

# NextCycle Washington Renew Seed Grant Application

Washington State is incubating and accelerating big ideas in material waste prevention, reuse, repair, recovery, recycling, and composting to help grow the state's circular economy.<sup>1</sup>

NextCycle Washington is a circular economy innovation platform designed to support the growth of businesses, community-based organizations, tribal nations, and institutions working within Washington's waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and/or organics recovery industry. By nurturing projects, the program helps reduce waste, keeps materials in use longer, and regenerates natural systems while developing equitable local economies.

A core element to NextCycle Washington is the Renew Seed Grant program, designed to provide funding and technical assistance for early-stage ideas. Selected projects are supported with up to \$10,000 in funding along with access

to mentors, consultants, and networking to support project execution and growth planning. Over \$350,000 in funding for this program is provided by King County and the Washington state departments of Commerce and Ecology, as reimbursement for eligible expenses to be distributed on a monthly basis.

The program will select up to 40 projects that contribute to building Washington's Circular Economy. We are looking for projects focused on waste prevention, reuse, repair, recovery, recycling, organics management and product development using otherwise wasted materials. The application is open to Organizations or a Team of Organizations: for-profit businesses, nonprofits or community-based organizations, university/research institutions, tribal nations, public-private partnerships, or trade organizations.

The application period is **September 21 – November 16, 2022.**

**Submissions are due on or before 5:00 PM PST on November 16, 2022.**

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<sup>1</sup> A Circular Economy is a model to reduce waste through Recycling, Reuse, Return, and Repair.

## Program Benefits for Selected Projects

- **Reimbursable Funding:** Projects will receive a grant of up to \$10,000 to reimburse eligible expenses that advance their project idea. Eligible expenses are listed under Section 2: Application Submission Details.
- **Preparation for Growth and Scaling:** Project teams will work with NextCycle staff and mentors to receive guidance on best practices and consideration for project implementation, how to scale and/or replicate the project to realize greater impact. This may prepare Applicants to participate in the NextCycle [Circular Accelerator Program](#).
- **One-on-One Consulting and Mentorship:** Consulting and mentorship support will be available from expert-in-resident economists, operators, engineers, researchers, and graphic designers at [Resource Recycling Systems \(RRS\)](#), [Cascadia Consulting Group](#), [Start Consulting Group](#), [Traversal Design](#), and other partners from businesses, community organizations, universities, research institutions and local/state governments.
- **Networking and Partnership Facilitation:** Project teams will have many opportunities to connect with experts and investors in the industry, community organizations, universities, research institutions, and local/state governments and will be supported in developing key partnerships including supply chain partnerships, funding partnerships, cross-organization partnerships, and public private partnerships.
- **Recognition and Publicity:** Projects will be promoted through press releases, social media, published articles, webinars, website, showcase, and public presentations, providing exposure to a larger network of investors and partners.

## Application Submission Details

### How to Respond:

Applications must be submitted through the [online submission portal](#). Submissions are due **on or before 11:59 pm Pacific Time on Wednesday, November 16th, 2022**.

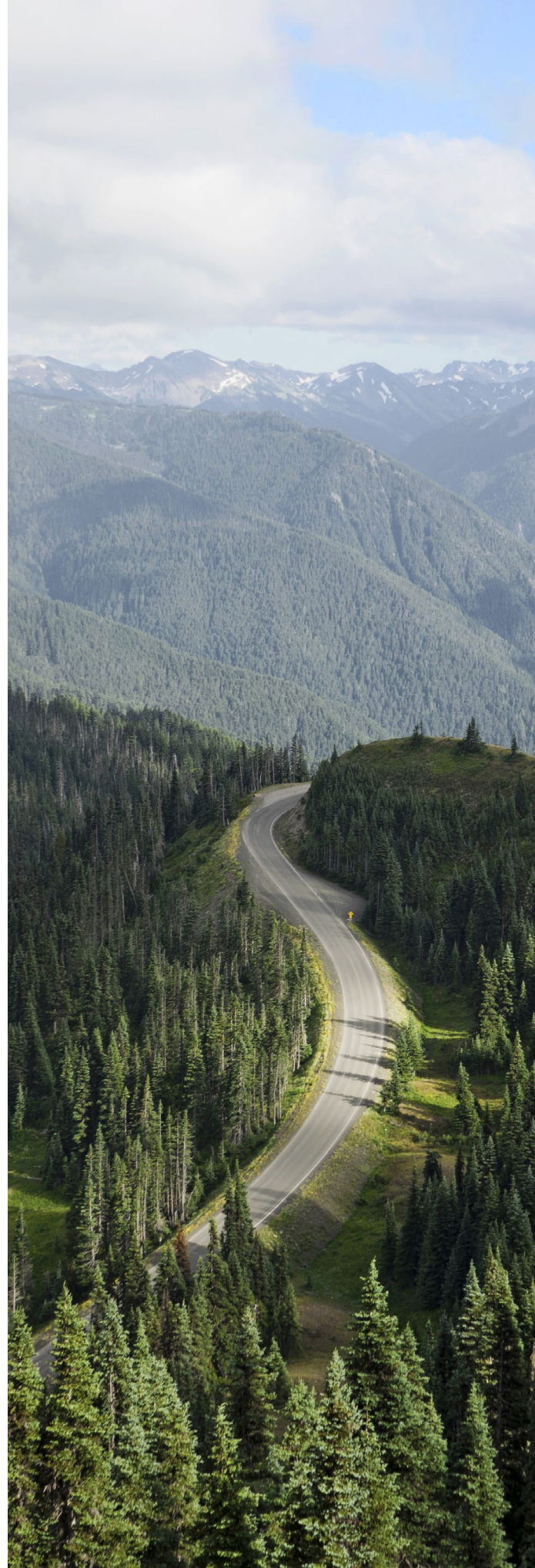
### Selection Process:

Evaluation criteria and the scoring rubric are included as an Appendix in this document.

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and scored by the NextCycle Washington staff and its Renew Seed Grant [Governance Circle](#) members. Final award decisions will be made by King County and NextCycle Washington staff (on behalf of Washington state departments of Commerce and Ecology).

Successful Applicants will be notified by NextCycle Washington staff by early January 2023.

Up to 13 grants will be awarded by King County for projects located in and/or have a direct impact on King County (excluding Seattle and Milton). Up to 27 grants will be awarded by NextCycle Washington for projects that have an impact anywhere in the state of Washington.





## Project Eligibility:

Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project has the potential for direct positive impact on Washington's circular economy.

Projects must be Washington-based or expanding to Washington and focused on waste prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and/or organics recovery.

Research projects, feasibility studies, pilot projects and early commercial projects are eligible.

This program is open to private sector businesses, nonprofits and community-based organizations, institutions, and tribal nations and organizations.

**Ineligible projects** include, but are not limited to, projects that:

- Only prevent waste for an individual or single business or organization,
- Seek funding for general operating or other expenses not directly related to the proposed project, and/or
- Seek funding for environmental compliance remediation

NextCycle Washington Renew Seed Grants are not intended for individuals or local governments (tribal nations are excepted). Local governments may be included on an Applicant Team but may not be the Lead Applicant.

## Funding Eligibility:

If the Applicant's Organization is not already a registered business in Washington state with a UBI and a Tax ID number when their application is submitted, the Organization must obtain these ID numbers before a Renew Seed Grant can be awarded. Assistance in applying for these ID numbers will be provided if needed.

- [Unified Business Identifier \(UBI\)](#)
- [Employer Tax ID Number \(EIN\)](#)

## Eligible Expenses:

**Expenses must be directly related to the project.** The following expenses are eligible for reimbursement:

- Consulting Assistance/Legal Services
- Marketing/Collateral
- Market Feasibility Analysis
- Project Related Event(s)
- Project Related Salary/Labor
- Prototyping/Lab Testing/R&D
- Supplies/Materials

**Ineligible expenses include**, but are not limited to general operating expenses, equipment purchase, computers, software, vehicles, office furniture, food and beverages, entertainment, fundraising events, conference or event registration fees (unless directly related to the project), lobbying activities, debt payments, and rent/lease payments.

Equipment purchases, rentals, or leases may be approved for projects that take place in or have a direct impact in King County, equipment purchases may be approved (excluding Seattle and Milton). If these criteria are not met, equipment purchases are not eligible. This is due to the different rules for the funding sources for NextCycle Washington Renew Seed Grants.

Applicants should contact the NextCycle Washington Staff at [NextCycleWA@recycle.com](mailto:NextCycleWA@recycle.com) if they are unsure about the eligibility of any expenses which they plan to submit for reimbursement.

## Applicants and Applicant Teams:

NextCycle Washington Renew Seed Grant Applicants may include one or more entrepreneurs/start-ups organizations, small businesses, established corporations, social enterprises, community-based organizations or nonprofits, trade organizations, tribal nations and organizations, university, or research teams. Applicants are encouraged to form local and regional collaborative partnerships and apply as a Team. Local governments may be included on an Applicant Team but may not be the Lead Applicant. Out-of-state organizations are eligible, but the proposed project or venture must be located and directly address the circular economy in the state of Washington. Cross-sector partnerships and existing end markets from out-of-state are eligible to apply as long as their project is focused on Washington and addresses Washington-based material.

Applicants may submit more than one application if the projects are different. Applicants may submit applications even if they are participating in the NextCycle Circular Accelerator Program.

NextCycle Washington Program Governance Circle Members and NextCycle Washington Application Mentors are not eligible to apply.

## Projects & Material Streams:

Any project that directly or indirectly improves waste prevention, reuse, repair, recovery, recycling, organics management and product development using otherwise wasted materials and products that help grow the circular economy in Washington will be considered for funding. Projects may focus on any material that is otherwise wasted or where there is a proposed higher, better use of materials, according to the [waste hierarchy](#). Eligible waste streams include pre-consumer, post-commercial, post-consumer, industrial and agricultural waste streams or by-products.

## PROJECT EXAMPLES:

- A community-based non-profit builds support for recycling leadership in their community by developing a **training and workforce development program**
- A start-up composter invests in operations training to run a **food scrap composting site**
- A niche packaging manufacturer conducts market research for a **new product using recycled content plastic**

## Centering Equity:

The NextCycle Washington vision for a local circular economy is one where the people, businesses, and local economy benefit first and foremost. This program aims to be inclusive in its engagement, practice, and process. NextCycle Washington strives to create an equitable system, especially for businesses owned by [socially and economically disadvantaged persons](#), as defined by the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). We anticipate that successful Applicants will explicitly recognize how their project reflects Washington state department of Health's principles of [environmental justice](#)<sup>2</sup>, equity, and inclusion, and demonstrate how it will serve and engage with frontline<sup>3</sup> and/or overburdened<sup>4</sup> members of the community. Applicants are encouraged to design projects that include benefits and positive economic impacts (such as jobs, livable wages<sup>5</sup>, and labor income) for overburdened, under-resourced, or under-represented communities.

## Project Commitment:

Applicants must be committed to executing their project according to the narrative and budget outlined in the application unless otherwise agreed between Applicant and NextCycle Washington program staff in writing. Grant award decisions will be announced by early January, 2023. Selected Applicants must spend their own funds and submit all expense reimbursement requests by June 15, 2023 (See Item 4 for details).

Applicants selected for grant awards will be asked to sign a release giving NextCycle Washington permission to use the Project Title, Team member's names, bios and headshots, brief organizational and project descriptions, project photos, and logo(s) for communications and promotional purposes.

## Indemnification:

If awarded, the Applicants must agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless King County, the state of Washington, Washington state departments of Commerce and Ecology, agencies/contractors of the state and all officials, agents/contractors and employees of the state, from and against all claims for injuries or death arising out of or resulting from the grant project execution. "Claim" means any financial loss, claim, suit, action, damage, or expense, including but not limited to attorneys' fees, attributable for bodily injury, sickness, disease, or death, or injury to or the destruction of tangible property including loss of use resulting therefrom.

## Application Resources and Support

Please answer the application questions to the best of your abilities. We understand that some questions may be difficult to answer and we encourage you to be thoughtful, take advantage of these application support resources, and do the best you can.

## Launch Webinar:

A live Renew Seed Grant Launch webinar on September 21, 2022, presented information to potential Applicants on program eligibility, how to apply, how the application will be evaluated, examples of successful projects, program benefits and overall timeline. The [webinar recording](#) will be available after September 26 on NextCycle Washington website.

## Application Party:

Applicants are invited to attend a virtual application party to ask questions about the Renew Seed Grant application process and receive support and guidance for preparing for and completing their applications. Please check the NextCycle Washington website for details about how to join and to confirm dates and times.

- Application Party 1: Thursday October 13, 4:00-5:30 PM PT
- Application Party 2: Thursday November 10, 12:00-1:30 PM PT

## Office Hours:

Applicants may sign up for virtual meetings to receive guidance on the application process.

Applicants may sign up [here](#) for a 30-minute, one-on-one virtual meeting to receive guidance on the application process.

<sup>2</sup> Environmental justice is 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.

<sup>3</sup> Frontline communities means a community or population that is disproportionately exposed to socioeconomic disparities, environmental injustice or another form of injustice. Frontline communities are those most vulnerable and will be the most adversely impacted by environmental and climate injustice and inequitable climate actions.

<sup>4</sup> Overburdened community means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in [RCW 19.405.020](#).

<sup>5</sup> Hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support themselves and their family. Visit this [link for reference](#).

## Resource Library:

All Applicants have access to the NextCycle Washington [Resource Library](#), which contains literature and other resources pertaining to:

- Recycling reports and data
- Business and financial planning
- Policy and regulation
- Industry organizations and specifications
- Standards and best management practices
- Washington Small Business Resources

## Translation Services:

Please reach out to [NextCycleWA@recycle.com](mailto:NextCycleWA@recycle.com) if you require interpretation or translation services.

Note: Full language support may not be available for the Renew Seed Grant cycle, however, NextCycle is working to develop these services. Informing us of your needs will help us develop appropriate services.

## Stay Informed:

[Sign up](#) to be included on the latest NextCycle Washington updates including application openings, upcoming events, new funding partners and more.

## Contact Us:

Email us at: [NextCycleWA@recycle.com](mailto:NextCycleWA@recycle.com)

## NextCycle Reimbursement Process

The NextCycle Renew Seed Grant awards are distributed as reimbursement for expenses detailed in the application and incurred between the award agreement date and June 15, 2023. Either NextCycle Washington staff or King County staff

will approve reimbursement requests for eligible expenses with appropriate documentation (eligible expenses are listed in Section 2: Application and Submission Details – Eligible Expenses).

The steps of the reimbursement process are as follows:

- Applicant signs a grant agreement with either King County or NextCycle Washington.
- Applicant/Team executes proposed activities and incurs expenses. (**expenses incurred prior to the agreement date are not eligible for reimbursement.**)
- Applicant submits reimbursement requests through the grant portal (instructions to be provided with grant agreement).
- NextCycle Washington or King County staff reviews and ensures compliance with program guidelines prior to remitting payment to Applicant. Payment will be issued either by King County or RRS.
- Reimbursement requests may be submitted on a monthly basis. However, **all expenses must be incurred and submitted by June 15, 2023.**

Decisions made to approve or deny reimbursement requests are final. This process is subject to change without notice based on funding availability and changes in state or county procedures and laws.

## Confidentiality

The financial and commercial information pertaining to or on your application will be kept strictly confidential pursuant to [RCW 42.56.270](#). Any information given on an application or subsequent completion report and surveys will only be reported as part of aggregated data that does not identify any individual responses or companies.



# Appendix

## Scored Application Questions

### PROJECT OVERVIEW (10 POINTS)

- **Project Title\***  
*Character Limit: 100*
- **Project Abstract\***  
Clearly summarize your project plan, including timeline and key milestones.  
*Character Limit: 1500*

### CONCEPT FEASIBILITY (30 POINTS)

- **Opportunity\***  
What gaps will your project fill in Washington State's circular economy? How will your project reduce waste, keep materials in use longer, and/or regenerate natural systems while developing equitable local economies?  
*Character Limit: 1500*
- **Scalability\***  
Describe the scale of the project and the extent that it is replicable, scalable, or is a necessary step towards a larger goal. How will your project compliment other businesses or organizations doing related or similar work, if known?  
*Character Limit: 1500*
- **Strengths and Challenges\***  
What will ensure that your project will be successful? What are the primary challenges you will face and how will you mitigate them? Explain why you are uniquely positioned to succeed.  
*Character Limit: 1500*
- **Financial Sustainability\***  
How will the project or program be sustained or have a lasting impact beyond the Seed Grant funding? For example, will there be a return on investment from increased revenue streams or will the project result in increased potential for fundraising? If the proposed project will require more than the Seed Grant award of \$10,000 for implementation, please describe the source of the additional funding required.  
*Character Limit: 1500*
- **Organizational Capacity\***  
Please describe your project team's plan for providing the staffing and administrative resources required for project success.  
*Character Limit: 1500*

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND JUSTICE POTENTIAL (10 POINTS)

- **Environmental Impact\***  
Describe how your project can reduce materials disposed in the landfill; increase material reuse, water savings or energy savings; reduce consumption of virgin materials and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions or result in other positive environmental benefits.  
*Character Limit: 1500*
- **Environmental Justice\***  
How will you ensure the fair treatment and engagement of frontline communities that bear the burden of environmental impacts?  
*Character Limit: 1500*

### EQUITY IMPACT POTENTIAL (20 POINTS)

- **Team Diversity\***  
Describe the extent to which the organizations and their team members involved in this project form a diverse and inclusive project team.  
*Character Limit: 750*
- **Capacity Building\***  
Describe the extent to which your project builds capacity and/or provides access to additional services in overburdened communities.  
*Character Limit: 750*

- **Community Engagement\***

How have representatives of the communities that will be impacted by this project been involved in development of the project concept? How will the project serve or engage overburdened and under-resourced individuals / communities?

*Character Limit: 750*

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT POTENTIAL (10 POINTS)**

- **Economic Impact\***

Describe how this project will create economic opportunities such as jobs, livable wages, and labor income or result in other economic impacts such as offsetting or reducing operational costs? Who do you anticipate will benefit from these opportunities or impacts?

*Character Limit: 1500*

## **PROJECT TEAM AND PARTNERS (20 POINTS)**

- **Project Team\***

Briefly describe your project team and their experience. Explain how the team demonstrates relevant experience, background, and leadership to successfully implement the project.

*Character Limit: 2000*

- **Project Team Members**

List your core team members, other than yourself.

First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Organization

- **Partner Description\***

Describe any established relationships that will actively support the success of your project such as supply chain partners, regional or local partners, mentors, advisors and/or community representatives.

*Character Limit: 2000*

## **PROJECT BUDGET (20 POINTS)**

- **Total Project Budget\***

Please provide a summary of the total project budget and timeline for requesting reimbursement from the grant award before June 15, 2023. If the total project budget exceeds the maximum grant award amount of \$10,000, please indicate the source of the additional funding required to implement the project scope described in the Project Overview.

*Character Limit: 2000*

- **Funding Categories, Amounts & Descriptions**

Please describe how the grant funds will be used for each applicable funding category. The total grant request may not exceed \$10,000

## **PROJECT OUTCOMES (10 POINTS)**

- **Project Outcomes\***

What does success look like for your project and how will it be measured?

*Character Limit: 2000*

## Evaluation Criteria for Scored Application Questions

Applications will be evaluated and given a score of up to 130 possible points.

Criteria	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 Washington'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 \$10K</li> <li>Has the capacity to manage the project</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Impact and Justice Potential</b> 10 POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project targets the top of the <a href="#">waste hierarchy</a></li> <li>Project contributes to positive environmental impacts</li> <li>Has awareness of potential environmental justice impacts and how to mitigate risks</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</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> 20 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 a six-month 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>