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Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant Response to Questions

Questions about the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant were due April 29, 2026. Below are MassDEP's responses to those questions. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on May 15, 2026.

General Questions

Several questions sought clarification on eligible expenses. Grant funds must be used for costs associated with implementing the proposed project, such as equipment, tools, and software; event promotion, marketing, and rental space fees; and hire of temporary workers for a specified and finite period (e.g. consultants, contractors, paid interns, and specialists).

Grant funds may not be used for operating expenses or costs associated with existing programs and services. See the definition of "operating expenses" on page 2 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information. Other examples of ineligible expenses include:

- Awards, gifts, incentives, or promotional swag.
- Art installations, art projects, fashion shows, and exhibitions.
- Wages or compensation for existing employees.

We received several inquiries requesting clarification on eligible projects.

Eligible projects will reduce or eliminate waste by extending the life of products through donation, sharing, rescue, reuse, and/or repair.

Ineligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Recycling projects.
- Composting projects.
- Repurposing projects.
- Ocean and/or land clean-up projects.
- Building renovations that do not promote deconstruction or building material reuse.
- Distribution of "reusable" cups, bags, bottles, etc. that are not part of a tracked return/reuse system.
- Purchase of reusable ware that does not replace single-use items.

- Swap shops/sheds.
- Activities that are not tied to waste reduction.

Other Questions and Answers (Q&A):

Q: Is an updated Environmental Preferable Procurement (EPP) Policy or Sustainable Purchasing Policy required for a municipality to be eligible for this grant?

A: No, it is not a requirement for this grant.

Q: Can a single applicant submit multiple applications?

A: Yes, you may submit more than one application, but you are only eligible to receive a grant for one of them.

Q: Can an organization that was previously awarded a grant apply again this year?

A: Yes, you may apply again provided you don't have an active Micro-Grant project.

Q: Is a newly launched business eligible?

A: Yes, new businesses are eligible if they are registered with the MA Secretary of State. See "Evaluation Criteria" on pages 5 and 6 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: Does MassDEP issue partial awards?

A: Yes, we may issue a partial award depending on the eligibility of items listed in the budget section of your application and available funding for this grant program.

Q: When will the grants be awarded?

A: We cannot provide an exact date, as grants go through several levels of approval before being awarded. We recommend building six months into your project timeline to account for MassDEP's evaluation and approval process.

Q: If awarded, when do I receive grant payment?

A: Grant funding will be distributed as a reimbursement once the project is complete. See "Grant Award Amount" on page 3 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: Do we need to provide hard numbers or quotes on project cost in the application?

A: Project costs can be an estimate but should be as accurate as possible. Quotes are not required.

Q: Can MassDEP award this grant to municipalities with large Recycling Dividend Fund (RDP) balances?

A: MassDEP will consider the amount of unspent RDP funds a municipality has available, but those funds do not preclude them from receiving a Micro-Grant. Review the “Project Budget” evaluation criteria on page 6 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: Can we use Recycle Dividends Program (RDP) funds for an in-kind match?

A: Yes, you may use RDP funds for a match.

Q: Are previously awarded grants visible somewhere?

A: Yes, a list of in-progress and completed grant projects is available on the [Micro-Grant webpage](#) under “More info.”

Q: Are community groups and/or collectives eligible to apply?

A: Community groups and collectives are not eligible to apply, but they could serve as a partner or subcontractor to an eligible entity. See “Eligible Applicants” on page 3 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for a list of eligible entities.

Q: Can a town’s solid waste advisory committee apply, or does the application need to come from a town department of public works or another department?

A: The application should come from the entity that will accept the funds, have a signatory, and provide the W-9. In the case of municipalities, this usually means the application should come from the town or city itself. If the town applies, the committee could still administer and manage the grant. If the committee has its own Internal Revenue Service (IRS) designation, it could apply itself.

Question: In the Grant Guidelines, it says that “operating expenses or costs associated with existing programs and services” are ineligible expenses. What does it mean to be an “existing program or service” in this context?

Answer: Ongoing costs to maintain an existing program or service at its current scope are not eligible, whereas costs associated with the expansion of an existing program to promote more reuse and repair are eligible. For example, gas for a vehicle used for routine pick up of rescued food would be ineligible, while repairing a walk-in refrigerator to support expansion of a food rescue program would be eligible. Please see the definition of “operating expenses” on page 2 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: Can you clarify what staffing costs are eligible?

A: The hire of temporary workers (e.g., contractors, consultants, paid interns, and specialists) for a specified, finite period is eligible. Wages or compensation for existing employees are not.

Q: Are fix-it clinics, zero waste days, and libraries of things eligible for this grant?

A: Yes, all are eligible.

Q: Could repair and zero waste events be a one-time thing or would it need to be recurring?

A: We are looking for recurring, replicable, and sustainable projects that would extend beyond the duration of the grant.

Q: Are supplies or tools eligible expenses?

A: Yes, they are eligible expenses if they are being used to expand reuse or repair programs and/or services. Review “Use of Grant Funds” on pages 3-5 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: Is the digitization of an organization’s records eligible?

A: No, it is considered an operational expense.

Q: Are upcycling, art, or alternative-use projects eligible?

A: No, they are not eligible. This grant defines “reuse” as the repeated use of a product for its intended purpose.

Q: We specialize in upcycling high-durability, non-recyclable textile waste – such as discarded tents, tarps, and event canopies – into travel gear like bags and pouches. Would the purchase of an industrial washing system, sewing equipment, material storage, and collection for upcycled textiles qualify as eligible equipment expenses?

A: Upcycling projects are not eligible for this grant. To qualify, the project must reuse a product for its intended purpose.

Q: Is the collection of discarded oyster shells to help rebuild oyster reefs eligible?

A: No, this type of project is not eligible as it does not meet the grant program’s definition of reuse: the repeated use of a product for its intended purpose. This project would be better suited for MassDEP’s [Recycling & Reuse Business Development Grant](#), or an ecological restoration or coastal resilience grant.

Q: Can grant funds be used to buy home composting bins?

A: No, costs associated with composting programs are not eligible.

Q: Are building upgrades, such as electrical or plumbing work, eligible expenses?

A: It depends on the upgrade. Upgrades to expand capacity for reuse and repair are eligible (e.g., refrigeration upgrades that expand an organization’s capacity to accept rescue food). Building upgrades that do not directly support reuse and repair are considered operating expenses and are not eligible.

Q: Would a project be eligible if it starts in 2027?

A: It depends on the project's timeline. Grant projects must be completed within one year of receiving a fully executed contract from MassDEP. Refer to page 7 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.