

Recycling and Reuse Business Development Grant (RBDG) - 2025

Response to Questions Received

February 12, 2026

Questions Regarding Eligible Materials and Activities

1. I have started a conversation with a glass blowing studio and school in the state about the possibility of incorporating locally generated post-consumer glass and applying for a grant to do so. Is glass no longer eligible? If not, is there any other grant they could look at?

MassDEP Response: *Glass is not included as an eligible material for this RBDG application cycle. This could be eligible for MassDEP's [Recycling Loan Fund](#).*

2. We are a non-profit organization focused on oyster restoration. One of our programs is a shell-recycling initiative in which we collect oyster shells from restaurants that would otherwise end up in landfills. We reuse these shells for habitat creation, much like a composting pickup service, but specifically for shells. I would like to inquire whether this type of project would be eligible for the RBDG grant. Who can we speak with regarding this matter?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, this is an eligible material under the "Food material" Category.*

3. I've seen a growing need in our community for help properly disposing of items such as textiles that many residents simply can't manage on their own - whether due to distance, cost, or the physical challenge of moving large items like mattresses. I would greatly appreciate any additional information about your program and the next steps to move forward.

MassDEP Response: *Textiles for recycling are an eligible material for processing in this RBDG application cycle. However, Mattresses are ineligible in this grant cycle. Past grant awards are listed on the [RBDG webpage](#). Additional information about managing [mattresses](#) and [textiles](#) is available on the [MassDEP website](#).*

4. We are a small retail store that recirculates donated clothing by selling it to the public. All proceeds directly support our services. This store generates approximately 25% of our annual operating revenue, helping sustain our services while advancing environmental responsibility. I'm writing to ask whether we would qualify for the Recycling and Reuse Business Development Grant.

MassDEP Response: *The eligible materials for this application round include recycling of textiles (such as clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, and fabrics) that are not acceptable for reuse. Textiles reuse activities are not eligible in this grant cycle. This activity may be eligible for MassDEP's upcoming application for Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro Grants.*

5. We are interested in applying for this grant opportunity that is due on April 3rd for processing of targeted materials. Are mattresses included as targeted materials for this opportunity? They are not specifically mentioned in the list of eligible materials.

MassDEP Response: *No, mattresses are not an eligible material for this application cycle.*

6. We are interested in working with a Company who can pick up reusable food trays, wash them and return them to us to reuse. We are trying to determine if we would be considered the Processor of Target Materials and if the collection of target materials could include the purchase of the meal trays and carts to hold the meal trays to use for transportation or is that not the intent of the grant?

MassDEP Response: *For purposes of this grant application, reuse is defined as activities that use eligible material again, either in its original state or with refurbishment, for its original purpose or for a non-traditional purpose; infrastructure development for reuse (donation center, workspace, storage) is eligible. Collection activities are not eligible. However, that may be eligible for the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant program.*

7. We are considering whether to submit a grant application for the decommissioning of air conditioners to recycle the metal, plastic, and CFCs/HFCs. We are unsure if this item fits into the grant description as noted below: Household Hazardous Waste: Operations that accept, sort and process a comprehensive range of hazardous household products for recycling and safe disposal.

MassDEP Response: *No, this would not be eligible within the household hazardous waste material category.*

8. My company recycles books and we manage a network of book donation bins, which falls under "Eligible materials - (d) Textiles for recycling,". Would the expansion of our collection bins be eligible for this grant? If not, what parts of our work system would qualify? Bay State Books currently has over 500 book donation bins in Massachusetts, but there are plenty of areas that could use more places to recycle used books.

MassDEP Response: *Books are not considered to be "textiles for recycling". Neither books nor textiles are eligible under the collection category in this grant cycle.*

9. I had a question on eligible equipment. In our textile collection business, we are often confronted with trash left in and around our bins that we do end up picking up for our customers but there is a cost to get rid of ourselves - we end up paying out of our own pocket to take to the dump. A trash compactor would help minimize these costs while also limiting the space required to keep temporarily on our site. Typical cost for a used compactor is around \$10K - see attached for example of equipment. Please let us know if this would be eligible.

MassDEP Response: *Equipment for solid waste disposal is not eligible under RBDG.*

10. I am wondering if a food establishment that would like to transition from single use service ware to reuseable service ware and needs a commercial dishwasher to do so is eligible to apply for the Recycling & Reuse Business Development Grant for a commercial dishwasher? They currently have a three-bay sink set up.

MassDEP Response: *No, on-site materials are not eligible for this grant.*

11. I work for an estate and business liquidation company which manages the liquidation of property in situations such as-but not limited to- death of a family member, downsizing, business closing, and inheritance. Before I apply I just want to make sure what we do is within the scope of the “processing grant.” Several of the listed materials pertain to our business, but I would like to make sure they are reasonably within the perimeters of what the grant is looking for. We locally repurpose household hazardous waste such as household chemicals, paint, and a wide variety of chemical products found in basements and garages. The method in which we “process” is by redistributing them back into the community to be used for the exact purpose they were intended for. This way people have access to highly discounted items and they are not thrown away or do not need to be processed at a facility. These products are actually quite popular at estate sales. The other item on the list of “processed materials” I had a question about was “reusable materials”- which broadly covers the majority of what our business concerns itself with. What, specifically, does reusable materials refer to? What does “reuse activities” encompass? We also encounter some of the other items on the list, but not always on a regular basis. For example, we liquidated an awning business and had to recycle textiles, but do not typically encounter such a business on a regular basis. We also have recycled metal scraps from businesses and homes several times. More space for storing, sorting, and selling items accordingly, the ability to dispose of certain items, development of our auction house as a main venue for repurposing them back to the community, being a few. For example, we are trying to develop an auction program catering to the needs of professionals in the area to help with their startup costs, and want to host entire auctions geared towards equipment for contractors. One last question- Because there are several areas of the business we could use this grant money for, is it possible to apply for 2 or 3 uses?

MassDEP Response: *Reusable materials that are eligible for RBDG are building materials, furniture and food service ware. Reuse is defined as activities that use eligible material again, either in its original state or with refurbishment, for its original purpose or for a non-traditional purpose; infrastructure development for reuse (donation center, workspace, storage) is eligible. An entity may only submit one RBDG application. Review the eligibility criteria and evaluation criteria in the grant guidance for more details.*

12. We collect used cooking oil from 1500+ food service establishments in Massachusetts. The material we collect is directly used to produce a renewable bio-fuel used in commercial and utility boilers. We process ourselves in our facility. My question; is our use eligible for this grant? I see "creating a fuel" on the list of the ineligible activities in the application (see except below) though I am not quite sure if this would apply to our activity. ***Ineligible activities and expenses include:*** · ***Recovering energy from the combustion of a material or creating a fuel, with the exception of activities defined as "conversion" in 310 CMR 16.02***

MassDEP Response: *As per 310 CMR 16.02 “Conversion means aerobic or anaerobic digestion or enzymatic, thermal or chemical degradation of organic materials. For purposes of 310 CMR 16.00, conversion does not include composting”. Creating a biofuel from purely organic materials would be considered conversion and, therefore, eligible. It is important to keep in mind that the RBDG program is set within MassDEP’s Solid Waste Master Plan and, therefore, MassDEP is seeking applications that divert materials from the solid waste stream.*

13. Would drywall be a material that would be considered?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, dry wall is considered as building material under reusable material in the “processing” grant category.*

14. Does e-waste equipment like motherboard crushers qualify for this grant?

MassDEP Response: *E-waste is not an eligible material under RBDG.*

15. Would a building or other type of storage structure that would support the processing of a much larger quantity of furniture items for reuse be an acceptable capital cost?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, expanding storage is an eligible activity for the “processing” grant category. Please refer to the application guidance for more details on eligible and ineligible activities.*

16. Do toppers of mattresses qualify for the textile part of it? For instance, another textile baler?

MassDEP Response: *Mattresses are not eligible material; however fabric components of mattresses that have been previously separated would be considered part of textiles.*

17. Can any part of the grant be used for expansion or renovations needed to install equipment needed for solar crushers?

MassDEP Response: *Solar panels are an eligible material and equipment to reuse or recycle solar panels is eligible under RBDG.*

18. Several people asked questions regarding whether vehicles or other collection equipment would be eligible under the “processing” grant category.

MassDEP Response: *No, collection activities, including vehicles, are not an eligible activity within the “processing” category. The only materials for which collection is an eligible activity are food waste and surplus food for donation.*

19. My business is centered around reclaimed lumber and building materials. Does this type of activity qualify for application?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, building materials an eligible material under reusable materials in the “processing” grant category.*

20. I would be using the grant funds to upgrade our sawing equipment. Would this be a qualified use of the grant funds?

MassDEP Response: *This could be eligible equipment, as long as it is utilized for an eligible material and eligible activity. Please refer to the application guidelines for more specific information.*

21. We are in the business of collecting textiles to process and prepare for sale and reuse. With that textile collection we receive approximately 7 tons of “trash” per day usually because of either well intended donors or illegal dumping on our clothing collection sites. Currently much of it ends up going in the trash to include many textile that is at its “end of life” or contaminated. We are trying to change that and solve the problem of not being able to process “end of life textile” as well as sort and break down all that “trash” down into a recyclable item. We have been working on this issue and are now at the point where our facility is not large enough to support the expansion and sorting of recyclable goods outside our textiles. Does the RBDG grant cover a building addition to expand a building to make room for new process to sort, breakdown and process items for recycle. I would assume any new equipment

would be covered if it falls into the targeted materials category below, but what about the building addition itself.

MassDEP Response: *Your application would need to be for an eligible activity and eligible material. For sorting of reusable materials (not textiles), infrastructure development for reuse such as a donation center, workspace or storage is eligible. Eligible materials for textile recycling are clothing, footwear, bedding, towels, curtains, and fabrics that are not acceptable for reuse. Textile reuse is not eligible under this application.*

22. I've reviewed the grant information and see it involves partnering with a business. I am interested in possibly piloting some food waste machines in schools. These are machines that grind and dehydrate food waste and reduce its volume up to 90%. How would I know if the idea is a good fit for the grant? Is there an opportunity to ask specific questions?

MassDEP Response: *Processing of on-site materials is not eligible under RBDG. For a municipality, you may want to consider applying through the [SMRP Municipal grant program](#).*

Questions Regarding Eligible Entities

23. Are municipalities, including municipal recycling centers, transfer stations, and public schools would qualify for this grant considering they are non-profits.

MassDEP Response: *No, municipalities or other government entities are not eligible for RBDG grants. However municipalities are eligible for funding through MassDEP's [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program](#).*

24. I wanted to confirm/clarify that an organization could apply for this grant to expand reuse infrastructure, specifically including that it can be with a 3rd party provider? I'd like to share this resource with some of my contacts looking for 3rd party support but first want to confirm that this set up would be eligible!

MassDEP Response: *Eligible materials for reuse under the processing category are building materials, furniture and food service ware. Any organization properly licensed to do business in the Commonwealth at the time of contracting, including being registered with the Secretary of State's office, can apply.*

25. I have a question about RBDG eligibility. We are interested in pursuing a public private relationship with a local municipality to run their compost site. If we are operating there are we still eligible to apply for the material processing grant? Our plan is to use our own capital equipment but use their existing space.

MassDEP Response: *Yes, an applicant may have collaborating partners including a municipality. However, the applicant would need to be an eligible for profit or non-profit entity. An application must be submitted by a single applicant.*

26. Are private recycling facilities eligible applicants or eligible through municipal partnerships?

MassDEP Response: *Any eligible entity properly licensed to do business in the Commonwealth at the time of contracting is eligible. Municipal entities are not eligible applicants, however an eligible entity may have a municipal partnership.*

27. I am in the process of launching a material recovery and research platform focused on construction and demolition waste. The immediate goal of the pilot is to build local capacity for material recovery through hands-on deconstruction, sorting, cleaning, and recirculation of salvaged materials that would otherwise be disposed of. At a practical level, the funding would support core recovery infrastructure, including tools and equipment for deconstruction, 1–2 staff to carry out recovery and processing work, and access to warehouse space for material intake, cleaning, and storage. This physical recovery work is paired with research and documentation to track material flows, diversion outcomes, and opportunities for reuse in future construction. I wanted to ask whether there are programs that might support this type of material recovery infrastructure and program development. I would also appreciate any guidance on how a project like this could best be positioned for eligibility in the future, particularly *if municipal partnership is required.*

MassDEP Response: *Municipal partnership is NOT required for RBDG. Entities considering applying should review the program guidance to determine whether they are eligible to apply and whether proposed activities are eligible under RBDG.*

28. My business is structured as a sole proprietorship, and has been for over 30 years on the South Shore of Massachusetts. Does this structure qualify for the application?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, as long as your application meets all other eligibility requirements, a company or corporation (for-profit or non-profit) properly licensed to do business in the Commonwealth at the time of contracting is eligible.*

29. Will co-applicants be accepted?

MassDEP Response: *Any company or corporation (for-profit or non-profit) properly licensed to do business in the Commonwealth at the time of contracting is eligible. An applicant may have other partners, but the application must be submitted by a single eligible entity.*

Questions on Funding and Match Amounts

- 30.** Can you please assist with the following questions? What is the maximum amount of funding available in the solicitation? Are entities allowed to stack this funding with other funds? For how long do entities have to operate the equipment? How long do entities have to deploy the equipment after award?

MassDEP Response: *Q1-The maximum processing grant award per applicant is \$500,000 (a minimum 25% match is required) and the maximum collection grant award per applicant is \$100,000 (a minimum 50% match required).*

Q2-Entities are allowed to combine this funding with other funds. However, RBDG grant awards and Recycling Loan Fund loans, when combined, may not exceed the total cost of a project for which a RBDG grant has been issued. RBDG grant funds cannot be used to repay Recycling Loan Fund loans.

Q3- As a condition of receiving the grant, grantees are required to meet their recycling and reuse goals for 3 years. MassDEP reserves the right to require the grantee to refund, in whole or in part, the grant funds if MassDEP determines that the grantee's success and level of effort is not satisfactory, or if the grantee moves the operation outside of Massachusetts within 3 years of receiving the grant.

Q4- At a minimum, the Grantee agrees to perform the grant supported activity within the Commonwealth for a period of five years from the date of execution of this Grant Agreement. For a minimum of five years, the Grantee shall not sell, lease, loan or otherwise transfer rights to any equipment or other materials purchased by the Grantee, in whole or in part, using Grant funds unless the Grantee has received prior written authorization from the Department.

- 31.** Could we include the value of the output produced from our proposed operation (since it certainly has a value!), even though it won't include actual monetary transactions?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, you should include the value of the output for purposes of a proforma as a part of application. We encourage you to review the proforma and evaluation criteria in our processing guidance document. However, this would not be eligible as a matching contribution. Matching contributions must be direct contributions from the applicant, exclusive of other state or federal grants or loans. The matching contribution must be for eligible expenses as defined for the collection grant category. Larger match amounts will be viewed favorably for grant evaluation purposes.*

32. We would appreciate guidance on the following items related to the required 25% match and the use of loans in project financing: **Required Match and Grant Disbursement Structure.** For the required 25% match, is the applicant expected to *contribute* those funds directly (i.e., the grant award covers only 75% of total eligible costs), or is the match provided in addition to the full grant amount? For example, if an applicant requests \$100,000 in grant funding and provides a \$25,000 match, would the total project funding be \$100,000 or \$125,000?

MassDEP Response - Q1- *if an applicant requests \$100,000 in grant funding and provides a minimum \$25,000 match, the total project cost must be at least \$125,000. These must be direct contributions from the applicant, exclusive of other state or federal grants or loans. The matching contribution must be for eligible expenses as defined for the applicable grant category. Larger match amounts will be viewed favorably for grant evaluation purposes.*

Use of Loans as Part of Project Financing (Beyond the Match)

If the applicant provides the required 25% match as an eligible cash contribution, may the remaining portion of total project costs be financed through a loan? For instance, if the total equipment cost is \$200,000, with a \$100,000 grant request and a \$25,000 cash match, can the remaining \$75,000 be covered through a loan that the applicant repays independently?

MassDEP Response - Q2- *Yes, financing may be used to fund other project costs.*

Loan-Financed Purchases and Reimbursement- Is it allowable for the full purchase of grant-eligible equipment to be made initially through a loan, with grant reimbursements then used to pay down that loan, assuming all other program requirements are met?

MassDEP Response – Q3- *Yes, this would be eligible. The only exception is that RBDG grant funds cannot be used to repay Recycling Loan Fund loans. Sources of funding should be identified clearly in the pro-forma statement submitted as part of the grant application.*

33. For the 25% match: I would like clarification that I'm approaching this concept correctly. For example, if we need \$100,000 total for a project, would our grant request be \$100,000 with 75% coming from the DEP and 25% coming from us? Or would the grant request be for \$75,000 and we'd be offering \$25,000 in addition to the \$75,000 request?

MassDEP Response: *A 25% match means that the matching funds are equal to 25% of the requested grant funding from MassDEP. For a \$100,000 project, the minimum match would be \$20,000, with the applicant requesting \$80,000 from MassDEP.*

34. Is the \$50,000 minimum a firm amount in the Processing category?

MassDEP Response: *Yes, \$50,000 is the minimum grant amount for the “processing” category.*

Schedule and Timing

39. It has an application deadline of April 3, 2026, but do you have an idea of when applicants would hear as to whether the grant had been awarded. I'm asking because what we are considering using the funds for is somewhat time-sensitive.

MassDEP Response: *MassDEP cannot provide a definite timeframe for grant notifications. The RBDG program guidance provides an estimated grant timeline, however this is subject to change.*