

This document outlines best practices for government agencies interested in launching reuse-focused grant programs. The goal is to encourage and grow the number of reuse-focused grant programs and to provide practical tips for developing a successful program.

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# Best Practices for Government Reuse Grant Programs

*Last updated December 2024*

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## Introduction

Grants are a widely used instrument to invest in and encourage businesses, organizations, and communities to improve materials and solid waste management. Traditionally, materials and solid waste management grants administered by government entities have focused on “end-of-life” management and resource recovery, namely through recycling and composting. While grants have grown infrastructure, programming, and education in these areas, it is time for government entities to move their focus up the waste hierarchy to waste reduction and reuse.

This document outlines best practices for state and local government agencies interested in launching reuse-focused grant programs. The goal is to encourage more reuse-focused grant programs given the clear environmental benefit of investing in these efforts and to provide practical tips for how to develop a successful program. The development of this document includes research and examples from around the United States where government entities have already started to implement reuse grant programs.

## Sec. 1: Definitions

**“Circular economy”** means a systemic approach to economic development where environmental and climate impacts are minimized, waste generation is minimized, products and materials are maintained and kept in use longer, and natural systems are protected and regenerated.

**“Climate or environmental justice”** means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**“Deconstruction”** means the systematic dismantling of a structure, typically in the opposite order it was constructed, from roof to foundation, in order to maximize the salvage

of materials for reuse in preference over recycling, energy recovery, or sending the materials to the landfill.

**“Equity”** means ensuring that all people, regardless of who they are and where they live, have the opportunity to thrive, with full and equal access to opportunities, power, and resources.

**“Inclusion”** is involvement and empowerment, where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized. An inclusive review board & grantee selection process will promote and sustain a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members.

**“Redistribute”** means to divert a product from its intended market to another customer so it is used at high value instead of becoming waste.\*

**“Refillable Packaging”** is packaging designed to be refilled by consumers multiple times for the same or similar purpose in its original format, and that is sold or provided to consumers once for the duration of its usable life.

**“Refurbish”** means returning a product to good working order. This can include repairing or replacing components, updating specifications, and improving cosmetic appearance.\*

**“Remanufacture”** means re-engineering products and components to as-new condition with the same, or improved, level of performance as a newly manufactured one.\*

**“Repair”** is an operation by which a faulty or broken product or component is returned back to a usable state to fulfil its intended use.\*

**“Returnable Reusable Packaging”** is packaging designed to be recirculated multiple times for the same or similar purpose in its original format in a system for reuse, that is owned and maintained by producers or a third party and is returned to producers or a third party after each use.

**“Reusable”** means a product or packaging that is designed to be refillable or returnable and/or is part of a system that achieves multiple uses, equitable access, reduced waste, and net benefits for the health of all beings and the planet.

**“Reuse”** is an essential aspect of circular economy strategies to extend the life of products and materials through resale, rental, and sharing models; systems that accommodate returnable or refillable packaging, subsequent to the initial use of the packing or food service ware for its original purpose.

**“Waste prevention”** is the reduction of the quantity of waste generated by reducing the production, distribution, or utilization of materials or by transitioning material use to reusable formats.

**“Zero waste”** means designing and managing products and processes to promote the highest and best use of materials, reducing the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, emphasizing a closed-loop system of production and consumption, and promoting low-impact or reduced consumption lifestyles. While 100% “zero waste” isn’t possible, this concept and resulting strategies is advancing efforts to reduce climate and environmental impacts of materials and waste.

The above definitions reflect Upstream’s recommended language, however, government agencies may vary in their statutory definitions of reuse, refill, waste prevention, etc. Grant issuers may wish to align definitions with relevant state, province, or territory legislation, such as packaging Extended Producer Responsibility.

*\*Definitions from the Ellen MacArthur Foundation’s [Finding a common language – the circular economy glossary](#).*

## Sec. 2: Purpose of Grant Program

The primary purpose of most government reuse grant programs is waste prevention and reducing environmental impacts. Reuse extends the life of products and packaging which reduces the consumption of natural resources. Some other benefits grant programs may highlight include:

- **Reducing climate impacts and protecting human health** through reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.
- **Stimulating economic activity** by keeping valuable resources in use and creating local job opportunities.
- **Reducing costs** associated with the end-of-life management of materials and ongoing purchasing of single-use products and packaging.
- **Conserving landfill space** and reducing the need to build additional capacity at existing or new landfills.
- **Increasing equitable access, participation, and benefits** for marginalized communities that have historically been overlooked and under supported with reuse opportunities.
- **Encouraging innovation** through testing or expanding new approaches, systems, or technologies that increase reuse.
- **Strengthening partnerships** with community leaders working to build and grow the foundation for reuse in the local community.
- **Building community** through providing opportunities to share resources and engage with one another.

## Example Language

The purpose of this reuse grant program is to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change and emissions of toxic particulates—impacts which disproportionately burden communities of color. The program also supports efforts to advance racial equity in the solid waste system, by expanding services and employment opportunities for underserved communities and reducing harms from facility operations.

The main goal of the program is to strengthen local efforts to reduce waste, continue using materials at their highest and best value, and help foster new economic opportunities particularly for communities of color.

Projects funded by these grants are intended to:

- Reduce harmful environmental and health impacts by reducing the amount and toxicity of waste associated with products produced, consumed, and discarded in the region.
- Advance equity by creating benefits from the solid waste system for historically marginalized groups including career opportunities, expanded access to waste-related services, and reduced harms from garbage and recycling operations; and by developing the capacity of businesses and organizations in the solid waste system to create more equitable workplaces.
- Build system resilience by strengthening, improving and increasing the capacity of the region's waste prevention and reuse/repair infrastructure and workforce.
- Catalyze innovation by encouraging projects that test or expand new strategies.

## Sec. 3: Applicant Eligibility

Applicant eligibility refers to who is able to apply for project funding through a reuse grant program. Defining the purpose of a reuse grant program may naturally narrow the applicant pool depending on whether the focus is on a specific industry, product category, or material type. For example, if a grant program focuses solely on replacing single-use foodware with reusable alternatives, applicants will include entities that produce and/or serve food and beverages. Alternatively, if a grant program is working to reduce the environmental and climate impacts of buildings through reuse (preservation, maintenance, adaptive reuse, structural moving, or deconstruction), applicant eligibility will include building owners, contractors, and reuse retailers.

When first launching a reuse grant program, consider hosting sessions with external entities to determine the needs and interested parties for grant funding. Alternatively, start with fewer restrictions on eligibility as a pilot, particularly if there is limited funding, and see the types of applicants that submit projects before determining if there should be more specific eligibility criteria.

While developing a reuse grant program, there are a few elements that can initially be used for defining applicant eligibility:

- Determining eligibility based on a geographic/location requirement corresponding to the government entity's jurisdiction or focusing on a specific community like an environmental justice area of concern or historically underserved neighborhood(s)
- Determining eligibility based on the type of entity (e.g., state, local, and tribal governments, educational and research institutions, for-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, etc.)

## Example Language

### Broad applicant eligibility

Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, businesses, institutions, political subdivisions of the state (including counties, cities, towns, etc.), state agencies, and tribal governments. Multi-organizational collaboration is encouraged.

### Focus on public entities, specifically rural and small communities

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, townships, and tribes located outside of the metro area. Cities must have a population of less than 45,000 to be eligible.

### Focus on entities excluding local government

Eligible applicants include small businesses, community-based organizations, non-profits, tribal governments, universities/colleges, and self-employed individuals. This grant is not intended for local governments, but they may partner on a joint application with other eligible applicants. Eligible applicants can choose to apply individually or jointly with others for a grant.

### Focus on specific sectors

Eligible applicants include businesses and non-profit organizations that repair, refurbish, or resell common consumer goods like clothing, electronics, and furniture.

## Sec. 4: Project Eligibility

The project eligibility should be aligned with the primary purpose of the reuse grant program — to **reduce environmental impacts and waste generation through reuse systems, infrastructure, and education and skills-training**. Consider the following reuse-specific criteria for project eligibility when developing a grant program:

- **Waste prevention:** Eligible projects must prevent or reduce waste through reuse, refill, repair, sharing, renting, reselling, donating, refurbishment, remanufacturing, deconstruction, redistribution, etc.
- **Product or material focuses:** Eligible projects may address reuse related to a specific product or material type ( e.g., packaging, food serviceware, textiles, electronics, building materials, etc.). To prevent funding projects that may be greenwashing materials under the guise of reuse, consider consulting the [Design Principles for Materials used in Reusable Packaging & Foodware Services](#) and other resources to identify priority material types.

Other criteria to review when defining overall project eligibility, separate from the reuse focus, include:

- System scope for a certain industry, community, or jurisdictional boundary (See Sec. 3 for Applicant Eligibility)
- Time scope for grant funding limits
- Type of project and whether early stage pilots and research are eligible vs. established operational or infrastructure development
- Type of costs and whether there are restrictions on activities like general operating expenses (i.e., only new projects are funded), lobbying, purchasing food and/or alcoholic beverages, lease or rental of real property, etc.



Before launching a reuse grant program, discuss the types of projects the agency or department would like to support. This can also include identifying priority projects or materials that will receive extra points during the application evaluation based on agency or department focuses or the greatest needs in the community. It is helpful to provide examples of eligible projects in program materials, such as:

- A community-based non-profit organization wants to organize clothing repair and swap events.
- A start-up wants to develop a community-based sharing platform for outdoor equipment.
- A reusable cup vendor wants to conduct a pilot with a local concert venue.

Additionally, it is helpful to provide examples of projects that would not be eligible for funding, such as:

- Recycling, composting, waste-to-energy, anaerobic digestion, or litter clean-up projects.
- Projects that only prevent waste for an individual or a single business/organization.
- Projects seeking funding for environmental compliance remediation.
- Creation of reusable merchandise that is not part of a tracked reuse program

## Example Language

### Eligible projects

Applications must set out how the project supports the core objectives of the reuse grant program and must have outcomes that are aligned with waste prevention and reuse. Eligible projects include:

- Projects that increase access to reuse programs and develop or build reuse infrastructure and systems.
- Projects that stimulate demand for reused materials and products.
- Reuse projects that benefit frontline communities or those communities that often experience the earliest and most acute impacts of climate change, face historic and current inequities, and have limited resources and/or capacity to adapt.

### Priority materials

Projects that address the prevention and reuse of single-use items, packaging, food service-ware, and textiles will be awarded higher points in the grant scoring process. Applications can also address other materials but will likely need to demonstrate significant benefits to be awarded grant funding.

### Scope

Projects must either be taking place in or supporting communities in the county/city or directly reducing materials being sent to the county's landfill.

### Type of project

- Projects must be ready for commercialization.
- Research projects and feasibility studies are not eligible.
- Pilot projects with proof of concept are eligible.

## Sec. 5: Funding & Match Amounts

### Program funding

Any grant funding invested in reuse is a net positive, even smaller dollar amounts. There are options for starting with smaller pilot grant rounds or implementing microgrants that can be successful with less program funding overall. Nationally, government reuse grant programs currently have program funding ranging from \$120,000 – \$2,000,000 per annual grant round cycle.

### Grant project limits

Several factors can influence the limits (minimum and maximum) for grant funding per project, including the total program funding available, staff capacity for grant reviews and management, community need/interest, and reuse program focus. For example, if there is a smaller program funding amount, decent staff capacity, and a focus on reuse operations and training instead of reuse infrastructure, a microgrant program (up to \$10,000 per project) may be a good fit. Alternatively, if there is a larger total program funding amount, limited staff capacity, and a focus on reuse infrastructure needs, consider setting a higher grant funding minimum to have fewer, larger projects.

When first launching a reuse grant program, consider starting without funding limits to see the requested amounts submitted by applicants before establishing ongoing program limits. If most of the grants are smaller amounts (<\$1,000 – \$25,000), a microgrant program may be more suitable. If larger grant amounts (>\$25,000 – \$500,000) are requested in the applications, consider keeping the requirements broad to address both large infrastructure projects and small operational projects.

### Match

Match refers to the non-grant share of costs that the grantee is responsible for contributing to accomplish the outcomes and goals of the grant. Match is often allowed as a direct

dollar match or as in-kind contributions, leveraging staff hours, resources, volunteer hours, cost sharing, or covering costs essential to the program but outside the scope of grant funding. Current government reuse grant programs approach match in a variety of ways – some programs have opted for match to be an optional component of the application budget to ensure it isn't a barrier to apply, others only require match from for-profit businesses and colleges/universities, and others require match across the board. For those requiring match from some or all grantees, the typical range is a 20–25% match.

### Eligible/Ineligible costs

When drafting grant program materials, identify cost eligibility for different categories of work and purchases. This may come directly from the organization's grant policies or from legislation related to the specific grant or all grants administered through the organization.

- **Eligible costs:** Typically eligible expenses for reuse grants include staff time (for project implementation, management, research, outreach/education, training facilitation, etc.) and equipment and material purchasing (e.g., tools and supplies for repair, reusables to replace single-use items, equipment for washing reusables, inventory software for a sharing library or rental system, etc.). Costs that may be eligible include mileage/parking during a project, overhead costs, food and drink during project activities, space rental, and certain professional services.
- **Ineligible costs:** Costs that are typically not eligible include costs related to more standard waste management (recycling, organics, collection, disposal, waste to energy), costs tied to the grant application, debts, legal costs, compliance/remediation costs, costs for permitting, lobbying, and fundraising.

## Example Language

### Program funding and grant project limits

There is a total of \$1.8 million in grant funding available for reuse projects and applications may range from \$20,000 to \$300,000 per project.

### Match

For-profit businesses and colleges/universities are required to share in the costs of grant-funded reuse projects and leverage the public investment by contributing a minimum of 20% of the grant amount. For example, a \$10,000 grant would require the applicant to contribute at least \$2,000 in value to the project. This match may be cash or in-kind contributions (i.e., donated professional services, volunteer time, donated use of space, etc.), or a combination of both. Match may not be the costs associated with preparing this grant application.

There is no match requirement for non-profit organizations.

### Eligible expenses

The following are examples of expenses you may include in your reuse project grant request:

- Staff time (may include overhead)
- Stipends and other incentives for participation
- Supplies, materials, and equipment
- Services such as interpretation, printing, and design
- Space rentals
- Food and drink for project activities, excluding alcoholic beverages

- Mileage and parking (valued at the current federal mileage rate)
- Fiscal agent fees (up to 10% of the grant request), where the fiscal agent takes responsibility for receiving and administering grant funds for the project

### Ineligible expenses

Ineligible costs for your reuse project include, but are not limited to:

- The cost of preparing the grant application
- The cost of activities initiated and costs incurred prior to the execution of a grant agreement
- The cost of environmental compliance remediation (i.e. permit fees, enforcement actions or financial penalty payments, etc.)
- The purchase of real property (land, real estate, and buildings), or easements; however, if not incurred prior to execution of a grant agreement, such costs may count toward the required match percentage.
- The cost of obtaining any required permits
- The cost of any of the following: fundraising; lobbying, lobbyists, and political contributions; entertainment, gifts; and bad debt, late payment fees and finance charges
- Any costs associated with other management methods besides waste reduction and reuse (including recycling, composting, waste-to-energy, anaerobic digestion, land-filling, etc.)

*(Note: Ineligible costs do not count toward the required matching funds percentage unless stated otherwise.)*



## Sec. 6: Schedule

Grant program schedules vary significantly and depend heavily on the resources and timelines of the awarding agency or department. In some cases, aspects of the schedule may be defined in legislation that originally formed the grant program or through overarching grant policies and procedures. When starting a reuse grant program, be realistic about the time needed to successfully complete each phase of the process and also ensure timelines do not present barriers for certain applicants to submit a proposal.

Depending on the type of reuse grant program, a rolling application process may be more successful. This will typically be when grant projects are for more consistent funding requests, when grant projects are shorter term and may have less lead time as a part of other related work (e.g., grant to purchase reused building materials for residential building renovation projects), and when the grant award is a set amount (e.g., grant to purchase \$500 of reusable foodware for a restaurant). After building the timeline, post it alongside the grant materials to ensure transparency, including expected dates for responses and decisions.

## Example Language

- **January 3:** Call for applications posted and application period opened
- **January 11:** Optional informational webinar
- **January 27:** Optional virtual office hours for 1:1 support for interested applicants
- **February 15:** Pre-proposals due with shortened application
- **March 14:** Responses to pre-proposals sent (invites to submit a full application or declines)
- **April 12 & 14:** Optional virtual office hours for 1:1 support for applicants
- **May 2:** Full proposals due
- **June 30:** Grant award notifications sent
- **August 31:** Grant agreements executed
- **September 5:** Projects begin with deadline to be completed within two years of the grant agreement execution date

## Sec. 7: Application Process

There are several options for formatting and publishing a grant application, including written (grant management software, editable PDFs, Microsoft Word documents, etc.) and video applications. Some of these methods may provide greater accessibility than others depending on your desired audience. It is best practice to make the reuse grant application process as accessible as possible for as many populations as possible.

Depending on your reuse grant program scope and focus, considering non-traditional application formats such as videos can be a good option to attract organizations that may be smaller with only a few employees (i.e., small repair shops) or organizations that do not typically apply for grants (i.e., restaurants). These organizations often do not have a grant manager and therefore it is useful to prioritize simplicity.

Providing support throughout the application process through informational webinars and office hours for one-on-one feedback on how to improve applications can also make your reuse grant program more accessible.

If possible, consider allowing applicants to submit their grant applications in their native language.

You may also consider engaging community liaisons or trusted community members to help with outreach and encourage target community-based organizations and businesses to apply. Mentors may also be engaged to guide potential applicants through the process.

Allowing applicants to submit a letter of intent (LOI) before a comprehensive grant proposal can be an effective way to determine if an applicant would be eligible for the reuse grant program before putting in the time and effort to complete a full application. However, this may not be possible or ideal for certain types of grant programs (i.e., procurement grants or

small to midsize business/restaurant grants) where contact prior to full submission needs to be limited in order to avoid impartiality or where applicants' resources are limited, making it difficult to complete a letter of intent prior to the full grant submission. In order to avoid perception of impartiality, make sure the proper lawyers review your grant application procedure before launch.

Determining applicant eligibility before submitting a full grant proposal can also be done through providing guidelines, an instructional video, tips, and contact information if they would like to reach out with any questions. The application questions should be structured so that applicants realize very early on whether their application is eligible or not. It is frustrating for applicants to progress through a grant application before discovering that they or their application is not eligible.

Once you begin receiving completed applications for your reuse grant program, provide the applicants with an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application. This allows you to provide information about next steps and timelines and for the applicant to confirm their application has been received.

## Sec. 8: Application Questions

When designing your reuse grant application, be sure to identify all the information you will need to assess the applicants, as well as any information or details that could be agreed on later when drafting an agreement with a grantee. Try to balance obtaining the information you need with keeping the application questions to a minimum.

While every grant application needs to collect standard organizational and project information such as applicant and budget information, for a reuse grant program, it is important to consider including application questions that are specifically pointed towards how reuse

fits into the project goal, what outcomes and/or benefits will come from the reuse project, and which communities will be served through reuse.

When considering the budget of a project, you can include a question about how the applicant plans to use the grant funds, or choose to discuss this during the grant agreement process with the awardee. If matching funds will be required for the grant program, decide on the required percentage match, usually 20–25%, and whether these matching funds should be included in the proposed budget form or separate to reduce any confusion. Providing a budget template for applicants can be helpful.

Response limits for questions can be placed and should be disclosed to applicants either through page length limits or character limits per section. There are pros and cons to both approaches. Page length limits can create pressure to reach the maximum page length in the responses while character limits can hinder applicants' ability to provide as much information as they need to fully describe their project and goals. Short character limits can also force applicants to spend unnecessary time editing and reducing their responses to reach small limits.

A potential solution to requiring either page length limits or character limits to individual questions is to allow applicants to submit their proposal in a holistic manner, not question by question. This would involve the submission of a succinct two-page letter of interest and a comprehensive proposal where applicants are able to address all the questions and information asked for in a cohesive way. This allows applicants to expand on certain questions they feel need more explanation and succinctly answer other questions.

## Example Questions

### Applicant Information

- Organization name
- Type of organization (e.g., non-profit, business, etc.)
- Project manager/Application contact (name, title, mail, phone, email)
- Website
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Owner/CEO/Executive Director contact about the business/organization (only if useful in review)

### Project Information

- Name
- Project timeline
- Location
- Stage (e.g., research, pilot, operations, etc.)

### How did you learn about this grant program?

### Reuse Project Description/Summary

- What do you want to achieve and why?
- What issue, need, or gap is your project seeking to address?
- Which community(s) is your project serving?
- Does your project serve an environmental justice community in your area?

### How does your project align with the grant program's objectives and priorities?

**What activities do you plan to complete throughout the project? Please provide a timeline for these activities. What outcomes or benefits are you hoping to see come from your project?**

- Examples: waste diversion, education, community impact

**What barriers to the implementation of this project are you expecting and how will you address them?**

**What metrics will you use to measure the success of your project and how will you track your progress?**

**What permits, licenses, authorizations, approvals, or waivers will you need to obtain to complete your project?**

**What capacity (staffing and partnerships) will be needed to implement your project?**

**How will you sustain this work after the grant term?**

**During the grant term, are you willing to provide a project progress report and/or attend progress check in meetings?**

**How do you plan to scale or replicate this project?**

**Please provide a detailed proposed budget for your project.**

**Grant amount requested**

- Total project cost breakdown
- How do you plan to use the grant funds?
- If matching is required the source of a 20% match of the total project costs.

## Sec. 9: Selection Process

It is important that the selection process for government grants be fair and equitable and that the awarded projects best support the targeted industry or community.

The following is general guidance on structuring the selection process:

### **Guidelines for the review:**

Before reviewing applications, communicate clearly how the review process will be conducted:

- **Who are the reviewers?** It is good practice to have a diverse mix of reviewers such as subject matter experts, individuals that represent that community or business targeted, and independent reviewers. It is also preferred to have more than one person reviewing each application. Reviewers may need to sign a Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement.
- **How will the review be conducted?** Will the reviewers be evaluating each application according to specific criteria or will they just be evaluating the application as a whole? Will a scoring system be used and what scale will be used? Will reviewers also be asked to justify their evaluation and/or provide qualitative feedback?
- **When will the review be conducted?** If there are many reviewers, it is important to have a reasonable deadline for when the reviewers are able to perform their review. This is particularly important when there is a review panel discussion, where the reviewers meet to discuss their evaluations and have to make a final selection.
- Provide clear instructions and guidelines for how reviewers should address biases so that all applications are evaluated fairly.

### Pre-screening of applicants:

Before reviewers start their evaluations, the agency or department should pre-review the applications and project eligibility in order to reduce the number of applications that need to be reviewed. This can also provide an opportunity to allow applicants to submit any missing information in their applications, if during this initial review there are gaps identified in the required information submitted.

### Review of applications:

There are many different ways of reviewing applications. The following steps are suggested as a common process for ensuring a fair and equitable review:

- **Individual review:** Assign all or a portion of the received applications to reviewers. Provide clear guidelines and instructions on how the reviewers should conduct their individual evaluations and scoring of applications. Ensure there is a system to document the evaluation and scoring.
- **Review panel discussion:** Once all the individual reviews have been performed, convene the reviewers to discuss their evaluations and compare notes. Reviewers have different backgrounds, knowledge, and experiences, so it is often helpful to have an open discussion about the assumptions and biases that were applied during the evaluations. While quantitative scoring is a good approach to selecting applications, it is best to have the entire review panel work towards a consensus approach on which applications should be recommended for funding.
- **Ranking:** When requested funding amounts vary or when there might be uncertainty on the eligibility of some applications, it is helpful to propose a ranked list of applications recommended for funding.

The scores and selection of applications by an external review panel may only be a recommendation to the funding agency or department. The funding agency or department bears the full responsibility for the final selection of which applications to fund.

### Consider:

- Anonymous application submission and evaluation – applying anonymity can help ensure that applications are evaluated with less bias, but this is not always possible. Check to see if transparency of applicant information is legally required.
- What to do when the application or the information is incomplete? Should applicants have the option to provide missing information or elaborate on critical information that would change how an application is evaluated?
  - ◊ When a grant application is incomplete or missing information, the agency or department may contact the applicant and request the missing information or documentation to be able to complete a more thorough evaluation of the application. This works best for rolling applications, but may not be relevant if strict deadlines are clearly communicated.

## Sec. 10: Selection Criteria

Selection criteria is used to determine 1) whether the application is eligible for the grant and 2) which applications to fund based on how well they meet the program focus and priorities.

The selection criteria should be aligned with the primary purpose(s) of the reuse grant program, while also covering general criteria such as the project potential, feasibility, and risks. Criteria should include the costs and benefits and potential environmental and social impacts. Encourage applicants to describe, and if possible, document how the grant funding will result in concrete benefits for reuse.

The selection criteria is often directly linked to the questions asked in the application, with different weights or points assigned to each criteria based on whether certain elements are seen to be more important than others. It is good to evaluate an application from many



different perspectives (e.g., feasibility, economic, social, environmental, etc.), but bear in mind that the application process and evaluation process becomes onerous on both the applicants and the reviewers the more questions and selection criteria there are.

The selection criteria should be determined before the grant application opens and transparent to all what the selection criteria is.

## Example Language

Criteria	Maximum Points	Definition
<b>Project Overview</b>	10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly describes the business or project and timeline</li> <li>Clearly articulates the gap that is being addressed in the Jurisdiction's circular economy</li> </ul>
<b>Concept Feasibility</b>	30 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explains the need for the project, product or service, its growth potential, and does not re-create work already being done by other organizations</li> <li>Provides compelling rationale for why the project will be successful</li> <li>Project can be sustained or has lasting impacts beyond grant period</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding of costs and revenues</li> <li>Has additional funding secured if project budget exceeds available amount provided by the grant</li> <li>Has the capacity to manage the project</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Impact &amp; Justice Potential</b>	10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project targets the top of the waste hierarchy (waste reduction &amp; reuse)</li> <li>Project contributes to positive environmental impacts</li> <li>Has tangible considerations for environmental justice impacts and how to mitigate potential externalities</li> </ul>
<b>Equity Impact Potential</b>	20 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has diverse and inclusive leadership, project team, and/or partners</li> <li>Project builds capacity within overburdened communities, provides lasting benefits</li> <li>Demonstrates effort to assess community impact through community engagement and input</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Impact Potential</b>	10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates potential economic impacts such as job creation, living wages, or other positive impacts</li> </ul>
<b>Project Team / Partners</b>	20 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project team demonstrates relevant experience, background, and leadership to ensure successful implementation</li> <li>Team includes regional, local, or other partners or relationships that will contribute to project success</li> </ul>
<b>Project Budget</b>	10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget request is clear and expenses contribute to achieving the project goals</li> <li>Expenses meet eligibility guidelines</li> <li>Budget request timeline fits within the allocated funding period</li> </ul>
<b>Project Outcomes</b>	10 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcome is clearly defined</li> <li>Outcome is appropriate for the scope and scale of the project</li> </ul>

## Sec. II: Measurement & Reporting

The measurement and reporting of outcomes from reuse grant projects document impacts and capture stories to ensure the value of this investment is more easily shared. In turn, measurement and reporting often is a means for securing additional funds for waste reduction and reuse work in the future. When developing measurement requirements, consider:

- Making it accessible.
- Identifying consistent impacts across projects and programs.

### Making it accessible

As valuable as data is to showing the environmental benefit of reuse grant programs, if it is not accessible to the grantees, the collected data will not be useful. Therefore, it is essential to provide clear structure and support during the application and project implementation process. Expectations for measurement and reporting as well as examples of data collection methods and key metric calculations should be clear from the start in the application materials. Additionally, links to data resources should be included (i.e., [Waste Reduction Model \(WARM\)](#), [Chart-Reuse](#), [UP Scorecard](#), [EJScreen](#)) and be as region-specific as possible. It can also be defined in a collab-

orative process with grantees to ensure the data will be beneficial for their organization at the completion of their reuse project (e.g., for an annual report, future funding applications, etc.).

### Identifying consistent impacts across projects and programs

Historically weight-based measures have been the standard for reporting outcomes of a waste reduction or reuse project, so this is a reasonable baseline. However, weight-based measures only tell a fraction of the story especially with regards to environmental impacts. Increasingly more government grants are requesting and supporting grantees with converting the weight of waste reduced or materials reused into an impact measurement like greenhouse gas emissions avoided or reduced. For reuse models, other types of measurements that may be more effective in highlighting a successful project include tracking the number of customers or users, number of single-use items reduced, the number of returns or refills, or the number of participating organizations. Additionally, broader economic and social outcomes of a project offer an important perspective. Consistent measures across reuse projects will allow for easier comparisons and program-wide results.

## Example Language

### Data & measurement

What environmental, economic, and/or social impacts will be measured? Describe the approach for calculating these measurements.

**Required environmental outcome measurement** (must select **at least one** of these to report):

- Weight of waste prevented
- Number of single-use items reduced/avoided
- Number of items/weight of items reused, rented, and/or repaired
- Greenhouse gas emissions avoided from reuse/rental/repair activities
- Other environmental indicator(s) such as air emissions avoided, energy saved, water conserved, etc. Please list.

**Additional measurement** (optional, but beneficial reporting):

- Number of impact individuals/households
- Reuse jobs created
- Revenue generated from reuse/rental/repair activities
- Cost savings
- Other: please specify.

**Anticipated measurable environmental outcomes** (create a table for each piece of data that you will be able to measure over the course of the project):

[Using the sample template as a guide, create a table(s) specific to your project specifying the baseline measures **before the project** and using your best estimate of outcomes expected **following** your project. Use measurements and measurable outcomes applicable to your specific project.]

### (Sample) Table 1:

#### Anticipated measurable environmental outcomes — furniture reupholster & repair

Description	Baseline items repaired annually (#/yr and lbs/yr)	Baseline jobs declined due to limited capacity (#/yr)	Estimated items repaired following project (#/yr and lbs/yr)	Estimated revenue increase (total dollars/yr)	Estimated greenhouse gas reduction (MTCO <sub>2</sub> e/yr)
Item or product type — upholstered furniture	Actual #	Actual #	Estimated #	Estimated #	Estimated #
Items or product type — wood furniture	Actual #	Actual #	Estimated #	Estimated #	Estimated #

## Sec. 12: Equity & Inclusion

Creating an inclusive program where all potential participants have access to participate in reuse opportunities should be a priority consideration in the grant application. When developing the grant program, consider the following elements:

- Accessibility throughout the service area
- Access for low-income and limited-English proficient population — includes communication and outreach as well as services provided.
  - ◊ Translation (using a native speaker), non-regular business hours, locations, reading level/other literacy needs, interpretation, picture depiction vs language, cost, etc.
- Access to overburdened and/or underserved communities
- Focus on marginalized business owners (women-owned, Indigenous and minority-owned, etc.)
- Just and clean job creation

To make a grant program more inclusive, consider engaging community liaisons or trusted community members to help with outreach and encourage target community-based organizations and businesses to apply. Mentors may also be engaged to guide potential applicants through the process — applying for grants can be daunting for someone who has never done it before or is not comfortable with written English.

Ensure that reviewers are briefed on common rating errors (e.g. lack of new or original ideas, wide-ranging amount of work proposed, uncertainty concerning future directions) and biases. Have a discussion about common biases and how to minimize their effects. For example, encourage reviewers to review all the information in an application before making a judgment. Remind reviewers that mastery of

the English language is not being evaluated in applications — applicants are not judged on their spelling and grammar. Anti-biased trainings are also available on individual and team levels and can help stop bias before it starts.

### Equity & Inclusion Considerations

- How will your program be accessible to a range of socioeconomic and demographic populations/regions in the service area?
- How will you ensure and promote access to your program for low-income and limited-English proficient populations? How will you consider factors such as program affordability, location, and access to services?
- How will you address disparities that exist for the affected population and how will your project affect and engage those communities?
- How will you address equity concerns if establishing a new facility location?
- What is your communications and outreach vision, including the number of individuals that will be reached and populations impacted?
- How will you encourage and maximize participation? For example, one demonstrated methodology for successful behavior change is practicing the principles of Community-Based Social Marketing. If you plan to use these or similar principles, what are the specific techniques that will be integrated and what is the expected impact on the project?
- What is your plan to adhere to a language justice framework to address possible language and literacy needs, including translation, interpretation, reading level, communication styles or other needs?

### *Equity & Inclusion Considerations Continued...*

- What is the position description and pay range for each job that will be created as a result of this project including details on permanent versus temporary or part time jobs?
- Will any of the jobs created be targeted toward a demographic who has historically faced barriers to securing employment?
- Will any of the jobs created be located in rural areas?

## **Sec. 13: Resource Requirements**

Besides the direct funding that is provided in a grant program, sufficient resources must be allocated to ensure a successful program. Time and resources must be set aside for each stage of the grant program:

- **Development and preparation of the grant program**, e.g., consulting with stakeholders, determining the purpose and scope of the grant program, eligibility rules, criteria and schedule, drafting and reviewing the application packet (including grant agreement), procuring and testing any grant management software, developing communications and outreach plan (including website), engaging community liaisons and mentors, etc.
- **Grant application launch, outreach and management**, e.g., communicating about the grant program, organizing application information sessions, application parties and open hours, coordinating with community liaisons and mentors, checking that applications are complete, preparing the review process and orienting reviewers, etc.
- **Review of applications and selection of grant recipients**, e.g., conducting initial screening / internal review, then external review, determining final selection, informing applicants of the decision to fund, etc.

- **Grant administration**, e.g., signing grant agreements, distribution of funds, providing support to grant recipients, reviewing and approving expenses and any reports, closing grant agreements, etc.
- **Evaluation of the grant program**, e.g., evaluating whether the grant program's objectives were achieved, evaluating each stage and activity to identify areas of improvement, writing a report and communicating the results, etc.

How much time is required at each stage depends on the size of the grant program, how new the grant program is, how extensive the outreach is, how many applications are received, how many reviewers are engaged, how many individual grants are provided, the duration of the grant funding, etc. It is always more time and resource demanding the first time a reuse grant program is developed. A small grant program may only require 0.5 FTE (full-time equivalent) staff that is already experienced with grants, but often it may require more.

The time and resources of other staff may also be required for a grant, e.g.:

- communication staff to develop the grant website and publicize the grant
- community liaisons or trusted community members to help with outreach
- mentors to help applicants apply
- internal and external reviewers
- contract managers and financial administrative staff to draft and sign grant agreements and distribute funds



As government organizations manage public funds, the processes in place for distributing grants need to follow certain rules, which may result in lengthy bureaucracy. Prepare and plan for this.

There are many different types of grant management software (e.g. Foundant, IGX Solutions, Benevity) that can help manage the process and make it more efficient but have licensing costs and may take some time to learn how to use.

For examples of previous and current reuse incentives and grants, checkout [Upstream's US & Canada Reuse Incentives and Grants Tracker](#). ◇