

**Solid Waste Trust Fund Grant Program
Recycling and Waste Diversion (RWD)
Grant Program Guidance
FY 2024**

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Recycling and Waste Diversion (RWD) Grant

Introduction

The Solid Waste Trust Fund (SWTF) Grant Program furthers the goals of the SWTF by providing financial support for projects that meet the requirements described in O.C.G.A. § 12-8-27.1 and O.C.G.A. § 12-8-37.1 of the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act (Act), and Rule 391-3-21.17 of Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia (Rules).

The Recycling and Waste Diversion (RWD) Grant created as a part of the SWTF Grant Program, will reduce solid waste in Georgia, recover valuable materials, support manufacturing, and encourage innovation.

Grant Description

Grants will be awarded each fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) subject to the amount of funds available that year, and there may be multiple rounds of funding in a year. Eligible applicants may apply for any amount up to the maximum available in that cycle. Awarded grant funds may pay up to 100% of project costs, subject to available funding. Grant funds must be spent according to the proposed budget.

A total of \$2,000,000 is available for the FY24 funding cycle.

Projects at various stages will be considered, however, reimbursements are not permitted for any funds expended prior to the execution of the RWD Agreement. The timeline for the portion of the project funded by this grant may not exceed 24 months in length.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible applicants and recipients for the RWD Grant include:

- a. Counties, municipalities, or any combination of the same, hereafter referred to as local governments;
- b. Public authorities, agencies, commissions, or institutions.

Local government applicants must have Qualified Local Government status as of the date of their application, as determined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs maintains an active listing of local governments who are ineligible to receive state funding, including grants: <https://apps.dca.ga.gov/LocalGovStatus/planning.asp>

Nonprofit or private organizations are not eligible to apply for funding, however, they may partner with eligible applicants on projects.

In addition to those baseline eligibility requirements:

- a. Applicants who are subject to an open EPD consent order or other EPD enforcement action are not eligible to receive grants.
- b. Applicants who have received grant funds in past years but have NOT demonstrated successful administration of those grant funds may be deemed ineligible by EPD. Successful administration includes but is not limited to completing all project activities during the contract period, meeting

all required deadlines, completing the project on time and on budget, expending all grant funds requested on project activities, and providing adequate documentation as requested by EPD.

Eligible Project Examples

The RWD Grant allows applicants to develop project proposals that best support their communities' needs. Projects must focus on increasing recycling, reducing waste, and/or diverting recoverable materials from the solid waste stream as described in the authorized uses of the SWTF.

Examples of RWD Grant projects may include, but are not limited to:

- **Recycling and Waste Diversion Infrastructure** – Projects that create, expand, or improve infrastructure at materials recovery facilities (MRF), recycling transfer stations, convenience centers, or through other equipment that will increase the capacity to serve customers.
- **Hub and Spoke Development** – Projects that create, expand, or improve the operation of recycling hub and spoke infrastructure, collection, distribution, and logistics.
- **Hard-to-Recycle Materials** – Projects that create, expand, or improve the operation of hard-to-recycle and/or household hazardous waste recycling facilities.
- **Recovery of Additional Materials** – Projects that collect and/or process new material streams
- **Waste Reduction** – Projects that create, expand, or improve programs at the local level to reduce waste.
- **Innovation** – Projects that demonstrate innovative processes for waste reduction or innovative use of recycled products.

Projects awarded in FY23 clearly demonstrated their project's alignment with the RWD Grant goals, providing the best explanation of how their projects will reduce solid waste in Georgia, recover valuable materials, support manufacturing, and encourage innovation, while also demonstrating their project's cost-effectiveness.

Awarded projects fell into three categories: Equipment Projects, Recycling Collection Projects, and Pilot Projects. Below are examples to guide applicants in planning for competitive projects. These are only examples; other types of projects may also be funded.

- **Equipment Projects:**
 - Procurement of recycling equipment – Projects that purchase, install, and utilize equipment, such as bins, forklifts, skid steer, densifier, glass crusher, bailer, compactor, or collection vehicles, to increase collection, recycling, and diversion.
 - Recycling capability expansion projects - projects that increase recycling capabilities by improving or replacing infrastructure to recycle or divert new or more material.
- **Recycling Collection Projects:**
 - Household hazardous waste collection events - one or multi-day events hosted to collect specific household hazardous waste which is then properly handled and recycled by a certified and/or permitted vendor.
 - Recycling collection bin/drop-off locations - projects that identify specific locations to strategically place new recycling collection or drop-off bin locations.

- **Pilot Projects:**

- Projects seeking to jump start new community recycling initiatives, such as a residential composting collection program.
- Projects seeking to evaluate participation rates and tonnage collected over the course of the pilot project.

Projects that did not closely align with RWD Grant goals and did not demonstrate cost-effectiveness resulted in a lower score. Examples include:

- Projects in which the *primary* activity and use of grant funds is for any activity not directly associated with recycling and diversion. Examples include land acquisition, paving, grading, and site preparation. NOTE: this does not include projects that expand recycling capabilities (see example of funded projects above) and in which land acquisition, paving, grading, or site preparation is *part of* the overall project.
- Projects that focus on operational efficiency or improvements rather than recycling or diversion outcomes.
- Pilot projects without sufficient cost-effective justification and longevity metrics.

Examples of ineligible projects that resulted in denial of consideration for funding:

- Projects in which the *primary* activity is education. Education may be a component of an eligible RWD Grant project, but it cannot be the primary focus.
- Projects that seek reimbursement for completed activities prior to the execution of RWD Grant award agreement.
- Projects regarding improvements for landfill capacity or any landfill activities that do not include recycling or diversion.
- Projects that are in violation of the Georgia Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Act and the Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia. For example, submitting a project that seeks to divert material from the landfill that is banned from landfill disposal.

Application Period

The application period for the FY24 cycle will open November 1, 2023. The deadline for submitting applications is 4:30 p.m. on December 31, 2023.

EPD will host a virtual meeting October 18, 2023, to review RWD Grant eligibility and application requirements. The virtual meeting will be recorded and will be posted along with a list of Frequently Asked Questions at the following website address:

<https://epd.georgia.gov/recycling-waste-reduction-and-diversion-grant>

The RWD Grant FY24 cycle will be administered according to the following schedule:

November 1, 2023	Application period open
December 31, 2023	Application submission deadline
January – February 2024	Application review
March – April 2024	Grant funds awarded
May 2024	Agreements executed and projects commence

Special Requirements

Grant funds are paid out on a reimbursement basis. If you require advance funds to achieve grant objectives, please contact program staff **before** submitting your application. This is permissible; however, additional documentation may be required.

Contractual costs for one-time only services are allowed, provided the project itself is approved. The first year of a recurring cost may be allowed if future non-EPD funding is available.

Eligible grant award amounts will be determined by EPD. Partial funding may be awarded.

All facilities constructed, equipment purchased, and educational material produced with grant funds must credit the RWD Grant. All purchases of goods and services shall be made according to the recipient's procurement (bid) requirements and policy.

Recipients may also be asked to provide documentation to be used by EPD as a case study illustrating the approach to reducing municipal solid waste management through recycling and waste reduction or supporting market development activities from scrap tires or other recyclables.

EPD staff may perform site inspections during the term of the grant.

EPD shall have the right to terminate a grant award and demand refund of grant funds for non-compliance with federal, state, or local regulations, the terms of the grant award, or this guidance.

EPD may declare the recipient ineligible for further participation in the program until the recipient complies with the regulations, the terms of the grant award, or this guidance.

Application Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

RWD Grant funds are limited and are contingent upon available funding. Applications will be evaluated by EPD to determine if the applicant and proposed project are eligible (see Eligibility Requirements). Eligible projects will be scored according to the requirements and criteria described below. EPD will fund projects starting with the highest-ranking score first and will continue awarding funds to those qualifying applications until EPD has exhausted available funds for that grant cycle. Projects not selected in one grant cycle may be resubmitted in subsequent grant cycles; however, applicants must complete the application form for the current cycle.

Awardees from previous RWD Grant cycles are eligible to apply if they have completed the terms of their previously awarded agreement.

Awardees from previous RWD Grant cycles may not resubmit for the same project as the original award, extend, or modify their current agreements.

EPD reserves the right to coordinate with applicants as needed to modify project scopes and budgets.

Application Requirements

The following elements must be included in all applications and will be evaluated as part of the scoring for award. Suggested points to include in the narrative are described below for the most competitive project types.

1. Description of the overall project, including need and purpose, in the proposed affected community.

a. Narrative Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. If the project involves at least two or more eligible applicants applying for a joint project, please describe. Five bonus points will be given to projects coordinated with other eligible applicants. For example, three neighboring counties submitting one application for a tri-county recycling drop-off center for residents would merit bonus points.

NOTE: One county applicant applying for a recycling drop-off center that will accept recycling from both county residents and non-county residents is not acceptable for bonus points.

- ii. Will your project require any EPD permits, approvals, or any major or minor modifications of an existing solid waste handling permit (if applicable)?

b. Narrative Suggestions for Equipment Projects:

- i. Does your organization currently have the equipment for which grant funds are requested?
- ii. What are the limitations of your current equipment?
- iii. What material(s) will you recycle or divert? List all items.
- iv. Will your project require any EPD permits, approvals, or any major or minor modifications of an existing solid waste handling permit (if applicable)?

c. Narrative Suggestions for Recycling Collection Projects:

- i. What specific materials will you be accepting? List all items.
- ii. How will you record and report the quantity of materials diverted from the landfill?
- iii. If you are hosting a collection day event, briefly describe your proposed event. Include proposed event date(s), times, location, staffing, and safety procedures.
- iv. Has your entity ever held a collection day event before? If so, how was it received and what was the outcome of the event?
- v. If the project involves drop-off locations, where will these sites be located?
- vi. Describe why this project is needed for the community. How did you assess the need?
- vii. What company will your organization use to collect/haul materials? NOTE: Applicants must ensure that their proposed vendor has obtained all necessary permits and approvals to transport and/or process recovered materials, solid waste, and/or hazardous waste.

d. Narrative Suggestions for Pilot Projects:

- i. Briefly describe why your organization needs grant funding to pilot your proposed project and what outcomes you expect from the project.
- ii. Describe how your organization will continue to fund the project if the pilot is successful. How will you reevaluate the project if it is not a success?

2. Description of the objectives and the “Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals for the project.

a. Narrative Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. What is the goal of the project?
- ii. What specific objectives need to be achieved for the project to be successful?
- iii. Are these goals and objectives realistic for the timeframe and budget for the project?

3. Description of the quantifiable metrics that will be used to evaluate the project’s impact on recycling or diverting recoverable materials from the solid waste stream.

a. Narrative Suggestions for all Project Types:

- i. Consider weight or volume of material diverted or recycled as a metric.
- ii. If not using weight or volume, describe another metric that your organization will use to evaluate the project’s impact on diversion or recycling.
- iii. How will weight/volume of material or other metric demonstrate *increased* (over baseline data) diversion or recycling?

4. Description of how you identified these metrics and how they are applicable to your organization’s project.

a. Narrative Suggestions for all Project Types:

- i. Describe the procedure for calculating weight or volume recycled or diverted after project implementation.
- ii. How does the metric make sense for your project?
- iii. If not using weight or volume, describe how you chose your metric and how it makes sense for your project.

5. Description of how these metrics will demonstrate that the project is likely to result in increased recycling or diversion of waste from landfills.

a. Narrative Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. Estimate weight/volume of material that will be recycled or diverted from the solid waste stream.
- ii. How will weight/volume of material collected demonstrate the potential for recycling or diversion?
- iii. Describe what steps you will take if the project does not produce the expected results. For example, how will your organization use or repurpose any data collected, equipment, education materials, supplies etc.?

6. Description of the amount requested and how grant funds will be spent. Include a description of any match items, if applicable.

a. Narrative Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. Clearly describe what you are seeking funding for and how it will be used. This narrative should match the material presented in the budget.
- ii. Use consistent terminology and dollar amounts between the narrative and budget.
- iii. Describe if any Georgia based suppliers for products and/or services will be used. Five bonus points will be given to projects coordinated with other eligible applicants. Documentation must be provided.

7. Description of how the project and its benefits are likely to be perpetuated after grant funds have been expended without additional funding from the State.

a. Narrative Suggestions for Equipment Projects:

- i. What is the anticipated service life for the equipment to be purchased with grant funds?
- ii. Is local funding dedicated to maintaining the equipment?
- iii. Will the equipment generate revenue or increase cost savings that can be used in other recycling program areas? For example, tipping fees, usage fees, or brokerage of recovered materials.
- iv. How will equipment be serviced? How will staff be trained and retained to handle the equipment?

b. Narrative Suggestions for Recycling Collection Projects:

- i. How does this project help achieve your recycling program's long-term goals?
- ii. If your project involves a recycling collection day, will your organization be able to host events for different materials in the future without RWD Grant funding?
- iii. If your project involves drop-off locations, would your organization be able to have a permanent recycling drop off center, or otherwise collect these materials in the future?
- iv. Will the project generate revenue or increase cost savings that can be used in other recycling program areas or for future recycling events? For example, usage fees or brokerage of recovered materials.

c. Narrative Suggestions for Pilot Projects:

- i. Describe how your organization will share the results of your pilot project with Georgia’s recycling and material recovery industries, and other decision makers.
- ii. Describe how your pilot project will benefit Georgia markets for recycled materials and the usage of materials.

8. A robust timeline with clearly identifiable steps for project implementation that are likely to result in the achievement of the objectives for the proposed project.

a. Timeline Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. Briefly describe each step for the project.
- ii. Provide dates for the estimated start and completion for each step by calendar month and year.
- iii. Applicants should base their projects around an initial start date of May 2024. This is when grant awards are anticipated to be executed.
- iv. Consider developing the timeline in a table format. A template is provided in the application form. See below for an example:

Timeline			
Activity		Start Date	Completion Date
1	<i>Example: Begin procurement process for recycling equipment</i>	<i>May/2024</i>	<i>June/2024</i>
2			
3			
4			
5			

b. Timeline Suggestions for Equipment Projects:

- i. Consider procurement, installation, site preparation work, and staff training.

c. Timeline Suggestions for Recycling Collection Projects:

- i. Consider pre-planning, promotion, and post-project steps.

d. Timeline Suggestions for Pilot Projects:

- i. Consider the methodology your organization will use to implement the pilot project.

9. A clear and coherent budget that aligns with the narrative.

a. Budget Suggestions for All Project Types:

- i. Use terminology in the budget that is consistent with what has been described in the narrative. Provide a description of the intended use of funds and amount requested for each expenditure.
- ii. Clearly delineate between grant funds requested and what is being provided as a match. See the section for Matching in this guidance for more information.
- iii. Describe the anticipated expenditure date.

- iv. Indicate if an expenditure is attributable to a business in Georgia. See the Supporting Materials section in this guidance for more information.
- v. Double check math.
- vi. Consider all costs, such as freight and installation.
- vii. Develop the budget in a table format. A template is provided in the application form. See below for an example:

Budget										
Description		Grant Funds Requested	Match Contribution		Total Project Cost	Anticipated Expenditure Date	Are the funds attributable to a GA business?			
			In-Kind	Cash			<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	N
1	Site preparation for a recycling center	\$5,000		\$10,000	\$15,000	March 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	N
2	Purchase compactor	\$10,000			\$10,000	May 2024	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input type="checkbox"/>	N
3	Purchase bins	\$20,000	\$5,000		\$25,000	June 2024	<input type="checkbox"/>	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N
Totals		\$35,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$50,000					
Percentage of Match		30%								

Application Form

EPD has created an application form for applicants to use that includes the requirements listed above. Applicants are strongly encouraged to use this template.

Applicants must designate one individual who will be the primary contact for all grant project administration, including application submittal, award procedures, reports, and reimbursement requests. This individual will be the main point of contact for all grant-related communication and questions. Include this information on the application form.

Please also include the contact information for the official responsible for approvals for your organization. If selected for an award, this will be the individual who will sign the agreement. Examples include but are not limited to the chief executive officer, commissioner, mayor, or solid waste director.

Supporting Materials

Applicants must include quotes and/or other cost estimate documentation to support each line-item request in the budget. If utilizing a Georgia business for any products or services, documentation should also be submitted that clearly indicates the business name and address to receive bonus points.

Applicants are also required to complete and submit a W9 form. The W9 form lists your organization’s federal employer identification number, which is required as part of EPD’s vendor management process to issue reimbursement.

Applicants are also required to complete and submit a state contractor affidavit form. The contractor affidavit is required per O.C.G.A. § 13-10-91. On this form, “contractor” refers to the applicant. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources should be listed as the “name of public employer”.

Matching

A match is a cash or in-kind resource commitment beyond the grant dollar amount requested.

Matching is not required for the RWD Grant; however, applicants who provide matching must document their match items. Examples include letters of commitment, copies of checks, payroll records, etc. Common sources of matches include:

Cash	In-Kind
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering • Construction • Materials • Equipment Rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donations • Volunteers • Staff time • Materials • Office Space

Applicants seeking to use volunteer time as a match should use the 2023 national average volunteer hour rate for the State of Georgia, which is \$29.67.

More information about this rate can be accessed at the following link:
<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

Applicants may consider using the following structure to document staff or volunteer time to supplement payroll records or other materials submitted to document the match. If using another format, make sure to include activity description, hourly rate, total hours, and total value.

Date/Activity	Name X @ \$20/hr	Name Y @ \$15/hr	Name Z @ 17/hr
2.7.23 Site prep work planning	1	1	
2.9.23 Site prep		8	8
2.13.23 Site prep		8	8
Total Hours	1	17	16
Total Value	\$20	\$255	\$272
Combined Hours	40		
Combined Value	\$547		

Application Assistance

Applicants may reach out to SWTF Grant Program staff if they need assistance or would like to discuss their projects. To reach out to SWTF Grant Program staff or ask questions, applicants should email swtf.grant@dnr.ga.gov.

Scoring

Applications will be scored based on how successfully the application demonstrates the following:

Category Weight	Evaluation Criteria	Score 0 = Incomplete 1 = Poor 2 = Good 3 = Excellent	Weighted Score
4	Does the application demonstrate the need and purpose of the project in the affected community?	0	0
3	Does the application clearly describe the objectives and the “Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals for the project?	0	0
4	Does the application identify quantifiable metrics that will be used to evaluate the project's impact on recycling or diverting recoverable materials from the solid waste stream?	0	0
2	Does the application describe how metrics were identified and how they are applicable to the project?	0	0
2	Does the application describe how metrics will demonstrate that the project is likely to result in increased recycling or diversion of waste from landfill?	0	0
1	Does the application describe the amount requested and how funds will be spent?	0	0
2	Does the application describe how the project and its benefits are likely to be perpetuated after grant funds have been expended without additional funding from the State?	0	0
3	Is there a robust timeline with clearly identifiable steps for project implementation that are likely to result in the achievement of the objectives for the proposed project?	0	0
2	Does the application have a clear and coherent budget?	0	0
Non-weighted Criteria	Does the project demonstrate a cost-effective use of RWD Grant dollars spent?	1-10 points	0
Bonus Points	Does the application demonstrate that the project will be a joint project from at least two eligible applicants?	5 points	0
	Does the application demonstrate that the project will use Georgia-based suppliers for products and/or services, and was documentation submitted?	5 points	0
Total Score			0

RWD Grant Award Procedures

Grant applications will be scored according to the criteria described in the Evaluation Criteria section. If a grant application is approved for award, EPD will notify the applicant and provide an agreement for signature.

The applicant must return the signed agreement within 30 days of receiving the agreement via email to the following address: SWTF.grant@dnr.ga.gov. The applicant will be required to complete a Vendor Management Form, E-Verify Form, and W-9 if the applicant is not already an established vendor with the State of Georgia (will be verified during the application process).

Any electronic signatures constitute original, valid signatures pursuant to the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, O.C.G.A. § 10-12-1 et seq.

Upon receiving the signed agreement, EPD will route the agreement for signature to the EPD Director. EPD will send the fully executed agreement to the awardee. Awardees may begin work *upon receipt of the fully executed agreement* and must *commence work within 30 days*.

Work related to the project performed prior to the execution of the agreement will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Recipients are required to submit Quarterly Reports throughout the duration of the project to document implementation progress. A Final Report must be submitted at the end of the project that includes a summary of the project and metrics quantifying the project's success.

Awardees must submit a Reimbursement Request Form to EPD along with invoices and proof of payment for grant expenditures. Reimbursement Request Forms may be submitted along with the Quarterly Reports or as needed, but no more than once every 30 days.

Both the Quarterly Report Form and Reimbursement Request Form are available on EPD's website:

<https://epd.georgia.gov/recycling-waste-reduction-and-diversion-grant>