

Recycling Market Development Grants: Frequently Asked Questions

Application process

Q: *Will you help me write my grant proposal?*

A: Although the agency does not assist in the writing of grant proposals, we do provide links in the proposal narrative on information/resources that can help you with business plans.

Q: *Do I have to include a business plan?*

A: Yes. We realize that not all applicants will have a formal “business plan,” such as solid waste management districts, schools, and cities/towns/municipalities. However, IDEM would expect a document summarizing many of those same elements, such as the background of the entity, current financial operations (such as the ability to charge fees, raise taxes, etc.), budget and operating expenses, and what the requested funding will allow that could not be accomplished currently.

Q: *Can I apply more than once?*

A: Only one proposal project is eligible for funding. For example, you could decide that you need equipment and outreach funding and submit two separate proposals, respectively. Both are eligible, but the board would consider only one for possible funding.

Q: *I noticed that you are accepting electronic copies. Can I still drop off a binder of information? I have a business plan already prepared with color photos!*

A: Although IDEM appreciates detailed presentations, this year we are requesting paperless grant proposals, allowing applicants to explain their projects in a narrative saved in Microsoft Word or a PDF and then uploaded to the agency. The agency will accept hard copies in special circumstances only, such as an undue burden for the applicant. But the agency may limit the amount of material and format. For example, no binders will be accepted.

Also note, the e-mail box limit is 25 megabytes (MB) of information per submission. Keep this in mind so that you will not have several attachments to supplement your proposal.

Q: *Do I have to be present at the board meeting to receive funding?*

A: Yes. Staff present the proposals to the RMDB members who often have specific questions or clarifications needed regarding a project.

Financial considerations

Q: *What does a 50-50 match mean?*

A: A 50-50 match or 50 percent match means that applicants must demonstrate they have available funds to pay for the entire project, and then the state will match 50 percent of the eligible costs up to \$500,000. For example, if you were purchasing a plastic pelletizing system for \$1 million and each part of that system was eligible for funding, an applicant may apply for the entire \$500,000.

Q: *Can I match part of the 50-50 match with another grant?*

A: Yes, as long as the outside grant funding has been awarded and is not matched with other state funds. Acknowledgement by an outside funding source that an application has merely been received or preliminarily meets eligibility criteria does not constitute approval of funding and will not be considered a match.

Q: *Can I match with in-kind funding?*

A: No. Funding must be a cash match. A cash match does include matching grant funding, if the funding has been approved, as explained earlier.

Q: *Can I use the funding to cover someone's salary or hire a consultant?*

A: No.

Q: *I am currently receiving economic development assistance (tax breaks) from the state of Indiana. Can I still apply?*

A: Yes. The board will take this into consideration, as funding rounds are competitive. But this does not disqualify you from seeking a grant through the RMDP.

Q: *How long does the entire process take after I turn in my proposal?*

A: The deadline for proposals is October 17, 2016 at noon (ET). Once you have submitted a proposal, RMDP staff will review the information for completeness. If eligible and complete, proposals will be submitted to the Recycling Market Development Board members who will award funding on December 1, 2016. If your project is allotted funding, a contract will be forwarded for review and signature within 30 days. You will have 30 days to sign and return said contract. The contract then enters the state's contract finalization process. The target date for approval and funding to be available is March 2017.

Q: *If I receive approval from the board at the meeting, am I free to move forward with my project?*

A: No. The contract must be fully executed—finalized through the state signature process—before a project may begin.

Eligibility considerations

Q: *Are not for profits eligible?*

A: Yes. As noted earlier, you must show that matching funding is available for this grant round. This includes public/private partnerships.

Q: *Are improvements to my recycling facility eligible for funding?*

A: Retrofitting equipment, improvements to a docking system or sorting area are eligible. Aesthetic improvements to a facility are not.

Q: *Can I purchase property with the grant?*

A: No.

Q: *Can I buy promotional items made of recyclable materials?*

A: A complete outreach plan would be required with your proposal. This would include details regarding materials to be purchased, their use, and how they would increase recycling. Giveaways made from recycled materials or company promotions on t-shirts are discouraged. Campaigns to increase participation, such as marketing area recycling locations or collecting a particular material will be considered if they demonstrate the consumer/manufacturer/product loop.

Q: *Can I request funding to supplement existing costs of a municipal recycling program?*

A: No. Proposals for funding should work to expand or create new recycling opportunities to better manage the municipal solid waste stream.

Q: *If I sell recycled products, such as recycled plastic bottles and containers, can I receive funding for my business?*

A: At this time the RMDP is focusing on collection, recycling, or manufacturing of recyclable materials, feedstocks or products. This is something we will keep in mind for funding parameters next year.

Equipment considerations

Q: *Can I buy recycling bins?*

A: Yes. You will need to demonstrate a need for the bins through the consumer/manufacturer/product loop. In other words, the proposal should show how bins will increase recycling in your area, who will collect the recyclables, where recyclables will be processed, and for what products the materials could be used.

Q: *My class would like to get recycling bins for our classroom to help increase recycling. Is this eligible?*

A: Yes, but you would need to have a proposal for your entire school or better yet, the district or corporation of which your school is a member. As mentioned earlier, the proposals need to show the consumer, manufacturer, product loop. This could include a business plan that shows how the company that picks up the school trash/recyclables will agree to begin or increase recycling, how the materials will be separated and processed, and how much more was actually collected. In this way, Indiana can track students' hard work toward increasing our recycling goal.

Q: *Can I buy equipment to make mulch or compost?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Can I buy equipment to make wood pellets for fuel?*

A: Projects that involve preparing material for a final disposal, such as landfilling or incineration are not considered part of the waste management cycle of reducing at the source, reusing or recycling. For waste to energy projects, please check with the Indiana Office of Energy Development for possible assistance.

Q: *Are pick-up trucks and other vehicles such as forklifts eligible for funding?*

A: In general, no. Pick-up trucks and construction equipment are not recycling proprietary items. Proposals including roll off boxes or nontransferable mobile shredding equipment have been considered.

Q: *I work for a city. Can we buy an automatic loader truck to take in single stream collection?*

A: Although the intent of the grant funding is to increase recycling and collection, offsetting purchases of vehicles is not. Vehicles are mobile pieces of equipment and because their continued use for recycling collection only, or use in Indiana only, cannot be guaranteed, the state has not provided funding for such proposals.

Q: *If I have already purchased equipment, can I apply for funding to offset the cost?*

A: No.

Q: *If I am renting equipment, can I apply for funding?*

A: IDEM discourages this, as the amount that you have already paid would have to be subtracted from the total equipment cost to determine what is eligible for the funding match.

Q: *What if I buy new equipment to rent; is that eligible?*

A: No.

Technical considerations

Q: *Can I recycle a hazardous material, such as solvents in a closed loop system?*

A: Although IDEM will consider funding to assist with household hazardous waste outreach and collection programs, funding to recycle solvents and hazardous materials has not been available because they have not been considered part of the municipal solid waste stream.

Q: *Is funding available for a reuse water system?*

A: No. Although this is commendable this is not considered part of the municipal solid waste stream.