Request for Proposal: 2023 TrashBlitz Community Fund

About TrashBlitz

**Organizational Background:** Since its inception in 2009, 5 Gyres Institute has been a science-based pioneer in ocean plastic pollution research and exploration. Our founders originally set out to answer key scientific questions, including how much plastic is in the oceans and what are the effects. After our early expeditions, we published the first global estimate of marine plastic pollution, documenting 5.25 trillion plastic particles weighing over 250,000 metric tons across the world’s oceans. We have since completed 19 expeditions and released a comprehensive global estimate integrating the largest data set to date on ocean plastics, finding more than a tenfold increase in ocean plastics globally. Now, through a science lens, we are taking our learnings “upstream” to inform effective solutions to reduce plastics pollution closer to the source.

**Program Summary:** The 5 Gyres Institute is a small organization with a global mission to stop the threat of plastic pollution. Community scientists, grassroots coalitions, and community leaders are our greatest champions towards driving greater local impact. TrashBlitz initiatives can function as a catalyst for increasing environmental stewardship, coalition building, and policy change with the ultimate goal of reducing disposable plastics and implementing a reuse and refill culture within a community.

5 Gyres’ TrashBlitz research platform is a global, community science-based tool that engages stakeholders in identifying specific plastic types and brands of waste found to formulate reduction strategies in a region. Our most recent activations were TrashBlitz Austin, which led to the creation of the Austin Reuse Coalition, and Plastic-Free National Parks, which is being used as evidentiary support for the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act. TrashBlitz has become a model for amplifying local plastic reduction efforts through data and policy support.

**3-Year Goal:** In 2023-26, we plan to expand our TrashBlitz program to six new cities/regions, reaching around 9 million people, by providing on the ground support and resources to emerging coalitions working to reduce single-use plastic in their communities. As active members of numerous advocacy coalitions, we will always stay engaged in single-use plastics as a core sector of the plastic pollution problem.

Together with our partners, we aim to continue to build a comprehensive dataset to be used in identifying, tracking, and monitoring localized solutions to reduce plastics (*All data will be submitted to BFFP Global Brand Audits*). We recognize that there is no one-size fits all solution, and that real change takes time and investment.
Proven Examples:

Los Angeles, CA
The results from the pilot TrashBlitz inspired the Reusable LA coalition to pivot their focus to a comprehensive single-use plastic phase-out in Los Angeles. With 5 Gyres’ leadership, three plastics reduction ordinances were passed in Los Angeles City and County in just four years, and we continue to support LA City on its multi-year phaseout process. The coalition that organized and rebranded as a direct result of TrashBlitz LA successfully:

● guided LA County to adopt a plastics ordinance for unincorporated areas, reaching 1.1 million people.
● supported LA City in adopting 14 plastics-related ordinances, impacting 4 million people and 32,000 restaurants.

Austin, TX
We partnered with local groups in Austin, TX to produce a TrashBlitz report identifying that single-use plastic foodware was a major contributor to Austin’s waste footprint. As a direct result, 5 Gyres committed to the pursuit of waste reduction locally with community leaders, businesses, municipal staff, and NGO partners. This culminated in the creation of a new organized group, the Austin Reuse Coalition, which supports restaurants in reducing their plastic footprint and transitioning to reusables.

Break Free From Plastic Global Brand Audits
Over the past 5 years, we partnered with Break Free From Plastic on their Global Brand Audits, using our TrashBlitz research platform to help identify the top corporate polluters globally. This community science data puts pressure on big corporations and brands, like Coca-Cola, that have expressed a commitment to reducing their plastic footprint and replacing virgin plastic with post-consumer (recycled) material.

TrashBlitz Community Fund
The issue of plastic pollution is understood and felt globally, and it continues to remain a growing concern that can’t be solved individually and uniformly due to its complexity. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it is through collaboration and networking that we can learn from one another and have the biggest impact. Plastic pollution activists are growing in numbers all over the world, and supporting local groups in building plastic pollution landscape analyses and brand audits relevant to their communities can drive solutions.
To better support our local champions, we are implementing a new RFP process to award two groups with $5,000 USD each to execute a TrashBlitz in their region and develop a report. In addition to the funding, 5 Gyres will support the coalitions with a toolkit of templated outreach materials, volunteer training, logistical support, including mapping and data analysis, and report production support.

Our long-term goal is to continue expanding and supporting coalitions and others through several grants of $5,000 each. This funding can have a big impact when put into the right hands, and local organizations are better suited to making real change in their communities.

**RFP Requirements**

- Must be a 501c3 organization or coalition of groups and individuals working on plastic pollution reduction, circular economy or reuse/refill implementation, and/or toxics reduction/monitoring
  - Provide overview, location, website, and other relevant contact information
- Must be willing to commit to a 3-8 month project timeline
- Recommended to already have an established volunteer base
- Recommended to have a larger goal or policy change identified
- Must be located within the United State (or US Territories and Freely Associated States)

**Application Process:**

There will be an informative webinar and Q&A for applicants on Thursday, March 7 at 11:00am PT, followed by a recording for those who cannot attend. Register [HERE](#). Applicants will be asked to submit information via this online form: [https://www.5gyres.org/trashblitz-community-application](https://www.5gyres.org/trashblitz-community-application). Applications will be reviewed 5 Gyres, and preference will be given to Environmental Justice or BIPOC-led groups, those operating in states with preemption laws, and/or work being conducted within frontline/fenceline communities.

Deadline for submission is **March 17**, and applicants will be notified of their status on March 27. The two selected awardees will complete an MOU with 5 Gyres and receive the $5,000 award in two payments.

*For all questions, please contact Alison Waliszewski at alison@5gyres.org.*