



# Department of Environmental Protection

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## Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant Response to Questions May 2025

Questions about the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant were due April 29, 2025. Below are MassDEP's responses to those questions. Applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on May 15, 2025.

### 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 specific to the project; event promotion and marketing; event space rental fees; and the employment 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 "Glossary of Terms" 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.

**Several questions sought clarification on the definition of a "new program" noted in this sentence in the guidelines:** "Note: Purchase of food service ware for establishing a new program or construction is not eligible."

In this context, a "new program" is one that's brand new and doesn't replace an existing program that's currently using single-use food service ware.

### We received several inquiries requesting clarification on eligible projects.

Eligible projects will reduce and prevent 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.

- Ocean and/or land clean-up projects.
- Building renovations that do not promote deconstruction or building material reuse.
- Distribution of “reusable” cups, bags, etc. that are not part of a tracked return/reuse system.

### **Other questions received:**

**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 subcontractor to an eligible entity. See “Eligible Applicants” on page 3 of the [Grant Guidelines](#).

**Q:** Are businesses or non-profits based in other states eligible to apply?

**A:** To be eligible, a business or non-profit must be registered with the MA Secretary of State. If you partner with an organization that’s registered with the MA Secretary of State, they could apply, and you could serve as a subcontractor on their project.

**Q:** Can a single applicant submit multiple applications?

**A:** Yes, you may submit more than one application.

**Q:** If we got this grant for a project last year and have not finished, are we eligible to apply again for a different project?

**A:** No, you will need to wait until your project has closed before applying for another Micro-Grant.

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

**A:** Grant funding will be distributed as a reimbursement. See “Grant Award Amount” on page 3 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for more information.

**Q:** Can you clarify what staffing costs are eligible?

**A:** The employment of temporary workers (e.g., contractors, consultants, paid interns, and specialists) for a specified, finite period is eligible. Funding for existing and/or regular staff time is not.

**Q:** Can MassDEP award this grant to municipalities with large Recycling Dividend Fund (RDP) balances? Does the existence of RDP funds in a municipality’s account make them ineligible for this grant?

**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. See 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:** Do we need hard numbers on project cost (with quotes) for the application submittal?

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

**Q:** What kinds of projects are considered for this grant? What is the application process?

**A:** See "Uses of Grant Funds" on pages 3 and 4 of the [Grant Guidelines](#) for a list of reuse and repair project ideas. The application process is outlined on pages 6 and 7 under "Grant Instructions, Timeline, and Expectations."

**Q:** I saw this eligibility as part of the requirement: "An organization or business (for-profit or non-profit) that is properly licensed to operate in Massachusetts." Our official company address is my home address. Do we need to do anything else to be eligible for this grant, or is our official address (my home address) good enough?

**A:** If your business is registered with the MA Secretary of State, it's eligible.

**Q:** We are running a pre-production trial of our cup sanitizing systems both in the Boston area and Portland, ME. Would only expenses associated with systems installed at locations within Massachusetts be eligible?

**A:** Correct, only expenses associated with MA locations are eligible.

**Q:** Would displaying at an appropriate industry trade show in the US (not in Massachusetts) be considered an eligible marketing expense?

**A:** No, that would not be considered an eligible expense.

**Q:** A big expense has been patents/intellectual property. Are lawyer fees and the associated filing fees they charge considered "temporary workers" for eligible expenses?

**A:** No, these fees are not eligible expenses.

**Q:** Currently, we store all our food in either a) cardboard boxes or b) plastic airtight containers. We would like to switch over all our food storage containers to tins. Is this eligible?

**A:** To be eligible, this type of project must replace single-use containers with reusable alternatives. Replacing one type of reusable container with another is not eligible.

**Q:** We currently use compostable items that are certified for commercial composting, but we would like to switch our packaging to one that is certified for home composting.

**A:** Switching from one type of compostable packaging to another is considered a compost project and is not eligible for this grant.

**Q:** We would like to switch over to a fully compostable label to minimize the waste of our production.

**A:** This is considered a compost project and is not eligible.

**Q:** We would like to add an automation to our checkout system that asks customers if they would like to "place an order or pay it forward by purchasing bulk food for someone in need." The funding would help us cover the cost of adding this feature to our website, transportation, additional packaging, etc. Is this eligible?

**A:** To be eligible, food collection, storage and distribution programs must rescue food that would otherwise go to waste.

**Q:** Is a newly launched business – not yet fully operational – still eligible to apply?

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

**Q:** Are recently licensed/registered businesses eligible for the Micro-Grant?

**A:** Yes, organizations recently licensed to do business in MA are eligible.

**Q:** Is working with a third-party warewashing service eligible?

**A:** Yes, working with a third-party warewashing service would be an eligible project as long it was helping an existing program switch from single-use food service ware to reusables.

**Q:** Can schools get a new dishwasher with this grant?

**A:** Yes, buying, installing, and fixing dishwashers are all eligible expenses as long as they help replace single-use food service ware with reusables.

**Q:** Is resale a requirement of this option [from the guidelines]: "Promote recovery and resale of used building materials in remodel, renovation, and new construction projects"? We currently cull and give away materials but could use a better storage and display area to be able to salvage more.

**A:** No, resale is not a requirement.

**Q:** Can you expand on the fix-it events? Could this be a one-time event 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:** Is a swap shop at the transfer station an eligible project?

**A:** No, a swap shop is not eligible. Swap shops are covered under the [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program Drop-off Equipment Grants](#).

**Q:** We are considering applying for a Micro-Grant to complete a regional inventory of reduce, reuse and repair initiatives in our region and prepare a webpage that uplifts them to our communities, the public and other potential users, as well as to organize a training session for towns and regional solid waste districts to understand how to improve their efforts. Would this be an eligible project and use of grant funds?

**A:** Yes.