



2027 Food Waste Reduction Grant Request for Proposals

*Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality*

The purpose of this grant program is to help local governments, nonprofits, and recycling businesses reduce the amount of wasted food being disposed of in landfills. The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) within the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 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

Proposals Due: Thurs., Nov. 5, 2026 by 5:00 P.M.

Project Period: Mar. 1, 2027 – Feb. 28, 2028

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

Cash Match: 20% of grant award

Who is Eligible?

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

- **Food recovery organizations** include food banks, food pantries, and nonprofit organizations that specialize in the gleaning, collection, storage, and distribution of rescued food for households or individuals in need.
- **Local governments** are counties, municipalities, councils of governments, and solid waste authorities in North Carolina.

- **Food scrap haulers** are companies that collect or haul organic material from outside sources to compost facilities.
- **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.
- **Anaerobic digestion facilities** are permitted or exempt facilities that process organic materials from outside sources to create biogas and digestate.
- **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 (Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026). 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.

Depending on the project, local governments and businesses may be eligible for other DEACS grant programs. Learn more at [Grant Opportunities](#).

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. These projects 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.

2027 FWR Priority Projects include:

- **Processing and/or Hauling Post-Consumer Food Scraps:** Projects that expand or improve infrastructure to haul and/or process post-consumer food scraps 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 by food recovery organizations.

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

Standard Project Grants include any project by a food recovery organization, local government, food scarp hauler, or organics recycling facility that increases the tons of wasted food diverted from landfill disposal but fall outside of the 2027 priorities.

Eligible 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 food scraps, 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

- Expand or improve storage, preparation, or refrigeration space to support edible food recovery and redistribution;
- Purchase a truck or vehicle to collect edible food for donation or food scraps for composting;
- 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;
- Construct a concrete pad to improve efficiency and expand 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.

Ineligible Expenses

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, purchasing bumper crops or excess produce, 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.*

To inform residents and businesses about composting, DEACS offers [ready-made compost education materials](#). 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 a maximum award of \$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 Mar. 1, 2027, and end on Feb. 28, 2028.** *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.

How to Submit a Proposal

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted to Christine Wittmeier at christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov as an attachment via email. 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.

Deadline for Proposals:

Proposals must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 5, 2026.

Any proposals received after the deadline will NOT be considered. Receipt of all proposals will be acknowledged by e-mail. It is the responsibility of anyone submitting a proposal to contact DEACS if they do not receive confirmation. If you do not receive confirmation, contact Christine Wittmeier at christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov or 919-707-8121 as soon as possible.

Conditions of 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 the total state grant award may not exceed \$40,000 for standard projects and \$60,000 for priority projects.
- Organics recycling facilities must be permitted or exempt from a permit and follow the current [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](#) are ineligible to apply unless removed from the list prior to the proposal deadline.

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? Does the proposal indicate sufficient planning and experience to ensure the success of the proposed project? 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? How well does the proposal and/or plan address the essential elements of material supply, financing, material handling, and other key issues? Does the proposal accurately describe your

operations before and after the project's implementation? Can the project be accomplished in one year? If applicable, did you complete the required additional required 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 in North Carolina? How many households or businesses will be served by the project? Is there already an organics recycling facility, organics hauler, 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 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 proposed project improve your operational effectiveness and efficiency? Does the project make long-term investments that will continue to serve the community well beyond the grant period? Did you commit to and adequately plan for sustaining the program for years to come? Is the organization financially stable and profitable? For start-ups, do you have a business plan and/or strategic plan?
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 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 grant amounts lower than the original request in an effort to support as many qualifying projects as possible.
 - If partial funding is awarded and accepted, applicants will update their proposal to reflect the new grant amount.

Successful Applicant Requirements

- Register with the state's eProcurement 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 [North Carolina eProcurement](#).
 - Grantees will select their preferred payment method in the eProcurement system.
- Submit the following three Grant Application Forms available at the bottom of the [Grant Opportunities](#) webpage:
 - **No Overdue Taxes Certification** with notarized signature
 - **Conflict of Interest Policy** using the template or submitting a copy of your organization's existing policy that meets or exceeds the language in the template
 - **Non-Debarment form** (not required for local governments)
- 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 NOVs must be corrected to the satisfaction of the N.C. Division of Waste Management (DWM) prior to any grant being awarded. Applicants with outstanding NOVs are responsible for providing DEACS with information from DWM indicating that the applicant is in compliance and that the NOVs 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 resulting 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. Grantees are required to participate in these check-ins and respond to grant-related correspondence and requests for information within the timeframe provided by your grant manager. Unless otherwise specified, grantees should generally respond within 10 business days. Failure to participate in required check-ins or respond to repeated requests may result in delayed reimbursements, denial of amendment or extension requests, or other actions allowed under the grant contract terms.

- **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 report guidelines will be provided to all grantees.
- **Site visit:** Grant managers may schedule a site visit at any time during the contract period and at minimum, after the project is complete to verify purchases.
- **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 via cover letter and include copies of invoices/receipts. Local governments must include proof of payment (copy of checks, printout of accounting system or invoice marked paid with a \$0 balance, 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.

2027 Food Waste Reduction Grant

Required Proposal Questions

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.

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:

1. What is your organization type (e.g. local government, composter, organics recycler, food rescue organization)?
2. Describe your organization's current operations for edible food recovery or food scrap recycling. Include a description of how materials are handled and managed, your organization's current processing capacity, and the types of food accepted. Attach your organization's accepted material list, if applicable.
3. If you are planning to start a new food recovery or food scrap recycling operation, please describe how your experience and expertise will ensure success in managing the food donations or scraps.
4. How do you currently manage food that is not suitable for distribution (e.g. animal feed, compost, landfill, etc.)? How do you currently manage non-organics in the food scraps?
5. (For food recovery organizations) Where do you source food from? What percentage of food distributed is currently rescued verses purchased?

6. (For food scrap hauling and recycling operations) Describe the source of your incoming food scraps (i.e., residential collection or drop-off programs, restaurants & cafeterias, industrial, etc.).
7. How many full-time equivalent employees do you currently have? *Please note: This number is for internal use only to help us track and promote the recycling sector's impact on jobs and North Carolina's economy.*

Project Description:

Detailed description of proposed grant project, addressing each of the following questions:

1. Describe the proposed project, indicating specifically what you are requesting funding for and the benefits and impact of implementing the proposed project.
2. What do you plan to buy during the 12-month contract?
3. How will the project affect current operations? Will this change how you collect, transport, and/or process the material? Will the project improve operational efficiency?
4. How does the project address a specific material recovery infrastructure need in NC?
5. Where will the material be sent after you manage it?
 - For haulers, where will you take the material to be processed? Does the facility have the capacity to handle additional feedstocks?
 - For food recovery organizations, how will you process and/or distribute additional edible food?
 - For composters, how will you market your finished products? Will they be distributed or sold? If sold, what laboratory do you use for testing?
6. What is the projected waste reduction impact? How many tons of food will be diverted from landfill disposal annually as a result of the grant project?
7. If applicable, how many extra meals will be generated annually by the project?
 - When calculating meals and/or tonnage, please use the USDA's guideline of 1.2 pounds per meal.
8. How will you manage contaminants or unacceptable materials? For food recovery organizations, this may be inedible food; for organics recycling facilities and haulers, this may be non-organic materials.
9. How will you sustain the project long-term? Address how you will ensure continued success of the project both economically and operationally.
10. How many households/businesses will be impacted by the project?

11. What other organizations will be affected by the project?
12. What are the expected new jobs created by the grant project?
13. Does your project include education and outreach materials? If so, will you be using your own design or requesting [DEACS's customizable design services](#)?
 - Please acknowledge that all outreach/educational materials purchased with grant funds must be submitted for review prior to printing or execution.
 - Reviews may take up to two weeks, so plan accordingly and submit well in advance of printing. It is often helpful to submit an initial draft for early feedback.
 - [DEACS's customizable designs and request form](#)

Project Timeline:

Simple bulleted list showing approximate dates for major project milestones. Timeline should begin on or after Mar. 1, 2027, and project must be completed by Feb. 28, 2028. Please include the following dates in the project timeline:

- Jan. 31, 2028 – Submit all invoices and draft final report to DEQ
- Feb. 28, 2028 – Project complete and final report submitted

Project Budget:

Submit budget tables following the samples below. The Project Elements table should include an itemized list of intended expenditures and estimated costs. The Project Budget Allocation table 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.

Sample 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 Budget	\$ 60,000

Sample Project Budget Allocation	Budget Share
Total Project Budget	\$ 60,000
State Grant Request	\$ 50,000
Applicant Cash Match	\$ 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.*

Other funding sources:

Please indicate if you have a loan, grant, or other funding from a bank, company, or agency to support the proposed grant purchases.

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.

Proposals submitted without quotes will be considered incomplete.

Certification:

Include the following certification as part of the proposal: "I certify that all of the statements included in this proposal are, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate."

(Optional) Letters of Support from Partner Organizations:

Additional Requirements for Specific Applicants

- **Exempted Organics Recycling Facilities – Question Series A**

A small Type 2 or 3 organics recycling facility that is currently or planning to operate under the permit by rule exemption.

- **Existing Businesses or Nonprofit Organizations – Question Series B**

A business or nonprofit organization that has been in operation and can show financials for at least three years.

- **Start-up Businesses or Nonprofit Organizations – Question Series C**

A business or nonprofit organization that has been in operation for less than three years.

Start-up business or nonprofit organizations are also required to submit a formal business or strategic plan.

Question Series A – Required for Exempted Organics Recycling Facilities:

Facility Information:

1. Have you confirmed your facility is exempt from requiring a permit within the [NC Compost Rules \(15A NCAC 13B .1401-.1410\)](#)?
2. What type of facility do you operate (i.e., Type 2, 3, or other)?
3. What is the address of your compost facility?

Note: *If a project is awarded funding and the location of the exempted facility changes, the grantee must notify their grant manager and submit updated answers to Question Series A with the new address.*

4. Are you the property owner? If “No,” has the property owner approved the facility?
5. Have you contacted the City/County land use planning office to confirm a compost site is allowed on this property? If “Yes,” please provide information on the City or County response.
6. What is the total property acreage?
7. What is the acreage of the actual composting area?
8. Is the facility located within the 100-year floodplain?
9. Is the facility located within a wetland?
10. Is the facility located on top of a closed disposal area?
11. What is the distance from the compost boundary to the nearest residence (in feet)?

12. What is the closest distance to the property line (in feet)?
13. Is the facility located near any wells? If so, how close (in feet)?

Feedstock and Operation Information:

14. What are the feedstocks? Where are they coming from?
15. What is the total amount of waste/feedstocks (in either cubic yards or tons) that is expected to be processed per month?
16. What method will be used to process the material (i.e., windrow, aerated static pile, in-vessel, other)? If "Other," please describe.
17. What kind of pad will be used to operate on (e.g., soil, concrete, asphalt)?
18. How will the temperatures be monitored and for how long?
19. What are the planned odor control methods to prevent offsite odors?
20. Have you received information about stormwater and process water permits/approval from the [NC Division of Energy, Mineral, and Land Resources \(DEMLR\)](#)?
21. Have you read [NCDEQ's Public Participation Plan and Language Access Plan](#)
22. How will you manage stormwater runoff?
23. Will the finished compost be distributed or sold to the public, stockpiled, and/or used onsite? If distributed or sold to the public, please list the laboratory you will be using for the required tests per [NC Compost Rules for Distribution of Compost Products \(15A NCAC 13B .1407\)](#).

Question Series B – Required for Existing Businesses and Nonprofits:

Please highlight or otherwise indicate any information in this question series you wish to remain confidential.

1. Briefly describe your organization's history.
2. Describe your competition. What are the advantages of your product, services, or community programs?
3. Describe your recent financial history. Fill out the table below and provide any necessary additional description or clarification. All financial information provided will remain confidential.

Recent Financial History	2023	2024	2025
Cost of feedstocks or food	-	-	-
Equipment/supplies	-	-	-
Rent/lease	-	-	-
Salaries	-	-	-
Loan payments	-	-	-
Other expenses	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	-	-	-
Sales/donations	-	-	-
Other revenue	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	-	-	-
PROFIT OR LOSS (Income – Expenses)	-	-	-

4. Please describe your organization's financial projections for 2026, summarizing expected expenses and income, profit or losses.
5. Explain any losses and how your organization plans to become profitable in the short term (1-3 years). Please explain how your organization's finances are sustainable and not dependent on grant funds.
6. Please disclose information related to any of the following instances that have involved the company/organization or its principals over the past three years:
 - a. Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company/organization's financial condition;
 - b. Bankruptcy, creditor's right or receivership proceedings;
 - c. Leins or judgements filed.
7. Please include any additional comments:

Question Series C – Required for Start-up Businesses and Nonprofits:

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 or strategic plan in addition to answering the questions below.
Please highlight or otherwise indicate any information on this form you wish to remain confidential.

1. Please describe the services/products you will offer. For nonprofit organizations, please include your mission statement.
2. For recycling businesses, who is your competition? What are the advantages of your product or services?
3. 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 will remain confidential.)
4. Please disclose information related to any of the following instances that have involved the company/organization or its principals over the past three years:
 - a. Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company/organization's financial condition;
 - b. Bankruptcy, creditor's right or receivership proceedings;
 - c. Leins or judgements filed.
5. Please include any additional comments: