



Paper Cup Recycling Education 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 assist North Carolina local government recycling programs in developing and implementing education and outreach to include and promote paper cup recycling. The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) is administering the Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant program through funding from the Foodservice Packaging Institute (FPI).

Contact: Madeline Joslin | 919-707-8341 | madeline.joslin@deq.nc.gov

Proposals Due: Proposals will be received on a rolling basis.

Project Period: One year

Grant Funding: Up to \$25,000

Cash Match: 10% of grant award

Background

A number of [material recovery facilities \(MRFs\)](#) in North Carolina have added paper cups to their list of accepted recyclable materials. The decision is a result of close collaboration between FPI, MRFs, and paper mills in the Southeast to ensure all are prepared to successfully receive and manage paper cups.

To support communities' addition of paper cups to their recycling programs, FPI has provided funding to update educational materials. Grants may be used to update general recycling outreach to include paper cups and other foodservice packaging items, and/or to specifically promote paper cup recycling. Paper cup recycling outreach examples are available on the [Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant](#) webpage.

With the release of this Request for Proposals (RFP), DEACS is seeking proposals that request grant funding to help initiate or expand paper cup recycling education and outreach. **Applicants should carefully read this entire RFP prior to submitting a proposal.** Interested eligible applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Madeline Joslin at madeline.joslin@deq.nc.gov to discuss potential grant projects prior to submitting a grant proposal.

Who Is Eligible?

Local governments, defined as counties, municipalities, councils of governments, and solid waste authorities in North Carolina that accept paper cups in their recycling programs, are eligible to apply for funding from the Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant Program.

What Types of Projects Are Eligible?

The intent of this grant program is to fund projects that inform and encourage effective paper cup recycling in curbside and drop-off programs through education and outreach. Grant funds are for outreach and education purposes only. This grant cannot be used to fund infrastructure, ongoing contracts, or salaries.

Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant funds may be used to promote paper cup recycling specifically or to update existing outreach and accepted recyclable material lists to include paper cups. Examples of eligible purchases include:

- Printed educational materials (e.g., brochures, handouts, postcards, cart tags)
- Digital and print advertisements
- Signage
- Stickers, window clings, promotional materials

DEACS offers readymade designs for educational materials as part of [Recycle Right NC](#) outreach suite. Any design template can be customized for a grantee. Graphic design services are offered at no cost, but printing and distribution is the responsibility of the grantee. Grant funds can be used to cover the cost of printing and distribution.

The use of DEACS outreach materials is preferred, but projects can utilize locally created materials. Locally created educational materials should be submitted in draft form as part of the grant proposal and all components must be reviewed and approved by DEACS before printing and distributing.

How Grant Funds Work

Available Funding

The maximum amount of grant funding available per Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant project is **\$25,000**. There is no minimum funding requirement for project proposals.

Cash Match

Local government grant winners must provide a cash match equal to or exceeding 10% of the requested grant funding. For example, a grantee requesting a \$10,000 grant must match at least \$1,000 with local funds for a total project cost of \$11,000.

Contract Period

Successful grant applicants will be required to enter a grant contract with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The resultant grant contract period will be one year. Grantees

must spend funds within the contract period unless the grant contract end date is extended by written agreement between the applicant and the DEQ. Extensions are possible but not guaranteed. All purchases associated with grant funds 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.**

How to Submit a Proposal

Grant proposals must be submitted by email to madeline.joslin@deg.nc.gov. Receipt of all acceptable proposals will be acknowledged by email. **If you do not receive a confirmation, contact Madeline Joslin at 919-707-8331 as soon as possible.** It is the responsibility of anyone submitting a proposal to contact DEACS if they do not receive a confirmation. Please submit electronic versions of proposals as Microsoft Word (preferred) or Adobe (PDF) files.

Deadline for Proposals

Proposals will be received by DEACS on a rolling basis until available funding is expended and this RFP is closed. Grant proposals will be evaluated in the order in which they were received. Grant contracts will only be initiated once all requirements are met.

Conditions of Submittals

- Only one proposal per eligible entity will be accepted.
- Multi-party initiatives such as joint projects involving two or more applicants where each applicant contributes towards project funding are encouraged. Any group participating in a multi-party project proposal may not submit additional proposals. Applicants may partner with organizations not eligible for grant funding, so long as the primary applicant meets eligibility requirements.
- 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.
- Applicants with previous or current DEACS recycling grants are eligible to apply as long as any open grants are in good standing and expected to be completed on time.

How Are Proposals Evaluated?

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

1. **Planning (0-35 points):** Did the project description include all necessary elements as outlined in the Required Proposal Questions? Are details of the program clearly planned and outlined with a strategy for addressing issues and evaluating success? Does the project incorporate paper cup recycling best management practices?

2. **Education (0-25 points):** Do the outreach / educational materials utilize images and provide clear and concise information about accepted recyclables? Does the project include messaging to ensure proper paper cup recycling (empty, no lids or straws)?
3. **Project Impact (0-20 points):** What is the expected impact of this project? How many households or businesses does this project expect to reach?
4. **Efficiency (0-20 points):** Will the program be implemented and operated in an efficient and cost-effective manner? Will the proposed outreach materials educate the public about general recycling guidelines in addition to paper cups?

A Final Word on Grant Writing

Proposals may receive low scores or even be rejected because applicants fail to follow the instructions outlined in this document. Applicants stand a better chance of success if they address all the [Required Proposal Questions](#). Project descriptions should be clear, concise, and should demonstrate thoughtful planning. Poorly prepared proposals create uncertainty about the project goals and intended results. Clear details will provide grant proposal reviewers confidence about the viability and feasibility of a proposal. Applicants with questions are encouraged to contact Madeline Joslin at madeline.joslin@deq.nc.gov.

If Selected for Funding

Applicants selected to receive grant funding will be notified by DEACS with a formal offer by email. The applicant must accept or decline the offer.

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.
- 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.

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.
- Provide your federal tax ID number.
- 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

- **Substitute W-9 Form**

- 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 community 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 printed on recycled paper containing at least 30 percent post-consumer content.
- **Quarterly Check-ins:** Your assigned DEACS grant manager 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 will be expected to evaluate program success and must include data about the amount of recycling being collected through the program and the impact of the outreach project (e.g., number of households or businesses reached).
- **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.
- **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. Reimbursement requests must be submitted in writing, must include copies of invoices, 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. 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. **Purchases made before a grant contract is signed by both NCDEQ and the grant recipient will not be reimbursed.**
- **Final 10% of Funds:** DEACS will reimburse grantees 90% of eligible grant funds, withholding the final 10% reimbursement until an acceptable final report has been received by DEACS. The final report must be received and approved prior to the end date of the contract.

Paper Cup Recycling Education Grant

Required Proposal Questions

The following outline indicates what applicants must include in their proposal for it to be considered complete. Proposals that fail to provide all the required information or that fail to follow the following format will be deemed inadequate and may not be 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

Project Description:

Provide responses to each of the following prompts below. Applicants are encouraged to provide a clear project description and consider the [Award Criteria](#) as they describe the project elements.

1. Describe the proposed project and identify specifically what items (and how many) you intend to purchase with grant funds.
2. State the MRF that will receive recyclables for sorting and marketing. What communication have you had with them regarding paper cups?
3. Provide a list of the recyclable materials accepted by the program. Are paper cups already included in your accepted materials list or will they be a new addition?
4. What is the anticipated service life for the items or materials to be purchased with grant funds (e.g., how long ads will run, brochures will last, signage will last)?
5. What audience are you seeking to reach with this project? How will you educate the audience about proper paper cup recycling (empty, with no lids or straws)?
6. How and where will outreach materials be distributed? Are you targeting specific populations, residential or commercial areas?
7. Describe any partnerships associated with the proposed project (e.g., businesses, schools, HOAs, nonprofits). Please include documentation of support from any partner entities.

8. What is the estimated impact of this project (e.g., number of households or businesses reached, increased tonnage)?
9. What is your plan for monitoring and addressing contamination?

Letter of Support:

All proposals must include a letter from the MRF stating the acceptance of paper cups as well as the full list of accepted recyclables.

Project Timeline:

A bulleted list showing project milestones and general implementation dates. The recommended contract start date is at least 90 days after proposal submittal. Please follow the example below:

- July 1, 2027: Contract start date
- July 31, 2027: Accepted recyclables list updated and published on webpage
- August 2027: Bin and sign labels developed in coordination with DEACS
- December 2027: Brochures printed and purchased
- May 31, 2028: Submit all invoices and draft Final Report to DEACS (*required*)
- June 1, 2028: Submit Final Report to DEACS (*required*)

Project Budget:

Submit budget tables following the samples below. The Project Elements table should include an itemized list of intended expenditures and estimated costs. Project elements should match the items listed in the Project Description. 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 10% of grant funds.

Sample Project Elements	Estimated Cost
Magnets (Printing)	\$6,000
Labels for Bins and Signs for Recycling Sites	\$2,000
Program Brochures (Printing)	\$3,000
Total Project Budget	\$11,000

Sample Project Budget Allocation	Budget Share
Total Project Budget	\$11,000
State Grant Request	\$10,000
Applicant Cash Match (10%)	\$1,000

*Note: State and local sales taxes are not reimbursable expenditures and should not be included as part of grant budgets.