



# 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

***N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center***

*Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS)  
Department of Environmental Quality*

The N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center (RBAC) seeks viable, well-planned proposals from recycling businesses in North Carolina that build lasting, private-sector capacity to divert materials from the waste stream and create jobs in North Carolina. For the purposes of this grant program, a recycling business is defined as a business or a nonprofit organization that accepts, collects, and/or recycles materials from outside sources to create a value-added feedstock for intermediary processing or end-use recycled product manufacturing.

This document is a Request for Proposals for fundable projects to meet the goals of the grant cycle. Applicants should review this RFP in its entirety and, if needed, discuss their proposed projects with the grant program manager prior to submitting a proposal.

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<b><u>Contact:</u></b>	Emily Weaver 919-707-8913 emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov	<b><u>Deadline:</u></b>	<b>5:00 pm, November 20, 2025</b>
		<b><u>Grant funding:</u></b>	Any amount up to <b>\$75,000</b>
		<b><u>Cash match:</u></b>	50% of grant award

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## **What kinds of projects will be funded?**

RBAC seeks viable, well-planned proposals from recycling businesses and nonprofit organizations in North Carolina. This grant program supports the goals of the [2024-2034 Statewide Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan](#), which prioritizes infrastructure, market development, and circular-economy outcomes.

Grant money is intended to assist with capital costs for physical infrastructure to increase the capacity or improve efficiency of a recycling operation. Grant money **cannot** be used to cover land purchases, salaries, labor costs, general operational expenses, marketing, or the cost of contract processing. To discuss your project ideas, contact Emily Weaver at [emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov](mailto:emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov) or 919-707-8913.

## **Priority Project Grants**

Priority Project Grants support investments in the private recycling sector that RBAC has determined to be of particular importance to North Carolina's recycling infrastructure. Proposals addressing these needs are strongly encouraged and will be identified as Priority Projects, making them eligible for additional points in the scoring criteria. 2026 RBAC Recycling Business Development Grant priorities include:

- a) Projects that expand, upgrade, or improve the capacity and/or efficiency of single-stream material recovery facility (MRF) operations. For the purposes of this grant, a MRF is defined as a facility that receives, separates and prepares commingled residential recyclables for downstream commodity markets.
- b) Projects that establish or expand recycling processing capacity for solar panels or lithium-ion batteries. Electronics recyclers managing these materials must be R2 or e-Stewards certified to receive priority consideration.
- c) Projects that establish or expand recycling infrastructure for mixed construction and demolition (C&D) materials. Eligible proposals may address a variety of strategies that increase diversion of C&D debris from landfills, strengthen end markets for recovered materials, or incorporate innovative processing technologies that improve recovery efficiency and material quality.

## **Standard Project Grants**

Standard Project Grants include any projects that divert recyclable materials from disposal and deliver materials back into economic use but fall outside of the 2026 priorities. Examples include but are not limited to recycling collection infrastructure, processing equipment, facility improvements, or manufacturing investments to create new products using recycled materials.

## Food Waste Projects

*All projects related to food waste collection, donation or recycling are encouraged to apply for the special [Food Waste Reduction Grant](#). Applications are due October 24, 2025. Please contact Christine Wittmeier at [Christine.Wittmeier@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Christine.Wittmeier@deq.nc.gov) for more information.*

### **Available funding and cash match required**

Eligible applicants may request any amount of grant funding up to a **maximum of \$75,000**. Grant requests for lower funding amounts will not impact a project's competitiveness. All applications will be reviewed based on the pre-established award scoring criteria outlined on page 3.

Applicants must provide at least a **50% cash match** of the requested grant amount. For example, an applicant requesting a \$20,000 grant would have to match the grant award with at least \$10,000 in cash or direct expenditures.

Upon consideration of the proposals received, RBAC reserves the right to award grant amounts that are lower than the amount requested by an applicant. Contract execution and disbursement of grant funds are contingent upon the availability of funds to RBAC for this purpose.

### **Funding period**

After the grant is awarded, it is anticipated that the grant contract period will begin on March 1, 2026, and end on February 28, 2027. The applicant must spend funds within this contract period, unless the time is extended by written agreement between the applicant and the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Extensions are possible but not guaranteed.

### **How will grant funds be disbursed to award recipients?**

All funds for RBAC grants are distributed on a reimbursement basis. Requests for reimbursement must include: (1) proof that funds were spent for the budgeted items in the grant contract, including an original receipt marked paid for the purchased equipment or work completed under the grant project; (2) contact information of equipment vendor; and (3) electronic photographs of the equipment purchased, or work completed. In addition, approval of reimbursement requests is subject to independent DEQ verification of purchases with the vendors of the equipment or item. **Purchases made before a grant contract is signed by both DEQ and the grant recipient will NOT be reimbursed. Likewise, purchases made after the contract end date will NOT be reimbursed.**

RBAC 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.

### **Who is eligible?**

Private-sector recycling business applicants are eligible for funding under this grant cycle.\* For the purposes of this grant program, a recycling business is defined as a business or a nonprofit organization that accepts, collects, and/or recycles materials from outside sources to create a value-added feedstock for intermediary processing or end-use recycled product manufacturing.

One funding request per applicant will be accepted. Former applicants are eligible to apply for 2026 grant funding. Current 2025 grantees and previously awarded grantees with current extensions are eligible to apply under the following conditions: (1) the project has been completed, and the contract is closed; or (2) the grantee has requested reimbursement and received approval for at least 90% of their grant award by November 20, 2025.

**Notice: Any applicant that collects, processes, disassembles or rebuilds computer equipment and TVs must be registered with the N.C. Division of Waste Management Solid Waste Section in compliance with state law ([N.C.G.S. 130A-309.142](#)) and be [R2](#)- or [eStewards](#)-certified facilities. Any such applicant not registered with the State and not a certified facility will NOT be eligible for RBAC grant funds.**

Companies 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 compete

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\* Public sector organizations (local governments) should contact Alex Miller at [alex.miller@deq.nc.gov](mailto:alex.miller@deq.nc.gov) or 919-707-8190 for information about the [Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grants](#).

unless removed from the list prior to the proposal deadline. If selected for grant funding, business will be required to certify that they are not debarred from doing business with any Federal or State department or agency.

All applicants selected for funding are subject to a compliance review to ensure they are meeting applicable permitting and regulatory requirements. Prospective grantees found to be out of compliance must resolve all compliance issues and submit proof of compliance before receiving a grant contract.

Applicants are also responsible for contacting the appropriate state and local regulatory agencies to obtain information about permitting requirements for the proposed grant project. All permitting requirements must be satisfied prior to receiving any grant funding.

For information pertaining to the permitting of new solid waste facilities or altering existing permits, contact DEQ's Division of Waste Management, Solid Waste Section, [Permitting Branch](#), at 919-707-8235. For general permitting information, please contact the NC DEQ hotline at 1-877-623-6748.

### **How do you apply?**

A complete **Proposal Checklist** is provided on page six of this RFP. This checklist describes what applicants must submit for their proposal to be considered complete. Existing businesses must complete the Business Status Report. Start-up businesses must complete the Business Plan Form and submit a formal business plan. A business is considered a start-up until it is in operation and can show financials for at least three years. *All necessary application forms are provided below. **Proposals that fail to provide all the required information and forms will be deemed inadequate and will not be considered for funding.***

### **Grant selection process**

The selection committee will use the pre-established criteria below to rank proposals and make award decisions. Applicants are encouraged to consider the award scoring criteria as they develop their grant proposals. A total of 100 points is available. The RBAC grant application review process should be completed and preliminary award announcements made in January 2026.

- | <b><u>Award Scoring Criteria</u></b>   | <b><u>Available points</u></b> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>1. Business Planning</b>  | <b>(0 - 25 points)</b>         |
| Does the proposal indicate sufficient business planning and experience to ensure the success of the proposed project? How well does the proposal and/or business plan address the essential elements of feedstock supply, recycling market development, financing, material handling and other key issues?   |                                |
| <b>2. Project Planning/Cost-effectiveness</b>  | <b>(0 - 25 points)</b>         |
| Is the proposed project well thought-out? Is it clear that the proposed project will have economic merit (i.e., through reductions in operating cost, potential capital cost savings, stimulation of higher prices for recycled materials, or through development of new markets)? Is it clear that the project will be sustainable after the grant is complete? Are the cost elements of the proposal appropriate for the successful completion of the project? |                                |
| <b>3. Infrastructure or Market Need</b>  | <b>(0 - 20 points)</b>         |
| Does the proposed project address a specific recycling infrastructure or market need in North Carolina?  |                                |
| <b>4. Impact on Waste Stream Size or Toxicity</b>  | <b>(0 - 20 points)</b>         |
| Will the proposed project lead to a clear, definitive impact on wastes being disposed of in landfills, either directly through diversion or indirectly through stimulation of the demand for an alternative product?   |                                |
| <b>5. Priority Projects</b>  | <b>(0 - 10 points)</b>         |
| <i>See page 1 for a detailed description of 2026 priority projects.</i>  |                                |
| Does the project address material recovery facility upgrades, solar panels, and/or lithium-ion battery recycling, or mixed C&D material recycling?   |                                |

### **How do I submit a proposal?**

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted to Emily Weaver at [emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov](mailto:emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov). Submit electronic applications as Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF attachments. Please refrain from using shareable links (e.g., Google Docs, Dropbox) to send documents. If you are unable to submit an application electronically, please contact Emily Weaver at 919-707-8913 for alternative arrangements. Please note that the application deadline still applies.

### **Deadline for proposals**

**Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 20, 2025.**

Proposals received after the deadline will NOT be considered. Receipt of all proposals will be acknowledged by email. It is the responsibility of anyone submitting a proposal to contact our office if they do not receive a confirmation. No arrangements will be made for lost applications after the due date. *If you do not receive a confirmation, contact Emily Weaver at [emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov](mailto:emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov) or 919-707-8913 as soon as possible.*

### **If Selected for Funding**

RBAC anticipates that applicants selected for funding will be notified by January 2026. RBAC will notify the applicant with a formal offer by email.

- **Within 10 business days of notification:**
  - Successful applicants must accept or decline the offer.
  - Successful applicants must provide their federal tax ID number.
  - If the grant award is different than the requested grant amount, successful applicants must submit a revised budget and project description reflecting the accepted offer. Any changes to initial proposals must be approved by RBAC and the applicant, and the resultant final proposal will become an attachment to a grant contract.

***Failure to respond with the above information will result in the grant award being rescinded.***

- RBAC will complete a compliance review with the N.C. Division of Waste Management (which may occur before offer is accepted). Prospective grantees will not be awarded a contract unless and until all regulatory and compliance issues are resolved, as independently verified by the Division of Waste Management.
- Once the offer is accepted, RBAC will submit a request through the DEQ contract processing system for a grant contract. Grantees must sign and return the grant contract per the written instructions provided within 10 business days of receipt. RBAC anticipates all grant contracts will be prepared and signed by the end of February 2026 and start on March 1, 2026. This date is subject to change.

### **Other general terms and conditions**

Terms and conditions will be outlined in the grant contract. In addition, all grantees are subject to the following terms and conditions:

- **Quarterly Check-ins:** RBAC staff will schedule quarterly check-ins with grantees for project updates and technical assistance.
- **Site Visits** – RBAC staff will perform at least one site visit to verify grant-related purchases after reimbursement is requested.
- **Reimbursement** – All funds for RBAC grants are distributed on a reimbursement basis. Requests for reimbursement must include proof that funds were spent for the budgeted items and include an original receipt marked paid for the purchased equipment or work completed under the grant project. Vendor contact information must also be provided. Approval of reimbursement requests are subject to independent DEQ verification of purchases with the vendors of the equipment or item. ***Purchases made outside the effective contract dates or before a grant contract is signed by both DEQ and the grant recipient will NOT be reimbursed.***
- **Final Report** – When the grant project is complete, grantees must submit a final report to the RBAC grant manager. RBAC final report templates are available through the assigned RBAC grant project manager or

on the website: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/reports>.  
*Online financial reporting through NCGrants.gov is no longer required.*

- **Final 10% of Grant Funds** – The final 10% of grant funds will be held until an approved final report has been received by RBAC. *The report must be received and approved prior to the end date of the contract.* All final requests for reimbursement must be received within 30 days of the contract end-date, or all remaining grant funds will be forfeited.
- **Extensions** – No-cost time extensions are possible but not guaranteed for grant contracts. Grantees seeking no-cost time extensions must request an extension 60 days prior to the contract end date; extension requests received less than 60 days prior to the end date may be denied. The request for extension must indicate the reason that the extension is being requested (i.e., why the project cannot be completed on time). Any request for an extension must include a new timeline of project milestones and a new budget. Extensions request templates are available through the assigned RBAC grant project manager.



## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS PROPOSAL CHECKLIST

*N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center*

*Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS)*

*Department of Environmental Quality*

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*Before submitting your grant application packet, use the checklist below to make sure you have included all the necessary documents. **Incomplete proposals will not be considered.***

\_\_\_\_\_ A completed **Contact Form** below. Be sure to include the following on this form:

\_\_\_\_\_ Register for NC e-procurement through the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) at <https://evp.nc.gov/>. If you are already registered, please check that the address used in eVP matches the facility location in which you want grant reimbursement payments sent. Check the appropriate “yes” box on the Contact Form to indicate that you have done so.

\_\_\_\_\_ A completed **Grant Proposal** using the form below to describe the proposed grant project. The grant proposal should be no longer than four pages (i.e., two double-sided pages).

\_\_\_\_\_ A preliminary **Grant Budget and Timeline** on the form below.

\_\_\_\_\_ An **Official Quote** from a vendor for the proposed equipment or work to be completed for the project.

\_\_\_\_\_ A completed **Business Form**. Choose from **one of the following** based on whether you are a start-up or existing recycling business. A business or nonprofit is considered a start-up until it has been in operation and can show financials for at least three years.

- **Business Plan Form AND a Formal Business Plan for Start-Up Businesses Only.**
- OR -**
- **Business Status Form for Existing Businesses Only.**

\_\_\_\_\_ The following three forms (**REQUIRED**):

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) **No Overdue Taxes Certification** (with notarized signature)
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) **Conflict of Interest Policy**
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) **Statement of Non-Debarment**

Templates for these forms can be downloaded at: <https://deq.nc.gov/conservation/recycling-business-assistance/financing/grants/forms>.

\_\_\_\_\_ **For nonprofit applicants only:** a copy of the **IRS Federal Tax Exempt Letter or 501(c) Verification Form**.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Optional: Supporting Documents** which may include letters of endorsement, copies of resolutions, documentation of partnerships, etc.

**Email Grant Application to [emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov](mailto:emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov)**

**Deadline: Thursday, November 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.**



## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS CONTACT FORM

***N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center***

*Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS)*

*Department of Environmental Quality*

**IMPORTANT: Use the *Proposal Checklist* on **page 6** of this RFP to be sure that all necessary documents are completed and included in your submission.**

<b>Recycling Project Category:</b> <i>See page 1 for a description of project categories.</i>		<b>Applicant:</b> Please check one:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Standard Project <input type="checkbox"/> Priority Project – indicate applicable priority area <input type="checkbox"/> Material Recovery Facility (MRF) upgrades <input type="checkbox"/> Solar panel or lithium-ion battery recycling <input type="checkbox"/> Construction and Demolition (C&D) Material Recycling		<input type="checkbox"/> Existing Recycling Business <input type="checkbox"/> Start-up Recycling Business	
<b>Company or Organization Name:</b>		<b>Contact Name &amp; Title:</b>	
<b>Registered in NC e-procurement through the electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) (<a href="https://evp.nc.gov/">https://evp.nc.gov/</a>):</b> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <i>Be sure that the address used in e-procurement matches the location you want grant reimbursement payments sent.</i>		<b>Website:</b>	
		<b>Phone Number:</b>	
<b>Mailing Address, Zip Code:</b>		<b>Email Address:</b>	
<b>Facility Address (if different):</b>		<b>County:</b>	
<b>Grant Amount Requested:</b>		<b>Company Cash Match Amount:</b>	
<b>Expected Annual Tons Diverted by Grant Project:</b>			
<b>Total Current Jobs:</b>		<b>Expected New Jobs Created by Grant Project:</b>	

*I certify that all of the included statements in this proposal are, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.*

(Signature)

(Date)





## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS GRANT PROPOSAL

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Proposals often receive low scores because applicants fail to follow instructions, leading to uncertainty about the project goals and intended results of the proposed project. The clearer the project description is, the fewer questions a reviewer will have about the validity and/or feasibility of a proposal. Applicants also stand a better chance of success if they complete all required proposal forms and carefully review the grant award selection criteria as they prepare their proposal.

Use the following form to write your grant proposal. *You may expand the space below to address each point.* Please ensure the completed grant proposal does not exceed four pages (two double-sided printed pages).

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1. Describe the proposed project, indicating specifically what you are requesting funding for, and discuss the economic merit of the proposed project (i.e., through development or expansion of new markets, reductions in operating cost, potential cost savings, or stimulation of higher prices for recycled materials). *A brief description of your organization is okay; later sections of the grant application will allow you to expand on your organization. For this section, please focus on describing the **proposed project**.*  
*(Project Planning: 0-25 points; Prioritized Projects: 0-15 points)*
2. How will you sustain the project after the grant ends? Address how you will ensure continued success of the project both economically and operationally.  
*(Project Planning: 0-25 points)*
3. How does the proposed project address a specific recycling infrastructure or market need in North Carolina?  
*(NC Infrastructure Need: 0-20 points)*
4. Estimate the number of tons of waste expected to be reduced annually **by the proposed project** (if applicable).  
*(Waste Diversion: 0-20 points)*
5. Is the project expected to create new jobs? If so, how many full-time equivalent (FTE) positions do you expect will be created?
6. Describe any public or private partnerships you have developed to pursue this proposed project. If applicable, please include documentation of support from partnership entity.
7. Discuss any previous RBAC grants you have received, including grant amounts, proposed project and final project outcomes. If you have recently received an RBAC grant, how is the new project related to what was done in the past? Is it a supplement to a previous project, or is it completely different?
8. If selected for grant funding, this proposal will become part of the contract document. If any portions should be redacted from the contract for proprietary reasons, please state as such below.





## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS GRANT BUDGET AND TIMELINE

**REQUIRED: Attach quotes from vendors for the proposed items.**

If needed, please add/remove lines to the table below.

Recycling Business Development Grant Budget			
Item(s)	Cost	Grant Amount	Cash Match*
	\$		
	\$		
	\$		
	\$		
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	\$	\$	\$

\* Cash Match: Please indicate below if you have loan, grant, or other funding from a bank, company, or agency for the cash match portion of this grant project.

Describe where your match funds will be coming from:

### PROJECT MILESTONES

Please approximate dates for major project milestones. For example, “order equipment,” “install equipment,” “submit draft report to RBAC,” and “submit final report to RBAC.”

Project Task	Approximate Implementation Date (Begin: March 1, 2026; End: Feb 28, 2027)
•	
•	
•	
•	
• Submit <i>draft</i> Final Report to RBAC for review	No later than February 1, 2027
• Submit Final Report to RBAC to close contract	No later than February 28, 2027

**Note:** Project must be completed within the timeframe specified in the awarded contract. Dates provided above are estimated and subject to change to correspond with the official start and end dates provided in a successful grantee's final grant contract.



## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS BUSINESS PLAN FORM (**for Start-up Recycling Businesses only**)

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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 **submit 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. Information provided on this form is **NOT** included in the four-page limit for the grant proposal. (Business Planning: 0-20 points)*

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1. Describe the services/products you will offer.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What materials will you recycle? Where and how will you get the materials to be recycled? How will you process or manage the material? Where will you market the recyclables? *(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. Please disclose information related to any of the following instances that have involved the company or its principals within the past 3 years:
  - Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company's financial condition;
  - Bankruptcy, creditor's right or receivership proceedings;
  - Leins or judgements filed.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Include any additional comments on separate pages.



## 2026 RECYCLING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS BUSINESS STATUS FORM (for Existing Recycling Businesses only)

If you are an existing business, please answer the following questions that address your business status. Please expand the space as needed to address each point below. Information provided on this form is NOT included in the four-page limit for the grant proposal.

*(Business Planning: 0-20 points)*

1. Briefly describe your company's history.
2. What materials will you recycle? Where and how will you get the materials to be recycled? How will you process or manage the material? Where will you market the recyclables? *(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
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Cost of feedstock			
Equipment/supplies			
Business rent/lease			
Salaries			
Loan payments			
Other			
<i>Total Expenses</i>			
<b>INCOME</b>			
Sales			
Other revenue			
<i>Total Income</i>			
<b>PROFIT OR LOSS</b>			

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. Please disclose information related to any of the following instances that have involved the company or its principals within the past 3 years:
  - Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company's financial condition;
  - Bankruptcy, creditors' right or receivership proceedings;
  - Leins or judgements filed.
  
8. Include any additional comments on separate pages.