

2026 Food Waste Reduction Grant

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service

The purpose of this grant program is to help local governments, non-profits, and businesses reduce the amount of wasted food being disposed of in landfills. The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) administers the Food Waste Reduction (FWR) Grant through the Solid Waste Management Outreach Program.

With the release of this Request for Proposals (RFP), DEACS is seeking proposals that request grant funding to support food waste reduction through the expansion of food donation networks or organics recycling operations, including collection and hauling. Applicants should carefully read this entire RFP prior to submitting a proposal.

Contact: Christine Wittmeier
919-707-8121
christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov

Grant Funding: Up to **\$40,000** for **Standard Projects**
Up to **\$60,000** for **Priority Projects**

Cash Match: 20% of grant award

Proposals Due: **Friday, October 24, 2025 by 5:00pm**

Project Period: February 1, 2026 – January 30, 2027

What Types of Projects are Eligible?:

Grant funds must be used to develop food waste reduction infrastructure by expanding food donation networks or organics recycling operations, including collection and hauling. Excess food donation occurs through food banks, food pantries, or nonprofit organizations in which packaged food, prepared food and/or produce is distributed to households or individuals in need. Organics recycling operations occur at permitted or exempt composting or anaerobic digestion facilities and include the collection of food scraps from outside sources or designated public drop-off sites.

Priority Project Grants – *Eligible for up to \$60,000 in grant funding*

Priority Project Grants support investments in public food recovery and organics diversion programs that have been determined by DEACS to be of particular importance to growing and expanding efficient and effective waste reduction and organics recycling services throughout North Carolina.

2026 FWR Priority Projects include:

- **Expanding Organics Recycling Processing and/or Hauling Infrastructure:** Projects that construct, expand, or improve existing or new organics recycling processing facilities and/or hauling operations that accept food waste from outside sources. This does not include drop-off sites.
- **Recovering Edible Food:** Projects that result in edible food destined for the landfill being recovered and distributed to people.

Standard Project Grants – *Eligible for up to \$40,000 in grant funding*

Standard Project Grants include any projects that increase the tons of wasted food diverted from landfill disposal but fall outside of the 2026 priorities.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Examples of approved uses of FWR Grant funds include refrigeration systems, freezers, food preparation equipment, kitchenware, vehicles, site development costs, construction of facilities to handle wasted food, equipment or vehicle purchases, carts, buckets, and equipment installation costs. Expansion projects for additional capacity are more competitive than projects that replace existing equipment.

Examples of Grant Projects:

- Purchase carts for curbside food scrap collection;
- Purchase a wheel loader to improve efficiency and capacity of food scrap management at a compost facility;
- Build an aerated static pile for food scrap composting;
- Purchase a truck or vehicle to collect edible food for donation or food scraps for composting;
- Expand or improve storage, preparation, or refrigeration space to support edible food recovery and redistribution;
- Construct a concrete pad to improve efficiency and expand the capacity of food scrap management at a compost facility;
- Establish a drop-off site for residential or commercial food scraps; or
- Install a stand-alone digester to process food scraps.

Grant funds may not be used for employee salaries, land acquisition costs, administrative expenses such as overhead (i.e., ongoing costs of operations), utility costs, studies or work performed by consultants, contracted collection costs, and/or payment for other contracted services such as payment to a vendor for operating a collection program. Projects may not include contingency funds or “buffers” – all budget items must correspond to defined purchases.

Projects that develop or expand food waste reduction infrastructure may also use grant funds to print and distribute related educational materials such as signage, handouts, mailers, or magnets. *Please note that education-only projects are not eligible for funding under this grant program.*

DEACS offers [readymade compost education materials](#) to inform residents and businesses about composting. Any design template can be customized for a grantee. See “Other General Terms and Conditions” for the policy on printing publications.

How Grant Funds Work

All FWR Grant funds are distributed on a reimbursement basis. Purchases must be made during the grant contract period and requests for reimbursement can be made after the grantee has paid for grant purchases and they have been delivered. DEACS offers partial reimbursements throughout the contract period and will continue to reimburse grantees until 90% of the award amount has been expended, withholding 10% of funds until receipt of an approved final report.

Available Funding

Applicants may submit grant proposals for a maximum award of \$60,000 for priority projects or \$40,000 for standard projects.

Cash Match

FWR grant winners must provide a cash match equal to or exceeding 20 percent of the requested grant funding. For example, a grantee requesting a \$10,000 grant must provide at least \$2,000 of matching funds for a total project cost of \$12,000. In-kind contributions will not be accepted in lieu of cash match.

To calculate the necessary cash match for any grant project, determine the total budget associated with the project and then use the following equation: total project budget ÷ 6 = required cash match.

Contract Period:

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The resultant grant contract period is one year and is **expected to begin on February 1, 2026, and end on January 31, 2027**. All purchases must be made within the grant contract period. *Any purchases made prior to the start of the grant contract or after the end date of the grant contract will not be eligible for reimbursement.*

The grantee must make a good faith effort to complete the project within the year-long contract period. Extensions are possible but not guaranteed. Requests for no-cost time extensions must be submitted to the DEACS staff contact *at least 60 days prior* to the contract expiration date. Upon approval, the contract end date will be extended by written agreement between the applicant and DEQ. Funds not expended by the end of the contract period will be forfeited.

Who is Eligible?

All applicants must already manage or plan to manage excess food or wasted food in their operations with the purpose of diverting material from landfill disposal. North Carolina-based compost facilities, anaerobic digestion facilities, compost businesses, local governments, and food recovery organizations are eligible to apply for funding from the FWR Grant. For the purposes of eligibility for this grant, the following definitions apply:

- Compost facilities are permitted or exempt facilities that process organic material from outside sources to create a usable soil amendment. Compost facilities can be operated by a private business, local government, food bank, food hub or food pantry.
- Compost haulers are companies that collect or haul organic material from outside sources to compost facilities.
- Local governments are counties, municipalities, councils of governments and solid waste authorities in North Carolina.
- Anaerobic digestion facilities are permitted or exempt facilities that process organic materials from outside sources to create biogas and digestate.
- Food recovery organizations include food banks, food pantries, and nonprofit organizations that specialize in the collection, storage, and distribution of rescued food for households or individuals in need.

Note: K-12 schools, colleges and university facilities are not currently eligible but may partner with an eligible applicant on a project.

Former FWR grantees are eligible to apply. Applicants with an open FWR grant contract must have invoiced for 90% of eligible grant funds by the proposal due date (Friday, October 24, 2025). Applicants with other DEACS recycling grants are eligible to apply as long as any open grants are in good standing and expected to be completed on time.

Conditions on Submittals

- Only one proposal per eligible entity will be accepted. Grant proposals may combine funding requests for multiple project elements into one proposal. The available funding limits still apply, and total request may not exceed the grant award amounts noted in the Available Funding section.
- Organics recycling facilities must be permitted or exempt from a permit and follow the most recently adopted [NC Compost Rules 15A NCAC 13B .1401-.1410](#).
- Applications will not be accepted from local governments that have not submitted the required Solid Waste and Materials Management Annual Report for the most recent fiscal year. Businesses on the N.C. Office of State Budget and Management's Suspension of Funding List due to failure to complete applicable financial reports for any previous North Carolina state agency grant are ineligible to apply unless removed from the list prior to the proposal deadline.

How to Submit Proposals:

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted as an attachment via email. Receipt of all acceptable proposals will be acknowledged by e-mail. Submit electronic documents to Christine Wittmeier at christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov. If you do not receive confirmation, contact Christine Wittmeier at 919-707-8121 as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of anyone submitting a proposal to contact DEACS if they do not receive confirmation. Please submit electronic versions as Microsoft Word (preferred) or Adobe (PDF) attachments. Please refrain from using shareable links (e.g., Google Docs, Dropbox) to send documents.

Proposal Due Date:

Proposals must be received by DEACS by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 24, 2025**. Any proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

Required Proposal Format:

The following list describes what applicants must include in their proposal for it to be considered complete. Proposals that fail to provide all the required information will be deemed inadequate and not considered for funding.

- Project Title
- Applicant Information
 - ✓ Name and title of main contact
 - ✓ Organization
 - ✓ Mailing Address
 - ✓ Physical Address
 - ✓ Phone number
 - ✓ E-mail address
- Date of Proposal Submittal
- Description of Current Operations: Detailed explanation of applicant's organization, including:
 - ✓ What type of organization is applying?

- ✓ Does the applicant currently manage wasted food? If so, please describe current operations. If not, please indicate how the applicant's experience and expertise will ensure success managing wasted food.
 - ✓ (For haulers) Where does the applicant take the material to be processed? Does the facility have the capacity to handle additional feedstocks?
 - ✓ (For organics recycling facilities) What is the applicant's operational capacity to manage wasted food?
- Project Description: Detailed description of proposed grant project, addressing each of the following questions:
 - ✓ Does the proposed grant project qualify for priority funding? If so, why?
 - ✓ What does the applicant plan to buy during the 12-month contract?
 - ✓ How will the project affect current operations?
 - ✓ Will the project improve operational efficiency?
 - ✓ What is the projected waste reduction impact?
 - For haulers and facilities, how many tons of wasted food will be diverted from landfill disposal *annually* as a result?
 - For food rescue organizations, how many extra meals will be generated *annually* by the project?
 - ✓ How will the applicant manage contaminants or unacceptable materials? For food rescue organizations this may be inedible food and for organics recycling facilities this may be non-organic materials.
 - ✓ How will the applicant sustain the project long-term?
 - ✓ How many households/businesses will be impacted by the project?
 - ✓ What other organizations will be affected by the project?
- Special Requirements for specific applicants:
 - ✓ **Exempted Organics Recycling Facilities** – all organics recycling facilities that are operating under the permit by rule exemption and interested in applying for funding must complete **Form A** and attach it with the submission.
 - ✓ Businesses or Nonprofit Organizations
 - If you are an *existing* business or nonprofit organization, please complete **Form B** and attach it with the submission.
 - If you are a *start-up* business or nonprofit organization, please complete **Form C** **AND attach a formal business plan**. A business or nonprofit organization is considered a start-up until it has been in operation and can show financials for three years.
- Project Timeline: Simple bulleted list showing approximate dates for major project milestones. Timeline should begin on or after February 1, 2026 and project must be complete by January 31, 2027. Please include the following dates in the project timeline:
 - ✓ December 31, 2026 – Submit all invoices and draft final report to NCDEQ
 - ✓ January 31, 2027 – Project complete and final report submitted
- Project Budget: Submit a table following the example below. Table should include an itemized list of intended expenditures and estimated costs. Total row should reflect the total project cost

with breakdown of grant funds requested from the state and amount of matching funds to be provided by the applicant. Matching funds must be at least 20% of grant funds. The budget should match the items described in the Project Description.

Project Elements	Estimated Cost		
Truck and cart tipper	\$ 38,000		
Curbside roll-out compost bins	\$ 18,000		
Educational materials (postcards, brochures, stickers, magnets)	\$ 4,000		
	Total Project Cost	State Grant Award	Applicant Cash Match
Total Project Budget	\$ 60,000	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,000

** Note about Project Budgets for local government and nonprofit applicants eligible for sales tax refunds: state and local sales taxes **are not** reimbursable expenditures and should not be included as part of grant budgets.*

- **Quotes:** for purchases included in the project budget. Successful applicants do not have to use the exact vendor provided in the initial quote(s) but must adhere to the items listed in the budget.
- (Optional) Letters of Support from Partner Organizations

How are Proposals Evaluated?

A selection committee will use the pre-established criteria to rank proposals and make award decisions. Applicants must score well in these criteria to receive a grant award:

1. **Planning (0-25 points):** Did the application include all necessary elements as outlined in the Required Proposal Format? Is the proposal well thought out, well researched, and backed by valid facts and assumptions? Are details of the program clearly planned and outlined with a strategy for addressing issues and evaluating success? Does the proposal accurately describe the applicant's operations before and after the project's implementation? Can the project be accomplished in one year? If applicable, did the applicant complete the required additional forms?
2. **Demonstration of Need (0-20 points):** How does the proposed project address a specific programmatic, equipment or infrastructure need to reduce wasted food? How many households or businesses will be served by the project? Is there already an organics recycling facility or food recovery organization servicing the county? Will the project replace current infrastructure or expand it?
3. **Waste Reduction Impact (0-20 points):** How many additional tons of wasted food will be diverted from landfill disposal annually? For recovery, how many more meals will the project create for people in need? How will the edible food be used in a more beneficial way?
4. **Efficiency and Longevity (0-25 points):** Will the project provide a valuable service that is worth the investment? Will the proposed project improve the applicant's operational effectiveness and efficiency? Does the project make long-term investments that will continue to serve the community well beyond the grant period? Does the applicant commit to and adequately plan for sustaining the program for years to come?
5. **Priority Projects (0 - 10 points):** Does the project recover landfill-bound edible food for redistribution to people? Does the project construct, expand or improve an organics recycling

facility and/or hauling operation that accepts food waste from outside sources?

If a Proposal is Selected for Funding

If an applicant is chosen to receive funding, DEACS will notify the applicant with a formal offer by e-mail. The applicant must accept or decline the offer. The following will occur once the offer of grant funding is accepted:

- DEACS may work with applicants to revise initially submitted proposals before entering into a grant contract. Any changes to initial proposals must be approved by DEACS and the applicant and the resultant final proposal will become an attachment to the grant contract.
- DEACS may award a grant amount lower than the original request in an effort to support as many qualifying projects as possible.
 - If partial funding is awarded and accepted, applicant will update their proposal to reflect the new grant amount.
- Successful applicants will be required to:
 - Register with the state's e-procurement system using the same address provided in the applicant's proposal. To register in the state's e-procurement system or confirm/update your existing registration, please visit the following link: <http://eprocurement.nc.gov/>.
 - Grantees will select their preferred payment method in the e-procurement system.
 - Submit a No Overdue Taxes Certification with notarized signature: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
 - Submit a Conflict of Interest Policy using the following template or submitting a copy of your organization's existing policy that meets or exceeds the language in the following template: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
- Successful applicants, with the exception of local governments, will be required to provide:
 - Non-Debarment form <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>
- All applicants selected for funding will undergo a compliance review to ensure that they do not have an outstanding Notice of Violation (NOV) related to North Carolina solid waste statutes and rules. Any outstanding NOV's must be corrected to the satisfaction of the N.C. Division of Waste Management (DWM) prior to any grant being awarded. Applicants with outstanding NOV's are responsible for providing DEACS with information from DWM indicating that the applicant is in compliance and that the NOV's have been corrected before a grant contract can be initiated.
- DEACS will submit a request through the DEQ contract processing system for a grant contract. Grantees must act to execute the resultant grant contract without excessive delay.

Other General Terms and Conditions:

All grantees are subject to the following terms and conditions. Most of these terms and conditions will be outlined in the grant contract.

- **Publications:** all documents and publications associated with a grant contract should be sent to the grant manager for review and approval prior to printing and should be printed on recycled paper containing at least 30 percent post-consumer content.
- **Quarterly Check-ins:** Grant managers will schedule quarterly check-ins with grantees for project updates and technical assistance.
- **Final reports:** a draft final report is required to be submitted to DEACS at least 30 days prior to the contract end date and a final report is required to be submitted by the contract end date. Final reports guidelines will be provided to all grantees.
- **Site visit:** Grant managers will schedule a site visit after the project is complete to take pictures of purchased items (required for businesses and non-profits).

- **Reimbursement:** distribution of DEACS grant funds is on a reimbursement basis. Requests for reimbursement can only be made after the grantee has completed purchases associated with the grant project and they have been delivered to the site. Reimbursement requests must be submitted in writing, must include copies of invoices/receipts, and must include proof that the grantee has made payment. Proof of payment may include copies of canceled checks or other financial reports showing that funds were spent. For local government and nonprofit grantees eligible for sales tax refunds, state and local sales taxes are not reimbursable, may not be counted towards expenditure requirements, and should be excluded from reimbursement requests. The amount of actual grant payments may be prorated for projects and / or project elements that come in under budget. Successful applicants that make purchases before a grant contract is signed by both DEQ and the grant recipient will not be reimbursed.
- **Final 10 Percent of Funds:** DEACS will continue to reimburse grantees until 90 percent of the grant award amount has been expended, withholding 10 percent of grant funds until receipt of an approved final report. The final report must be received and approved prior to the end date of the contract.
- **Extensions / Amendments:** no-cost time extensions are possible but not guaranteed for grant contracts. Grantees seeking no-cost time extensions should submit a request for a time extension at least sixty (60) days prior to the contract end date.

2026 Food Waste Reduction Grant EXEMPTED COMPOST FACILITIES

Please complete this form if you operate a compost facility that is exempt from the permitting requirement and plan to apply for any level of funding. If you need assistance or have questions, please contact Christine Wittmeier at christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov or (919) 707-8121.

Facility Information:

Have you read the [NC Compost Rules 15A NCAC 13B .1401-.1410](#) and confirmed your facility is exempt from requiring a permit? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Type of facility: ☐ Type 1 ☐ Type 2 ☐ Type 3 ☐ Type 4 ☐ Other

Address:

Are you the property owner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "No", has the property owner approved the facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you contacted the City/County land use planning office to confirm a compost site is allowed on this property? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes," please provide information on the City or County response below:

What is the total property acreage?

What is the acreage of the actual composting area?

Is the facility located within the 100-year floodplain? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the facility located within a wetland? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the facility located on top of a closed disposal area? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What is the distance from the compost boundary to the nearest residence (feet)?

What is the closest distance to the property line (feet)?

Is the facility located near any wells? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how close (feet)?

Is the facility close to any streams or bodies of water?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how close (feet)?

Is the facility close to any ditches or berms?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how close (feet)?

Feedstock and Operation Information:

What are the feedstocks? Where are they coming from?

What is the total amount of waste/feedstocks (cubic yards or tons) that is expected to be processed per month.

☐ cubic yards ☐ tons

What method will be used to process the material?

☐ Windrow

☐ Aerated Static Pile

☐ In-Vessel

☐ Other

If selected "Other", please describe:

What kind of pad will be used to operate on (soil, concrete, etc.)?

How will the temperatures be monitored and for how long?

What are the planned odor control methods to prevent offsite odors?

Have you contacted the NC [Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources](#) (DEMLR) for information on stormwater and process water permits/approval?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Have you read [DWM Solid Waste Section Environmental Justice Guidance](#) document?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How will you manage stormwater runoff?

Will the finished compost be distributed to the public or used onsite?

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BUSINESS PLAN FORM (for EXISTING Businesses / Nonprofits only)

Please highlight or otherwise indicate any information on this form you wish to remain confidential.

1. Briefly describe your company's history.
2. What materials will you manage? How will you collect and transport the material? (*The more detailed information provided, the more competitive your proposal will be.*)
3. Describe your competition. What are the advantages of your product or services?
4. Describe your recent financial history. Fill out the chart below and provide any necessary additional description or clarification. ***All financial information provided will remain confidential.***

THREE-YEAR EXPENSE AND INCOME CHART

YEAR	2022	2023	2024
EXPENSES			
Cost of feedstock			
Equipment/supplies			
Business rent/lease			
Salaries			
Loan payments			
Other			
<i>Total Expenses</i>			
INCOME			
Sales			
Other revenue			
<i>Total Income</i>			
PROFIT OR LOSS			

5. Please describe your company's financial projections for 2025, summarizing expected expenses and income, profit or losses.
6. Explain any losses and how your company plans to become profitable in the short term (1-3 years). Please explain how your company's finances are sustainable and not dependent on grant funds.
7. Include any additional comments:

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BUSINESS PLAN FORM (for START-UP Businesses / Nonprofits only)

Please highlight or otherwise indicate any information on this form you wish to remain confidential.

A business or nonprofit organization is considered a start-up until it has been in operation and can show financials for three years.

*If you are a start-up business or nonprofit organization, please **attach a formal business plan** AND **answer the following questions** that address your recycling business plan. Please expand the space as needed to address each point below.*

1. Describe the services/products you will offer.
2. What materials will you manage? How will you collect and transport the material? (*The more detailed information provided, the more competitive your proposal will be.*)
3. Who is your competition? What are the advantages of your product or services?

4. Describe your anticipated expenses and income. Please also include any financing plans, specifying how much money you can put toward the project, how much grant money is requested, and how much additional money you will need to borrow to complete the project. *(All financial information provided below will remain confidential.)*

5. Include any additional comments below: