



NEXTCYCLE  
MICHIGAN

# SEED AWARDS



FUNDED BY THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT,  
GREAT LAKES AND ENERGY (EGLE)

## SUMMARY:

**Award Size:** \$8,000-\$10,000

**Match:** None

**Application Deadline:** July 31 at 5pm ET

## OVERVIEW

The NextCycle Michigan Seed Award Program is designed to provide small-scale funding and support to early-stage projects focused on keeping materials out of landfill. These awards are designed to help businesses, public sector entities and non-profits get a jump-start to launch or scale a solution which fills a needed gap in Michigan's circular economy.

Supported projects may range from developing a new product which uses recycled content, building markets for recovered products, reuse system pilots or broader supply chain innovations for both inorganic and organic materials.

Applicants will apply for seed funding to support their projects and cover project-related expenses. Selected projects will also receive up to 10 hours of technical support from NextCycle staff to aid in their success. EGLE Recycling Specialists will also be engaged to provide additional technical support to projects.

These awards are funded by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) as part of NextCycle Michigan. NextCycle Michigan is a recycling market development program strategically designed to build a circular economy in Michigan through a variety of programs and services. Applicants do not have to be involved in other aspects of the NextCycle Michigan program to apply.

## TIMELINE

- JUNE 2, 2025**  
Application Period Opens
- ONGOING**  
Virtual Office Hours
- JUNE 18, 2025 AT 11AM ET**  
Seed Program Info Session
- JULY 31, 2025**  
Application Deadline
- FALL 2025/EARLY 2026**  
Award Selection and Agreement Execution

## APPLY THROUGH THE ONLINE PORTAL

[https://webportalapp.com/  
sp/login/nextcycle\\_grant](https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/nextcycle_grant)

## AWARD

Awards may range from \$8,000-\$10,000 per project to cover eligible expenses which are detailed below. 50% of each award will be processed upon execution of the award agreement. The remaining 50% of the award will be processed as a reimbursement at the end of the project once the final report and relevant expense documentation is submitted and approved. All award funds will be required to be properly documented including receipts and proof of payment both for the 50% upfront award and the remaining 50% award upon project completion. Misuse of seed award funds may impact the entity opportunity for future funding through EGLE and the State.

### MATCH

Match is not required for this award.

### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For each selected project, up to 10 hours of technical support from NextCycle Staff will be offered. Technical support will be scoped during the award phase to align with relevant project needs, but will range from data curation and analysis, business planning, marketing and communications, economic modeling, best practice guidance and other support based on specific project needs.

EGLE Recycling Specialists who support the State in providing technical support will be engaged in the program and available to provide supplemental technical support.

### BUDGETS

Each award application will require a complete budget. A provided budget template is included in the application for you to submit. Project budgets should clearly identify the following:

- List of expenses including brief summary, unit cost, and total for all units
- Type of expense [Equipment, materials, contracted testing, etc]
- Total award request amount
- Total project cost amount

Award budgets may be refined during the selection phase based on guidance from the selection panel. Any potential changes will be discussed with awardees at the time of selection.

## ELIGIBILITY

Michigan businesses and communities managing Michigan generated materials are eligible to apply. Applicants may be a business, non-profit organization, tribal government, universities/college, public-sector entity, municipal solid waste authority, or similar entity physically located in Michigan.

Any project that directly or indirectly improves collecting, processing, minimizing, reusing, composting, or recycling of Michigan's waste materials are eligible. Types of materials recovered may range from textiles, plastics, metals, organic waste, food scraps, C&D, batteries or other materials. Materials which are not eligible for this funding opportunity are tires or electronic waste. It is encouraged to explore [other EGLE programs](#) for support with projects or materials which Seed Awards do not include.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Target specific recycling gaps/opportunities with best practice solutions.
- Target solutions that leverage added public/private investment.
- Target solutions that can be scaled or replicated across the state.
- Target increasing the statewide recycling rate to 45 percent by 2025, while building diversity, equity, and inclusion across Michigan.
- Target benefits for high risk and overlooked populations in Michigan.
- Target climate change priorities through measurable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by diverting material from disposal.
- Target economic and environmental impacts, including greenhouse gas reduction, jobs created, water saved, energy saved, or other positive environmental and economic outcomes.

### Example Types of Projects:

- A new business conducting research for increasing recycled content in a product
- Pilot to launch a food scrap collection program for downtown businesses
- Stakeholder engagement for launching a reuse program
- A local hauler and city staff partner to apply for funds for marketing materials to grow a compost collection program.
- A non-profit applies for funding for equipment to operate a local food rescue program
- New approach for collection of cardboard from small businesses
- Capture of last-chance goods heading to landfill to repair or reuse

### PROJECT STAGE

This award is intended to support early-stage and growth-stage projects to help invest in solutions ready to get off the ground. Earlier stage projects which are beyond the ideation phase will be prioritized with later stage projects considered based on the fit and impact of the project.

EARLY						MATURE	
Ideating	Research/ Pre-Seed	Validating/ Seed	Scaling/ Series A	Growth	Expansion	Mature	Renewal
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	Limited	No
GROWTH							

### INELIGIBLE PROJECTS:

The following types of projects will be considered ineligible for this award.

- Projects which do not prioritize highest and best use of materials.
- Waste to Energy projects including, but not limited to, projects involving combustion or related activities.
- Projects deemed illegal under the law or inappropriate under contract management standards.
- Projects considered scientifically unsound or significantly increase risks to workers and/or the public.
- Projects that will not be conducted in Michigan or address waste material in Michigan.
- Projects that do not adhere to State of Michigan permit requirements.
- Projects related to tires or electronic waste.

This is a non-exhaustive list of ineligible projects and there may be additional projects which are not eligible. If you have questions regarding the eligibility of your project please reach out to [NextCycleMI.Grants@Recycle.com](mailto:NextCycleMI.Grants@Recycle.com) or [schedule virtual office hours](#) to meet with award program staff.

## ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

For each project aligned with the categories listed above, a clear work plan and budget can include the following expenditures listed below which are eligible to be covered by the award.

- Equipment and Supplies\*
- Prototyping/Lab Testing/R&D (supplies or labor\*)
- Project Related Event/Meeting Space Rental
- Marketing and collateral
- Contracted services related to expenditures
- Awardee labor or project stipends\*
- Surveys
- Project Related Travel/Lodging - aligned with the [state travel rates](#).

*\*Individual equipment purchases of the full \$10,000 will not be eligible. Funding regular salaries, paid holiday, or similar is not eligible. Labor will need to be reported based on hourly tracking.*

## NON-ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

- Purchase or rental of property for normal operating or unrelated to the specific project
- Dues, memberships or subscriptions
- Relevant Conference or networking fees
- Paid holiday, vacation or similar time
- General business expenses such as payroll taxes or other costs
- General operating costs for pre-existing activities
- Out of scope supplies or purchases

## PROJECT TIMELINE

All project activities will be expected to be completed within a 6-month period which should be clearly identified in your application which outlines core activities and milestones. Project timelines will start upon the final signatures of the award agreement expected early 2026. Only approved expenditures incurred after the award agreement has been signed will be processed.

## EXPLORE RESOURCES

There are a variety of free resources available which prospective applicants are encouraged to explore and utilize. These resources can help inform your project or application and help get your questions answered.

**Michigan Gap Analysis** – The latest Michigan Gap Analysis compiles important information and data about Michigan's waste and recycling landscape which can be used to inform where opportunities may exist, and reflects EGLE's priorities for funding. Find the latest [gap analysis here](#) and [explore online data visualizations](#) based on this information.

**NextCycle Michigan** – a variety of services and programs are offered through NextCycle Michigan which can help accelerate projects to ensure they are ready for investment and implementation. The Accelerator program is a 6-month program providing free technical support and coaching. [Explore more here.](#)

**EGLE Recycling Specialists** – EGLE offers a variety of resources, information, and a helpful team to support circular economy and recycling projects around the State. EGLE Recycling Specialists can provide direct technical support for your specific region. Explore resources and connect with EGLE staff [here](#).

**Other EGLE Programs** – The Materials Management Division offers a variety of resources including programs for Scrap Tires, Medical Waste and Drug Disposal, Household Hazardous Waste, Pollution Prevention, Storm Recovery, and other programs you can receive support through. [Explore more here.](#)

## SEED PROGRAM INFORMATION SESSION

June 18 from 11 am - 12 pm ET a virtual information session will be hosted for interested applicants to attend. The session will include a program overview and open Q&A for applicants to hear real-time details from program staff.

[Register here.](#)

## HOW TO RESPOND

Applications must be submitted through the [online submission portal](#). Submissions are due on or before July 31 at 5pm ET.

The application will include:

- Narrative responses to general project questions
- A detailed budget
- A detailed work plan

A preview of the online application questions is listed below. Budget and work plan templates can be utilized which are linked in the online portal.

## OFFICE HOURS

Meet with award program staff to discuss your project eligibility, receive general guidance, get help navigating the online portal, or answers to other question you may have.



**Meet with Keira:**

[Link to schedule virtual meeting with Keira](#)



**Meet with Bridgette:**

[Link to schedule virtual meeting with Bridgette](#)

## PREVIEW: APPLICATION QUESTIONS

There is an online application form for all award applications. Create a profile on the [online portal](#) to submit your application. Questions which appear in the online application are as follows:

### 1. **PROJECT TEAM LEAD INFORMATION:**

**Primary Organization Name:** Address, website (if available)

**Primary Contact:** Name, title, phone, email

**Organization Type:**

- For-profit business
  - Identify business stage: early, start-up, growth, expansion, mature
- Non-profit organization
- Local government
- University/research institution
- Tribal government, Nation or Citizen
- Public-private partnership
- Other (fill in blank)

**Organization's Physical Operational Geography (check all that apply):**

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban
- County-wide
- Multi-regional
- Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUB Zone) or Opportunity Zone
- Tribal Land

**Will the project work be based in Michigan?** Yes/No

**Will the project work address recyclable materials generated in the state of Michigan?** Yes/No

## 2. **PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

By answering the following questions, please succinctly and clearly articulate your project plan and statement of need. This is your opportunity to explain your project, pitch why your project is needed, and why it is going to be successful.

### **Project Title:**

**Project Plan (500 words or less)** – Describe your project including WHAT you plan to do, HOW you will accomplish it, and the IMPACT it will have. Consider how the project will provide value for the state of Michigan if implemented. How does the project address recycling, reusing, or diverting material that otherwise would be destined for disposal in Michigan? What materials or waste streams is the project addressing? What are your inputs and outputs? What product(s) are you making, processing, collecting, or repurposing? How will the project improve the supply chain, end markets, or reduce disposal of recyclable materials in the State? What is the scale of your project? What are the goals of your project?

**Project Work Plan:** upload

**Project Budget:** upload

## 3. **PROJECT IMPACTS AND METRICS**

**Holistic Impacts (500 words or less)** – What are the benefits and/or risks of the project considering environmental impact, equitable impact, and economic impact? What are the short and long term goals for environmental impact considering things like tons of materials diverted from disposal or greenhouse gas emission reduction? How does the project impact historically underserved communities? Are equitable jobs with livable wages created?

**Impact Area:** What county or counties will your project impact? [drop down of counties]

**How would you categorize your geographical impact?**

- i. Rural. ii. Urban iii. Suburban iv. Historically Underutilized Business Zone/ Opportunity v. Tribal Land

**Geographic Impact (100 words or less)** - Briefly describe the geographical impact of your projects. How will a specific area, region, city or county be impacted?

## 4. **PROJECT TEAM / PARTNERS:**

- a. **Do you have any partner organizations or project advisors?**

- i. **If yes, please provide partner organization(s)' or advisor(s)' contact information:**

Organization Name, Contact Name, Contact Email,

- b. **Project Team / Partner Description (250 words or less):** Briefly describe your project team and their experience. Explain how the team demonstrates relevant experience, background, and leadership to successfully implement the project? Include regional or local partners and/or advisors involved in the project and describe how they will contribute to successful outcomes including specific roles with the project.

## 5. **MARKET POTENTIAL (250 WORDS):**

Describe the market potential of your product or service? Is there a validated demand for your product or service? Is the model scalable and/or replicable? How would you describe the competitive landscape? What are the primary risks or barriers that you will face? If replacing a virgin material with recycled content, what is the cost differential and how will you address that in the marketplace?

## 6. **FINANCIAL VIABILITY (250 WORDS OR LESS):**

Describe how your project plan results in a financially sustainable venture within Michigan's economic framework. What is your estimated operating and capital cost for the project? What are your anticipated revenue sources? How long will it take to become self-sustaining and/or profitable? Describe any existing funding and/or where you expect to secure funding for the project development and ongoing operations.

## 7. **TECHNICAL SUPPORT.**

Please share what potential technical support you may need to support the success of your project. Note, support will be limited so NextCycle staff and EGLE will work with you to determine what support is possible during the scoping of your award agreement.

## 8. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (OPTIONAL).**

You may submit up to three, one-sided, PDF documents of relevant information about your team, business, or project. Examples of additional information may include marketing material examples, bids for equipment or services (if relevant and appropriate), profit and loss statement, memorandum of understanding for feedstock or off take agreement, or information about the founder(s). There is no penalty for not submitting the optional additional information.

## 9. **SIGNATURE:**

E-signature of signature and date of authorized individual.

## REVIEW PROCESS & SELECTION CRITERIA

All applications will be reviewed by NextCycle Michigan technical experts with selections made by a selection committee at EGLE. Selections will be made without discrimination to age, ability, gender, cultural background, ethnicity, race or other unique attributes of applicants.

Applicants will be selected based on the following criteria:

CRITERIA	DEFINITION
<b>VALUE PROPOSITION: ADDRESSES A KEY GAP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addresses gaps in the recycling supply chain identified by the Michigan gap analysis</li><li>• Addresses other needs in Michigan's recycling supply chains</li><li>• Demonstrates a meaningful scale of materials diversion from landfills or disposal including metrics (e.g. tons, lbs. etc.)</li></ul>
<b>MARKET AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates path to financial sustainability</li><li>• Addresses operating, capital and other costs</li><li>• Shows potential to achieve a self-sustaining or profitable revenue stream</li><li>• Considers market conditions and potential to scale.</li></ul>
<b>HOLISTIC IMPACTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates consideration for environmental, social, and economic impacts.</li><li>• Identifies potential environment and social risks and/or benefits.</li><li>• Demonstrates potential economic impacts such as labor, job creation, living wages, or other business and economic impacts.</li></ul>
<b>PROJECT TEAM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Project team demonstrates relevant experience, background, and leadership</li><li>• Team includes regional or local partnerships</li></ul>
<b>PROJECT READINESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are clear deliverables and goals for the project.</li><li>• The application, work plan and budget are well thought out and complete.</li><li>• The project is ready to start upon award.</li></ul>

The review process will be a roughly 60-day period. Awardees will be contacted via e-mail once final selections are made regarding the status of their application.

# AWARD EXPECTATIONS AND REPORTING

If an applicant is selected to receive award funds, they will be notified via e-mail regarding the status of their application which will initiate the selection process.

## What to expect if you are selected:

1. **Scoping & Award Agreement** – you will work with NextCycle staff to ensure your budget and work plan include full detail regarding eligible expenses, a clear timeline adjusted based on the timing of the award, and important deliverables and milestones reflected.
2. **Onboarding** – a group onboarding call with other awardees will be hosted to review the award process, reporting expectations, reimbursement process, and other key information for awardees to be successful during the award period.
3. **Partial Award Payment** – Upon execution of the award agreement, 50% of the award will be paid to the awardee.
4. **Progress Check ins** – Award administration staff will schedule regular virtual check-ins to ensure projects are making progress and meeting agreed upon milestones.
5. **Expense Tracking and Documentation** – Awardees will be required to submit receipts and proof of payment for any expenses incurred that are within the approved budget and eligible expenditures.
6. **Final Reporting** – a final report will be required to summarize progress, capture key metrics related to the project, and recap relevant next steps for the continued success of the project.
7. **Final Payment** – Upon completion of the project and submission of all reports, receipts, and documentation the final award payment will be processed.

Detailed reporting expectations will be communicated during the selection process including important dates for reporting, reporting process, and other important information. Regular check-ins with award program staff will help ensure progress and reporting expectations are met and allow for discussion regarding potential scope changes. Misuse of seed award funds may impact the entity opportunity for future funding through EGLE and the State.

## CLOSING

Prospective award applicants are encouraged to contact staff regarding any questions or clarifications. Changes to this document or other information relating to this award will be posted at [www.nextcyclemichigan.com/seed-awards](http://www.nextcyclemichigan.com/seed-awards) or notifications shared through the online portal. If you have suggested changes or questions, please reach out to [NextCycleMI.Grants@recycle.com](mailto:NextCycleMI.Grants@recycle.com).