

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. Previous grant award recipients may not reapply until one year after the funded project was completed.

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, we request 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: It is recommended. The RMDB members 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 Friday, May 25, 2018 at 5 p.m. (ET). Once you have submitted a proposal, RMDP staff will review the information for completeness. If eligible and complete, proposals will be forwarded to the Recycling Market Development Board members who will award funding on August 23, 2018. If your project is allotted funding, a grant agreement will be forwarded for review and signature within 30 days. You will have 30 days to sign and return said agreement. The agreement then enters the state's contract finalization process.

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

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

Eligibility considerations

Q: *Are nonprofits 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 equipment to make wood pellets for fuel?*

A: No. 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 waste to energy or trash to fuel projects eligible?*

A: No. These are not municipal solid waste management recycling practices, but preparing materials for a final disposal.

Q: *Are projects for tire derived fuel eligible?*

A: No. Again, the policy of the state is that source reduction, recycling and other solid waste management alternatives are preferred over incineration and landfill disposal as solid waste management methods. Please check with the Indiana Office of Energy Development for possible assistance.

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. The RMDP goal is to assist projects sustainable after the funding is awarded.

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.

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 a sustainable program by understanding 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: *Are vehicles such as pick-up trucks or automatic loader trucks eligible for funding?*

A: In general, no. 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. Trucks are not recycling proprietary items. However, the board has considered proposals including roll off boxes or nontransferable mobile shredding equipment, specifically dedicated to only recycling. Such requests must indicate how the vehicle is tied to the recycling project and how it affords the project to remain sustainable. The intent of the grant funding is to increase recycling and collection; not offsetting purchases of vehicles.

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.

Other 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 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.

Q: *We would like to hold a recycling contest at our school. Students would bring in recyclables for the spring session and then the winning class would be rewarded with a party and gift cards in the fall. Would your program pay for food, renting a facility and these cards?*

A: No. Cash payments are ineligible costs. In addition, although exciting, competitions do not promote a long term sustainability program.

Q: *We would like to hold a tire collection on the 4th of July. Different municipalities and local fire departments would emcee the event. Would your program match funding for security and the collection company we hire?*

A: No. It is difficult for the state to match funding for things such as household hazardous waste collections or e-waste collections because they are one-time events, and not sustainable. Liability coverage and/or salaries are ineligible costs.