



2027 Recycling Business Development Grant Request for Proposals

Recycling Business Assistance Center

Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS)

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center (RBAC), part of the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) within the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) 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 (RFP) 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.

Contact: Emily Weaver | 919-707-8913 | emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov

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

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

Grant Funding: Any amount up to **\$75,000**

Cash Match: 50% of grant award

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.

What Types of Projects Are Eligible?

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.

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. The 2027 RBAC Recycling Business Development Grant priorities include:

- 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.
- 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.

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 2027 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 November 5, 2026. Please contact Christine Wittmeier at christine.wittmeier@deq.nc.gov for more information.

Eligible Expenses

Grant funds are intended to support capital costs for equipment and physical infrastructure that increase recycling capacity or improve the efficiency of a recycling operation in North Carolina.

Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds may **not** be used for land purchases, salaries, labor, general operating expenses, marketing, contract processing, or costs incurred outside the grant contract period. To discuss your project ideas, contact Emily Weaver at emily.weaver@deq.nc.gov or 919-707-8913.

How Grant Funds Work

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

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 5.

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.

Cash Match

Applicants must provide at least a **50% cash match** of the requested grant amount. The match is calculated based on the grant request, not the total project cost. 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.

Contract Period

After the grant is awarded, it is anticipated that the grant contract period will begin on March 1, 2027, and end on February 28, 2028. Only eligible purchases incurred during the contract period and included in the approved project budget may be reimbursed. All purchases must be completed, installed, and operational before the contract end date specified in the grant agreement, 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 to Submit Proposals

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

One electronic copy of the proposal must be submitted to Emily Weaver at emily.weaver@deg.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.

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 acknowledgement. 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 or 919-707-8913 as soon as possible.*

A complete **Proposal Checklist** is provided on page 8 of this RFP. This checklist describes what applicants must submit for their proposal to be considered complete, including contact information, business information, and the project proposal. Start-up businesses must provide the requested business information 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. ***Proposals that fail to provide all the required information and forms will be deemed inadequate and will not be considered for funding.***

Conditions of Submittals

- One funding request per applicant will be accepted. Former applicants are eligible to apply for 2027 grant funding. Current 2026 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 5, 2026.
- 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 comply with the rules set forth in 09 NCAC 03M or the terms of previous state contracts, are ineligible to compete 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 are Proposals Evaluated?

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 2027.

Award Scoring Criteria:

1. **Business Planning (0-25 points):** 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?
2. **Project Planning/Cost-Effectiveness (0-25 points):** 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?
3. **Infrastructure or Market Need (0-20 points):** Does the proposed project address a specific recycling infrastructure or market need in North Carolina?
4. **Impact on Waste Stream Size or Toxicity (0-20 points):** 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?
5. **Priority Projects (0 - 10 points):** Does the project address material recovery facility upgrades, solar panels, and/or lithium-ion battery recycling? *See page 2 for a detailed description of 2027 priority projects.*

If Selected for Funding

RBAC anticipates that applicants selected for funding will be notified by January 2027. RBAC will notify the applicant with a formal offer by email. Successful applicants must accept or decline the offer within 10 business days of notification. ***Failure to respond with the information requested in the notification will result in the grant award being rescinded.***

The following will occur once the offer of grant funding is accepted:

- RBAC may work with applicants to revise initially submitted proposals before entering into a grant contract. Any changes to initial proposals must be approved by RBAC and the applicant and the resultant final proposal will become an attachment to the grant contract.
- RBAC 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 final accepted grant amount.
- 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 that all grant contracts will be prepared and signed by the end of February 2027 and start on March 1, 2027. 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. Grantees are required to participate in these check-ins and respond to grant-related correspondence and requests for information within the timeframe provided by RBAC. If no deadline is provided, grantees should respond within 10 business days. Failure to participate in required check-ins may result in delayed reimbursement, denial of a contract extension request, or other action allowed under the grant contract terms.

- **Project changes:** Any material changes to the project scope, location, proposed purchases, timeline, or expected outcomes must receive written approval from RBAC. Without written approval, reimbursement is not guaranteed for purchases that do not align with the grant contract. Approved changes may require a formal contract amendment.
- **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: (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) documentation demonstrating installation and operational readiness of the equipment or completion of the approved project scope, which may include electronic photographs and other supporting verification. **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.**
- **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 [grants website](#). Grantees must submit a draft final report to the assigned RBAC grant manager at least 30 days before the contract end date. RBAC may require revisions or additional documentation before approving the report. The final report must be received and approved before the contract end date. *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.

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Proposal Checklist

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.**

- ☐ Register for NC e-procurement through the [electronic Vendor Portal \(eVP\)](#). 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.
- ☐ Answers to the required **Proposal Questions**, including **Official Quote(s)** from vendor(s) for the proposed equipment or work.
- ☐ The required **Business Information**. **Provide the requested information** 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.
- ☐ The following three forms (**REQUIRED**):
 - ☐ (1) **No Overdue Taxes Certification** submit an unsigned copy with the application. Applicants selected for funding will be required to submit a current, notarized certification before contract execution.
 - ☐ (2) **Conflict of Interest Policy**
 - ☐ (3) **Statement of Non-Debarment**

Templates for these forms can be downloaded from DEQ's [Grant Opportunities](#) page.

- ☐ **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@deg.nc.gov by **Thursday, November 5, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.**

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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 incomplete and not considered for funding.

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 answer all required proposal questions completely and carefully review the grant award selection criteria as they prepare their proposal.

Applicant Information

1. Provide the following applicant information:
 - Company or Organization Name
 - Contact Name & Title
 - Phone Number
 - Email Address
 - Mailing Address, Zip Code, County
 - Facility Address (if different)
2. Acknowledge registration in NC e-procurement via the [electronic Vendor Portal \(eVP\)](#)
3. Provide the following project information:
 - Recycling Project Category: Standard Project or Priority Project
 - If a Priority Project, indicate applicable priority area:
 - Material Recovery Facility (MRF) upgrades
 - Solar panel or lithium-ion battery recycling
 - Indicate if an existing recycling business or a start-up recycling business
 - Grant Amount Requested
 - Company Cash Match Amount
4. Signed and dated attestation: *"I certify that all of the statements included in this proposal are, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate."*

Project Description

Use the following prompts to write your project description.

1. Describe the proposed project, indicating specifically what you are requesting funding for. Explain how the proposed project develops or expands new markets, reduces operating cost, provides potential cost savings to customers, or stimulates higher prices for recycled materials. *(Project Planning: 0-25 points; Priority Projects: 0-15 points)*

*Note: 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**.*

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 entities.
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.

Project Timeline

Provide approximate dates for major project milestones. For example, “order equipment,” “install equipment,” “submit draft report to RBAC,” and “submit final report to RBAC.” Implementation should begin March 1, 2027, and end Feb 28, 2028. Please include the following in the project timeline:

- Draft report should be submitted no later than February 1, 2028.
- Final report should be submitted no later than February 28, 2028.

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

Project Budget

1. Submit a budget table following the sample tables below. Budget 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 50% of grant funds. The budget should match the items described in the Project Proposal.

REQUIRED: Attach quotes from vendors for the proposed items.

Sample Project Elements	Estimated Cost
Item 1	\$42,500
Item 2	\$70,000
Total Project Budget	\$112,500

Sample Project Budget Allocation	Budget Share
Total Project Budget	\$112,500
State Grant Request (max \$75,000)	\$75,000
Applicant Cash Match (min 50% of grant)	\$37,500

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

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Required Business Information

Provide the following requested information 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.

For Start-up Recycling Businesses

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. (*Business Planning: 0-20 points*)

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:
 - a) Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company's financial condition;
 - b) Bankruptcy, creditor's right or receivership proceedings;
 - c) Leins or judgements filed.

For Existing Recycling Businesses

If you are an existing business, please answer the following questions that address your business status. (*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 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	-	-	-
Equipment/supplies	-	-	-
Rent/lease	-	-	-
Salaries	-	-	-
Loan payments	-	-	-
Other expenses	-	-	-
TOTAL EXPENSES	-	-	-
Sales/donations	-	-	-
Other revenue	-	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	-	-	-
PROFIT OR LOSS (Income – Expenses)	-	-	-

5. Please describe your company's financial projections for 2026, 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:
 - a) Pending or threatened litigation impacting the company's financial condition;
 - b) Bankruptcy, creditors' right or receivership proceedings;
 - c) Leins or judgements filed.