

Sustainable Materials Recovery Program (SMRP)

Grant Questions and Answers

Application Period: April 1 – June 1, 2026

Question Period: April 1 – May 1, 2026

The Question and Answer (Q&A) period for the Spring 2026 SMRP grant cycle is now closed. The following document includes questions that were submitted through the online question form as well as those discussed via the chat function during the Spring 2026 Grant Webinar. Questions and answers that were submitted during the Spring 2025 grant cycle continue to be included in this document and noted as such, with any applicable updates to these questions noted in yellow highlighted and bold text. For more information, visit the [SMRP Grant website](#).

General Questions:

Q1: When will a model EPP policy and example(s) be available? **(Spring 2025)**

A1: On June 16, 2025, MassDEP hosted a webinar, “EPP Procurement and Sustainable Purchasing,” in collaboration with the Massachusetts Operational Services Division (OSD). All municipalities and regional districts were invited to attend. A link to the [webinar recording](#), presentation slides, an EPP Policy Template, sample policies from other municipalities, and additional guidance documents and resources are available under the [Minimum Eligibility Criteria section of the SMRP Grants webpage](#). **(UPDATED)**

Q2: Does the EPP policy have to be approved by a City Council, Board of Selectmen, or Town Meeting vote or can a mayor or Town Administrator approve the policy?

A2: MassDEP will accept signatures from the municipality’s Chief Executive Official such as the Mayor or Town Administrator, but we encourage and prefer a vote at a public meeting so that it is part of the public record.

Q3: Does a regional applicant such as a regional planning authority or regional solid waste district also have to adopt an EPP policy as part of the minimum eligibility requirements?

A3: Eligible regional governmental entities as defined in the [Grant Minimum Eligibility Requirements](#) may continue to utilize their Buy Recycled Policy OR may choose to adopt a broader sustainable purchasing policy or EPP policy as noted in their application on ReTRAC.

Q4: If we currently apply for and receive RDP grant funding annually, are we able to apply for other SMRP grants as well in the same year? Would our RDP grant funding be jeopardized if we were to apply and receive funding for other SMRP grants?

A4: Yes, municipalities can apply for other SMRP grants in addition to RDP in the same grant cycle. Their RDP funding will not be jeopardized.

Q5: Will cities and towns that are non-compliant with Section 3A of the Zoning Act be disqualified from receiving SMRP/RDP grants?

A5: Yes, receipt of grant funds will be contingent upon the grantee being able to certify that it will comply with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities

Act. Compliance with the MBTA Communities Act is determined by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities.

Q6: Please provide more detail on the definition of "dedicated account." Are you asking a municipality to open a separate bank account for RDP funds or have a separate line item (account line) on their accounting list like they do with other grant funds? The money is considered restricted and not part of the general fund money. **(Spring 2025)**

A6: No, we are not asking a municipality to have a separate bank account. A "dedicated account" can be a separate line item or fund managed by the municipality for specific funding sources. In the case of an RDP dedicated account, this means that the municipality will save all RDP funds awarded by MassDEP separately to ensure that these funds are utilized for approved waste reduction, reuse, and recycling. See the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#) document. Most municipalities (94 percent) indicated in their most recent RDP Spending Report that they already have a dedicated account. If a municipality does not, they will need to implement a dedicated account as described above within 30 days of notification of the RDP grant award.

Q7: Do the RDP Funds get allocated by the calendar year or fiscal year? **(Spring 2025)**

A7: RDP funds are awarded based on the fiscal year. For Spring 2025, this means that a municipality can earn RDP points for activities implemented between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025. The awards are expected to happen sometime in the Fall of 2025, which is the middle of the following Fiscal Year 2026.

Q8: If the RDP funds that we are approved for come in the middle of the fiscal year, do those have to be expended by June 30th of that year, or can we roll those over and use them in the next fiscal year. **(Spring 2025)**

A8: A municipality can roll them over and use them in the next fiscal year.

Q9: I teach 6th graders at [an elementary school]. I also run our school's recycling and composting program in our school's cafeteria. My school has about 1100 students (Grades 4-6); [the municipality] has a population of about 27,000 people. I'm looking for new sources of funding to maintain our contract with Black Earth, and I have heard a little about the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program. Is there a particular grant that you would recommend I apply for? **(Spring 2025)**

A9: [Eligible applicants for SMRP grants](#) include individual Massachusetts municipalities or regional governmental entities with legislative authorization to apply for grants on behalf of member municipalities. There is one ReTRAC account assigned per municipality, with the contact who is the person in charge of recycling programs, typically a representative from the Department of Public Works or Board of Health. There is not a specific grant for schools to help cover ongoing operating costs for recycling and composting services. However, these are expenses that a municipality could choose to fund using money accumulated from RDP grants. See the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#) document.

Drop-off Recycling Equipment Grant:

General

Q10: Are used containers eligible since new containers are so expensive?

A10: Yes, MassDEP will reimburse municipalities for a used or refurbished container, provided that it meets equipment requirements as described in the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#).

Q11: Are there criteria that need to be met for recycling, such as “How” or “Where” for recycling glass and/or paint?

A11: While there are no specific standards or criteria for how or where a municipality should send these items for recycling, there are questions within the grant application that address this and applications are evaluated based on the response. For example, there is a question asking if the applicant has identified a glass processor. If the applicant were simply to write “No” or “I don’t know” as a response, they would not be scored as highly as a different applicant that has identified an outlet for the material and provided that information.

Bulky Rigid Plastics Container

Q12: Can we get the signs for bulky plastic without the grant for a roll-off?

A12: No, the \$8,000 drop-off center equipment grant must be used for equipment, which is the actual roll-off container used to collect and store bulky rigid plastics. Municipalities may use RDP funds to purchase educational signs as applicable under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Cardboard Compactor

Q13: Can the cardboard compactor be located at a school?

A13: The grant does allow cardboard compactors to be located at various municipal sites, including schools, provided that it is also open and accessible to residents. Please note that applications will be evaluated based on the amount of the target material (i.e., tonnage) captured for recovery and recycling as noted in the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#).

Q14: Why is the cardboard compactor intended to only collect OCC cardboard and not mixed paper? **(Spring 2025)**

A14: MassDEP’s waste ban inspections show that large amounts of cardboard are disposed of in the trash. Because cardboard is a high-volume material that takes up a lot of space, and when separated from mixed paper for recycling it is more valuable, using a compactor to collect cardboard would provide the greatest increase in efficiency. In addition, municipalities with cart collection of recyclables would benefit from providing a separate collection for the large quantity of cardboard from online shipments. These grants will be competitive, and it will be important to demonstrate impact on the amount of cardboard that can be captured for recycling.

Q15: If the cardboard compactor is a reimbursement, when does the purchase need to take place? **(Spring 2025)**

A15: All purchases must take place after the municipality is awarded a grant and signs a statement of work, typically in the Fall/Winter of 2025. MassDEP cannot reimburse for any purchases made before a grant contract is signed. The municipality will have until the end of June 2026 to submit reimbursement requests.

Q16: Your info says to "expand an existing recycling program". Our need for a compactor is to compact our current paper/cardboard collection so as to reduce the required number of hauls to the out-of-town processing facility. Does this qualify for a grant application? We do collect comingle and paper/cardboard. **(Spring 2025)**

A16: Municipalities are not eligible for a compactor for use with commingled paper/cardboard. The “cardboard compactor” grant is intended for old, corrugated cardboard (OCC) only and specifies that the target material is cardboard. See the Chart on Page 1 of the of the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#). Also see the response to questions above.

Glass Container

Q17: NOTE: We received two similar questions related to the type of container allowed for source-separated glass: Is there an option for the municipality to choose a closed-top roll-off for glass collection as opposed to an open-top roll off? **(Spring 2025)**

A17: The equipment offering for a glass container specifies that the container should be an open-top roll-off as it is generally the standard container for glass collected at transfer stations and what MassDEP understands as being the most efficient. However, we can consider these requests on a case-by-case basis if there's a particular reason why a municipality prefers an alternative type of container. Note that the grant allows municipalities to purchase a gable-top cover with this grant funding. See Page 1 of the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#).

Q18: I already purchased a glass container; can I get reimbursed through the grant? **(Spring 2025)**

A18: No, grantees are not eligible to receive grant funds for items that they have already purchased.

Food Waste Collection Bins

Q19: Would counter-top food waste collection containers ever be considered for the municipalities that don't offer curbside pickup?

A19: Counter-top kitchen scrap bins, compostable liners, and other food waste containers are approved expenses for municipalities under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q20: Would MassDEP fund (under drop-off equipment) bear-proofing fenced enclosure or shed for compost carts? Our vendor provides and swaps the collection carts, but many rural transfer stations need to bear-proof the carts - or not collect food waste.

A20: Yes, municipalities can customize food waste collection systems (e.g., carts, dumpsters, containers, and enclosures), based on their specific needs. As noted in the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#), if the collection carts are leased or purchased through another mechanism, such as the vendor, the municipality must provide a copy of the contract or lease agreement. The municipality could then use the \$3,000 grant award for other eligible expenses, such as building a bear-proof enclosure.

Q21: Does a transfer station that is adding a food waste collection bin need a site assessment exemption form or can they submit a transfer station certification form to the DEP Regional Office in which one identifies this “change” (as instructed for other types of drop-off equipment)?

A21: Municipalities looking to set up a new food waste collection site at an otherwise exempt municipal drop-off center, should complete and submit a [Solid Waste Site Assignment exemption notification form](#) for recycling and organics management activities, pursuant to 310 CMR 16.03. Municipalities that plan to locate the equipment at a permitted transfer station should notify their MassDEP Regional Office and/or local Board of Health for next steps.

Q22: We already have project funding to establish 15 drop-off food waste locations around the city. We are hoping to use the grant to purchase certified compostable liner bags and kitchen countertop food waste containers for residents to transport their food waste to the drop-off bins. Given we plan to have 15 sites, how should we answer the question “How many sites do you propose to collect food waste (maximum 4)?” Or should we put 0 since we are not applying for this funding for the site itself?

A22: The grant is intended to fund the food waste collection system site itself (i.e., the carts, containers, or dumpsters), with any extra funds available for other expenses including counter-top kitchen scrap bins, compostable liners, etc. If the collection system used onsite is leased or purchased through another mechanism, the municipality must provide a copy of the contract or lease agreement, or a photo of equipment to be eligible for these other expenses. At maximum, MassDEP would consider this request as one site, and fund \$3,000 total, but this is subject to grant application review and evaluation. In most cases, municipalities are encouraged to utilize their RDP funds to pay for these other expenses, identified in the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q23: Can the funds for food waste drop-off be used to purchase containers that utilize apps and measure fullness such as Big Belly or metroSTOR? **(Spring 2025)**

A23: Yes, a municipality can buy whatever container works best for them with the available funds.

Q24: To qualify for the drop-off equipment grant, specifically for drop-off food waste containers (like metroSTOR or big belly), must the municipality pay for the hauling of the food? **(Spring 2025)**

A24: Yes, the municipality is responsible for coordinating and paying for the hauling costs of their food waste collected from their drop-off locations. A list of eligible uses of grant funds can be found on page 2 of the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#). Please note that RDP funds can also be used to pay for food waste hauling costs. See page 2 of the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#) document.

Paint Shed

Q25: Does the Paint Drop off Shed add points to the RDP Application? **(Spring 2025)**

A25: For the RDP grant application, a municipality is reporting on what they're already doing in this current fiscal year (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). Programs implemented after June 30, 2025 would only apply to the next grant application issued in Spring 2026.

Reuse Swap Shed

Q26: Could drop-off equipment funds be used to buy materials to build a swap shop structure that best suits our needs, or does it need to be a pre-assembled structure?

A26: Yes, MassDEP can reimburse grantees for the materials required to build a structure/shed, including wood/lumber, roofing materials, shelving, doors, a ramp, etc. However, the reimbursement cannot be used to cover personnel or labor costs.

Q27: NOTE: This question was submitted for consideration under the Universal Waste Shed grant category but may be better suited for the Reuse Swap Shed option. Our Town is interested in applying for a grant to purchase a Swap Shop Shed. The Town uses the shed to keep items out of the weather to encourage re-use of no longer needed items from residents. The Swap Shop Shed is very popular but limited due to the current shed size. The Swap Shop reduces the items ending up in the garbage. Is a shed for this purpose eligible? Are there any recommendations on how to strengthen the application, i.e., to have pictures or what other important information?

A27: Yes, MassDEP offers up to \$8,000 for a new Reuse Swap Shed. MassDEP cannot reimburse a municipality for a swap shed that they already have in use, but the municipality could consider repurposing an older, smaller shed that no longer fits their needs for another use and applying for a grant for a new one, provided they have not received the same grant previously. More information can be found in the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#).

Universal Waste Shed

Q28: Has FAC110 been updated with contractors and pricing for July 2025, on? **(Spring 2025)**

A28: Yes. State Contract WMR001 for Hazardous/Universal, Medical, Electronic Waste Disposal, and Emergency Response replaced the FAC110 contract. WMR001 was last updated on April 7, 2026, and is [accessible at this link](#). **(UPDATED)**

Q29: If a Universal waste shed is already at our recycling center, can this grant be used for an expansion/renovation of the existing shed? For example, our recycling center does not accept paint waste at this time. Would a renovation of the existing shed to accommodate paint waste fall within the scope of the grant? **(Spring 2025)**

A29: Paint vendors and universal waste vendors are distinct so storing these materials in the same shed/structure would not necessarily be ideal. This is another situation that would likely need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis to understand if there's a particular reason why a municipality requires this method of collection. It is important to note that the grant award allows MassDEP to award a municipality "up to \$5,000" and this is intended for a brand-new shed or piece of equipment. If MassDEP were to approve expansion or renovation of an existing structure, the award may be adjusted to reflect a lesser amount.

Food Waste Collection Carts:

Q30: Can a grant for composting with a contractor (Black Earth) be combined with request for backyard composters for residents who want to do their own composting?

A30: The Food Waste grant does not cover the cost of backyard compost bins, but they are an approved expense under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q31: With the food waste bin [cart] grant, can municipalities split the cost and use some for bins and some for subscription? **(Spring 2025)**

A31: The food waste cart grant is for the carts themselves. MassDEP requires that the municipality is also funding a portion of the program, whether that's for the balance of the cost of the carts, additional carts, bag liners, or towards the cost of hauling and subscriptions. But the \$25 per household awarded for the Food Waste Cart grant may only be used to pay for carts. A list of eligible uses of grant funds can be found on pages 1-2 of the [Food Waste Collection Cart Grant Details Document](#).

Q32: In the Organics Carts grant, it says that "phase-in style" organics collection programs are eligible, but I heard in the SMRP webinar that pilot programs are ineligible. **(Spring 2025)**

A32: Pilot programs are no longer eligible under this grant. The Food Waste Collection Carts Grant Guidelines document specifies that "Municipalities with new or phased-in programs must commit to operating the program for a minimum of 2 years." See page 2 under "Use of Grant Funds" of the [Food Waste Collection Cart Grant Details Document](#).

Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) Program Funding:

Q33: [Our municipality] is moving to automated pickup, but we already have a one-bag free model. If we keep the trash at 35 gallons for the new carts, can we apply for reimbursement for the new carts?

A33: Yes, in this scenario, using 35-gallon carts for basic level service is considered a modified PAYT program and the municipality would be eligible for grant funding of \$30 per cart, up to \$300,000.

Q34: If you move from PAYT bags to 35-gallon cart, do you have to use PAYT bags in the carts?

A34: No, municipality is not required to use PAYT bags in 35-gallon carts. The former scenario is considered a modified PAYT. This means that everything that fits inside the trash cart is covered and only the overflow bags that do not fit inside the cart must be official PAYT bags. The latter scenario of using PAYT bags also in 35-gallon carts, allows the municipality to keep their “Full PAYT” status. While the amount of PAYT grant funding that could be awarded remains the same at \$30 per cart, municipalities may receive more “points” and therefore, funding, for maintaining a Full PAYT program through the [“Solid Waste Reduction” section of the RDP Details Document](#).

Q35: NOTE: The question that was submitted included commentary of one individual municipality and included many details related to their specific program. It has been edited to better reflect the specific question only: ...In reviewing the grant paperwork, there appears to be a discrepancy regarding a few spots listed, namely "Use of Grant Funds" and the reference towards just 35-gallon trash carts (assuming weekly collection), and the non-inclusion of 64-gallon trash carts (only collected every other week), as the Program Structure "Updates to Existing PAYT Program" has recently been changed to accommodate 64 -gallon carts (collected every other week), with a \$5 award/cart amount.... [Our municipality is asking for] clarification, and ultimately permission to use any awarded grant funds "towards the purchase of" 64-gallon trash carts based on our collection schedule of trash and recycling every other week, consistent with the existing language for 35-gallon carts (weekly collection). **(Spring 2025)**

A35: The language is intentional. MassDEP does not approve of the use of \$5 per household (HH) for this grant option for the purchase of 64-gallon trash carts. This \$5 per HH served can be used towards the municipality’s expenses for other approved funds including PAYT bags, outreach and educational materials, enforcement, and a program coordinator (i.e., personnel). See Page 2 of the [PAYT Details Document](#).

Q36: What is the process for determining “other approved expenses” for the grant? **(Spring 2025)**

A36: While the high-level items are listed under “Use of Funds” in Page 2 of the [PAYT Details Document](#), the Agency does realize that sometimes expenses may not fit squarely into these guidelines. These “other approved expenses” would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, most likely during the required Technical Assistance (TA) process before the municipality applies for the grant.

Q37: Can we use PAYT [grant funding] for yard waste bags? We are thinking about enhancing our program here for now. **(Spring 2025)**

A37: No, yard waste bags are not an eligible expense for PAYT grant funds. See “Use of Funds” in Page 2 of the [PAYT Details Document](#).

Q38: How would the 64-gallon every-other-week collection be implemented into our program already where we have 64-gallon carts? **(Spring 2025)**

A38: If a municipality currently collects residential trash on a weekly basis, the municipality will have to modify its collection and hauling contract to collect trash every other week. MassDEP recommends that the municipality first apply for a [Technical Assistance Grant](#) to evaluate whether there is local support to pursue a change such as this.

Recycling Dividends Program (RDP):

General

Q39: NOTE: MassDEP received several questions from applicants submitting links and other supporting documentation, asking if the items would qualify for certain RDP points. The specific questions have been removed from the record upon subsequent request from the municipality.

A39: MassDEP does not comment on specific application questions in terms of guaranteed qualification of RDP points – links and other supporting documentation are reviewed during the grant evaluation period, following submissions on June 1. Municipalities should contact their Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) for further information.

Q40: For the links to information on our websites, do you want the link that brings up the flyer or the link to the page where the resident can pull up the flyer? For instance, Bulky Items -- I can link directly to the flyer or to the page where the resident can access it.

A40: Please link directly to the document (e.g., flyer) as that will ease review, but only if the document will be available to view throughout the summer. We need to be able to access the document at any time through August when our evaluations end. If there's a chance that the document will be updated and the direct link broken, link to the page that contains it instead and note this in the "Comments" section of the RDP application.

Q41: When entering links for RDP points for the towns can I utilize [a regional solid waste district] website?... Some of the small towns struggle when it comes to websites. I am also going to request each town has on their municipal web site text stating "members [regional solid waste district], please see [website URL] for information". Will this Satisfy the RDP information?

A41: The individual municipalities should have links and/or supporting documentation on their OWN municipal website. Residents may not know that the municipality is a member of a regional solid waste district and will not immediately know to check a different website. Municipalities can link to the solid waste district from their own website as long as they are directing residents to the regional website with clear instructions, rather than a general "for more information..." link. The wording of the text should make it clear that this is where residents can learn more about the specific programs and opportunities available to them. For example, appropriate text could be: "Learn more about backyard composting here..."

Q42: I discovered today that Mass EOEEA 2022 Updated Environment Justice Map added [our municipality]. However, [our municipality] is not listed on your EJ Community list for this year or last year, which impacts the amount of funding per point earned. Would you please update your list for this year to include [our municipality], as well as the other 17 municipalities added in 2022. If not, we would appreciate a reason why [our municipality] is not accurately listed. **(Spring 2025)**

A42: The Environmental Justice (EJ) designation for RDP is unique for this grant only. It represents a small subset of all municipalities identified by the Commonwealth. This subset is defined as those communities in which 45 percent or more of their residents live in an EJ Census Block Group that meets combined criteria for either 1) minority population AND income ("MI") components OR 2) minority population, income, AND English isolation ("MIE") components. The criteria and definitions for the "RDP-EJ" designation is further detailed on pages 2-3 in the [RDP Details Document](#). When reviewing the specific details for this municipality, it appears that it meets the EJ population definition for Income (I) only and the percentage of residents included in this

population is 15 percent. The Town does not meet the criteria for minority population (M) and English language isolation (E), nor the 45 percent residential population requirement.

Bulky Item Collection

Q43: Does it count if the hauler direct-bills and collects for the bulky items in a curbside program?

A43: Yes, this qualifies as long as the hauler information (fees and contact information) is provided on the municipal website. On the application, please be sure to provide a direct link to the municipal website where the relevant information is located.

Q44: Bulk items – we allow residents 1 bulk item per month. We don't charge residents on the day of pick up because the residents are charged an annual fee with a bill sent to residents from the treasury department. Can we get a point for this?

A44: No. To receive the point in this category, residents must be charged a fee of at least \$5 for at least 3 of the following 5 bulky items (i.e., upholstered furniture, wood furniture, toilets, sinks, carpet) placed for trash pickup, regardless of other fees or payments for municipal solid waste and recycling services, including annual fees.

Q45: Bulky items – we have two bulk amnesty weeks per year. Participating units can put out two large and two small bulk items at no additional charge. Otherwise, residents pay \$33.20 per bulk item. We have received this point as of last year. I am confirming that this is still good to go.

A45: No. To receive the point in this category, residents must be charged a fee of at least \$5 for at least 3 of the following 5 bulky items (i.e., upholstered furniture, wood furniture, toilets, sinks, carpet) placed for trash pickup, regardless of timing. Upon reviewing the application submitted by this municipality last year, MassDEP has confirmed that they claimed “None of the Above” and therefore did not receive a point in this category.

Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHARM)

Q46: My question is that we are a very small rural town and most people in town use kitchen compost buckets and compost their food waste in their own yard composting bin. Are there any type of CHARM credits for small rural towns that compost food waste? We don't need to collect it because residents compost on site.

A46: Food waste is not one of the items that qualify for RDP CHARM points. There is a separate [“Organics/Food Waste” section of the RDP Details Document](#), where municipalities can earn credit for providing residents backyard compost bins at cost. Municipalities can use their RDP funds to provide residents with kitchen-counter buckets, liners, etc. under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q47: If items must be recycled or reused, do you provide outlet options? At the MassRecycle conference, a question came up around recycling options for carpet, and it didn't seem like any existed.

A47: MassDEP does not provide outlet options or endorse specific businesses, but your MAC may be able to help you find businesses that take the specific items in your area based on what nearby municipalities are doing. Municipalities can also check the [RecyclingWorks search tool](#) to find outlets for specific items.

Q48: Does participation in a reciprocal arrangement for HHW including oil-based paint count for accepting paint 6x per year?

A48: The answer is that it depends. While oil-based paint collected through HHW events for disposal or fuel-blending is allowed under CHARM, the other conditions detailed in the [“CHARM” section of the RDP Details Document](#) must be met. For example, oil-based paint must be collected at least six times per year; the collection event must be within the municipality claiming the point, or its adjacent community, or within a 10 miles radius (for rural communities only); the end processor must be identified; and the information must be listed on the municipality’s [Beyond the Bin listing](#). Additional information about this collection can be added to the “Comments” section at the end of the application.

Q49: Beyond the bin – do you want collection events on there?

A49: Yes, if the item you are claiming in CHARM is one of the seasonal items (paint, marine boat plastic/wrap or agricultural wrap, shredded paper, string lights, yard waste) collected only at specific times or events throughout the year, that should be added to the municipal listing’s “Important Note” section. For example, you could add: “Each April, we hold an event for shredded paper. See municipal website or call for details.” Items that are collected year-round should be included as an accepted material under the “Materials Accepted” section of the listing. To add a listing, please see the [instructions and video tutorial](#). To update an existing listing, please email mass.recycles@mass.gov.

Q50: Can the Paint Swap Shed be open seasonally to earn the RDP Point, [including being] closed during winter to avoid freezing paint. **(Spring 2025)**

A50: Yes, the paint shed can be open seasonally in RDP. The requirement is that it must be open at least 6 months out the year as noted in the CHARM section, page 3 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Q51: Who takes Solar Panels to be recycled? We'd be interested in doing it but can't find anyone in MA. **(Spring 2025)**

A51: A few options that MassDEP is aware of include Good Point Recycling in Brockton, METech Recycling in Worcester, and Complete Recycling Solutions (CRS), a TerraCycle company, in Fall River. Municipalities can also search the [business directory from Recycling Works Massachusetts](#) for PV solar panel recycling outlets. Note that MassDEP does not endorse individual companies for recycling services.

Q52: For the CHARM points, we don't offer drop-off for large appliances, mattresses, and yard waste. However, we offer weekly [curbside] collection of each. Could we count these items since the access to residents is the same (if not, better)? **(Spring 2025)**

A52: Yard waste collection specifies curbside pickup as applicable. See optional item #16 in the CHARM section, page 4 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#). Mattresses and large appliances are not granted the same exception for curbside collection; however, we could consider this in future years.

Q53: Since yard waste is listed as a CHARM item I wanted to see if I can use my RDP funds to pay for the grinding of yard waste. We collect grass and leaves at our Compost Center. We pay a company to come in and grind the material and haul it away. **(Spring 2025)**

A53: Yes, a woodchipper or stump grinder is included in the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#) document, on page 1 under “Equipment”.

Q54: NOTE: The question that was submitted included commentary of one individual municipality and included many details related to their specific program. It has been edited to better reflect the question being asked: We have been collecting all universal waste for the past 20+ years and if not being open for the month of February disqualifies us from receiving points towards the grant, [we request] that you take in consideration the reasons why we have to close [this one month], recognize the efforts that we have made to make sure that residents can still recycle some items during that month, and [consider us eligible] for charm points. **(Spring 2025)**

A54: Any special circumstances or additional information that is specific and unique to the municipality should be documented in the municipality’s RDP application, under the “Comments” section at the end of the application. Please note that SMRP is a competitive grant program. Applicants may apply for whatever category they feel they meet and MassDEP staff will evaluate their award based on the information provided in the application; there are no guarantees for approval.

Q55: For the “paint” CHARM item – we only accept oil-based paints. Does that qualify?

A55: Yes, the collection of oil-based paint meets the CHARM criteria. **(Spring 2025)**

Curbside Recycling Regulations

Q56: We have regular recycling audits conducted by our contractor, Casella. Do the audits need to be conducted by the municipality, or do these contractor-conducted audits qualify? If this qualifies, I believe both of the following options are applicable to us. Which would you recommend we select? The Comprehensive Hauler Regulations: Municipality is actively enforcing regulations, including bundled trash and recycling services, that apply to both residents and businesses. Mandatory recycling is required. [3 points] or the Mandatory and Quality Recycling: Municipality regularly enforces these rules AND is measuring the results through annual recycling audits to assess contamination levels. [3 points]. **(Spring 2025)**

A56: The recycling contamination audit should be conducted by the vendor and documentation in the form of the audit results, including contamination rate, must be attached to the application. As SMRP is a competitive grant, MassDEP cannot advise applicants which grant option they should select and there are no guarantees for approval. Municipalities should consider all options and the requirements for each. If they are still unsure, they can consult with their [Municipal Assistance Coordinator \(MAC\)](#) for guidance.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Recycling Programs

Q57: The DEI section of the grant application, section 5 states that distribution or posting of translated guides for handling HHW would qualify for the point and that these are available on recyclesmartma.org, but I've since been told that there are no guides available. Could RecycleSmart MA provide those as a resource?

A57: It has come to our attention that the online application in ReTRAC does indeed reference HHW guides as available from Recycle Smart MA. However, this is a typo. Recycle Smart MA does not have these translated materials available. For full details and the most accurate information, applicants should reference the grant guidelines in the [“DEI” section of the RDP Details Document](#), which DO NOT include this erroneous reference. MassDEP apologizes for any confusion or inconvenience. Municipalities are encouraged to use RDP funds to translate outreach materials such as HHW guides.

Q58: From Optional DEI on page six of the RDP – item #9. Recycling services are provided by the municipality to large apartment buildings (6 or more units), mobile home parks, condominium complexes, and/or public housing. Does this include all of each group? For example, if we offer recycling pickup at most of the public housing but cannot for some reason pick up for all of them?
A58: If the majority of these units or types of buildings are included in the municipal trash and recycling program, it will meet the requirement. The applicant should explain in the activity’s description box and in the “Comments” section of the RDP application as to why there are some exceptions in service.

Q59: For the optional DEI Activities #1: We offer a reduced fee for senior citizens to purchase a Transfer Station Access Permit. Does this qualify as a residential hardship? **(Spring 2025)**
A59: Yes, MassDEP has accepted seniors as an applicable group for this category. As noted in this section, MassDEP acknowledges that low-income and hardship classification varies amongst municipalities. When selecting applicable activities, use the municipality’s classification standards. See the last two sentences of opening paragraph in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Recycling Programs section, page 5 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Q60: Will having links on our Town website to the recycling guides in multiple languages be sufficient, or do we have to actually have the guides posted on the website? **(Spring 2025)**
A60: Clearly labeled links that go directly to the translated document are allowed.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Q61: We have never formally notified MassDEP through their Notification for Household Hazardous Waste Events system. However, we’ve made it clear with our MAC and through a significant amount of promotion/outreach that we conduct household hazardous waste events for 6 months out of the year. Is that sufficient? **(Spring 2025)**
A61: All municipalities should utilize the notification system form as this is a requirement of MassDEP under [regulation 310 CMR 30.392](#). This is also a requirement of the grant as the notification system is cross-checked with the information provided by municipalities in the RDP grant application. See the third sentence of the second paragraph in the Household Hazardous Waste section, page 6 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Organics/Food Waste

Q62: With food waste being such a big target material, why can munis only get points for one organics reduction program, rather than for each type of diversion program they offer (i.e., selling low-cost compost bins AND a curbside preferred vendor program)? It seems that we need to take an "all of the above" approach to make a dent.
A62: MassDEP understands that the food waste collection landscape continues to evolve and that municipalities have unique needs. We will continue to review the organics category in RDP for future grant rounds. For this Spring26 grant cycle, municipalities can get up to 2 points if they “bundle” the distribution of backyard compost bins and have a food waste drop-off site.

Q63: Both of the following options are true for our municipality. Which should we select? The Curbside Collection: Food waste was collected curbside at least weekly from households participating in a municipally funded or subsidized private subscription collection program. A municipal contribution of at least \$35 towards the yearly rate or provision of a food waste cart to each participating household may qualify as a municipal contribution. [1-2 points] or the Drop-off

Center Collection: Food waste was collected at a municipally owned collection center AND the municipality offered home compost bins to residents at cost or less with an effective promotion and outreach program. [2 points]. **(Spring 2025)**

A63: As SMRP is a competitive grant, MassDEP cannot advise applicants which grant option they should select and there are no guarantees for approval. Municipalities should consider all options and the requirements for each. If they are still unsure, they can consult with their [Municipal Assistance Coordinator \(MAC\)](#).

Recycling Center Access

Q64: Regarding the municipal recycling center and allowing residents not served by the City's solid waste program - is notifying residents via our social media pages and our website an acceptable notification?

A64: To receive points in this category, annual notification is required and applicants must attach supporting documentation in the form of a word document, PDF, or other image. Posts on social media are acceptable if the applicant attaches a screenshot showing the post on the municipality's official social media channel, with the date of the post clear.

Q65: NOTE: MassDEP received two similar questions regarding whether municipalities were allowed to charge a fee for businesses and non-residents to tip recyclables at their recycling center. **(Spring 2025)**

A65: Yes, a fee can be charged for all options under the Recycling Center Access section on pages 7-8 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Reuse Programs

Q66: Section 8, Page 8, Item #4, Does our ban on polystyrene to-go containers count as one item?

A66: Yes, a ban on polystyrene containers is considered a ban on one single-use item. In order to receive credit for this option within the ["Reuse" section of the RDP Details Document](#), a municipality needs to document a ban on two single-use items. Please see the Reuse details for what other single-use items qualify.

Q67: Will a regional repair event count as credit for multiple towns? **(Spring 2025)**

A67: Yes, a regional repair event would fit if the municipality applying for this point provides significant monetary and/or in-kind donations to the event organizers AND promotes the repair events on its website/social media platforms. See optional item #9 in the Reuse Programs section, page 9 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Waste Prevention Outreach and Education

Q68: For RecycleSmart MA -- do we need to have the large widget or is the smaller one OK?

A68: Please utilize the widget size that works best for your website.

Q69: NOTE: MassDEP received two similar questions as to whether municipalities could claim credit for sharing Recycle Smart MA social posts on Facebook Groups that were not owned by the municipality. In at least one of the cases, the municipality does not have its own social media account. **(Spring 2025)**

A69: While the grant states that these shared posts must be on a municipal social media platform, in the event a municipality does not have their own social media page, if they share the post to a public community page that is geared towards the residents of the specific municipality, they can

claim credit. This type of unique situation should be documented in the municipality's RDP application, under the "General Comments" section at the end of the application. See optional item #14 in the Waste Prevention Outreach and Education section, page 11 of the [RDP Grant Details Document](#).

Q70: Do the pizza boxes have to meet certain criteria to be recycled due to the oil on them? **(Spring 2025)**

A70: Greasy pizza boxes are acceptable for recycling. They should be empty (no plastic tables, food bits, wax paper).

Q71: If the Recyclopedia widget cannot be added to our municipal webpage due to a technical error that isn't resolved with troubleshooting, will our municipality lose the RDP Waste Reduction Outreach points? **(Spring 2025)**

A71: MassDEP would not intentionally penalize a municipality for their inability to meet a requirement if it is beyond their control. We understand that there are some instances when technical issues cannot be overcome. If you have exhausted the tips in the troubleshooting guidance and still cannot embed the widget, you should document this in your RDP application under the "Comments" section at the end of the application. MassDEP will review on a case-by-case basis.

Waste Reduction Projects:

Q72: Could a muni partnership with an organization such as The Great Exchange qualify?

A72: Yes, the municipality could apply for a Waste Reduction Grant and partner with a non-profit organization to implement the project. Note that a maximum of 15 percent of the grant funds awarded is to be used for non-capital expenditures, such as a design or engineering, unless otherwise approved by MassDEP, as described in the [Waste Reduction Project Details Document](#).

Q73: Can RPAs apply for funding on behalf of their communities? And does DEP also offer any planning-type grants to, for example, fund the creation of regional solid waste plan? Something that would guide the types of investments that were discussed [on the grant webinar] today.

A73: Yes, regional planning authorities are eligible to apply for grant funds. While not a specific "planning" grant, municipalities or other eligible regional entities may choose to submit a proposal for such a project under the Waste Reduction Project application; however, a successful project proposal would likely require more than just a "plan" as a deliverable and need to focus on execution or implementation. As noted above, a maximum of 15 percent is allowed for non-capital expenditures. The intent of the grant is to help fund initiatives that will expand the scope or effectiveness of reuse, recycling, composting, or household hazardous waste programs. The [Waste Reduction Project Details Document](#) includes examples of projects that would be eligible for funding. Municipalities and regional entities can use their Regional Small-scale or RDP funds to pay for consultants or contractors to help them develop model programming under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q74: We were previously awarded a grant two years ago for our ramp donation program where we recycle metal ramps and reuse them on those in need of a ramp but cannot afford them. Would this program qualify again for this grant?

A74: MassDEP would not award a grant for the same project a second time, nor would MassDEP fund operational or ongoing expenses through a grant program. Municipalities may consider using

RDP funds to facilitate reuse and donation programs under the [RDP Approved Spending Categories](#).

Q75: Would a waste reduction grant fund a rural regional recycling consolidation project that is located at a private hauler's facility? For example, would grant funds provide an additional fabric structure for tipping recyclables from town transfer stations and fund a 100-yard transfer trailer to consolidate individual town loads. This would reduce the inefficiencies and high cost to towns of direct hauling small amounts of recyclables in a roll-off container (1-4 tons) directly to the recycling processing facility which is over an hour away. The additional capital equipment would allow the private hauler to consolidate recyclables at their existing site. A municipal entity would "own" the building and equipment and have an agreement with the private hauler for its use.

A75: Establishment of a regional recycling program at a site, including equipment for collection and consolidation would be considered an eligible project for a Waste Reduction grant proposal if the intent is to increase tonnages and amounts/types of materials that are diverted from disposal for recycling and reuse.

Q76: Would SMRP/WRP funds be able to support a part-time staff person (manager) of a newly established CHaRM site under the term "new personnel"?

A76: Establishment of a CHaRM (Center for Hard to Recycle Materials), including new staff or personnel needed for planning and design, or to get the new site up and running would be considered an eligible project for a Waste Reduction grant proposal. However, SMRP grant funds are not intended to pay for ongoing operational costs so continued funding sources of staff after the launch of the project would need to be identified in the proposal to explain how it will be sustained after grant funding ends.

Q77: Our city is interested in piloting a CHARM facility which accepts cardboard, Styrofoam, metal, books, textiles, etc. Initially, we would like to keep it to just our municipality, but plan to expand it to 2-3 smaller surrounding towns in subsequent years. Is it possible to begin with just one city then expand in subsequent years to a regional CHARM facility? We feel this will position the pilot project for success in year one then expansion will have a higher probability of success and fewer issues.

A77: While the municipality could indicate in their proposal that it plans to eventually expand their CHARM facility to act as a regional site, if the project proposal is focused on developing a CHARM for the host municipality only, it would not be considered a "regional project" and would be evaluated as such.

Q78: Would MassDEP consider a grant for new staff to explore/create a regional solid waste district/cooperative and/or identify a location for a regional recycling consolidation center in order to create more efficient and cost-effective hauling and reduce GHG emissions? If so, when does MassDEP approval happen to allow for more than 15% of funds to be used for new staff for this project?

A78: Waste Reduction grants can provide funding for new staff or personnel needed for planning and designing a new regional recycling site. If the applicant believes they will need to allocate more than 15% of total funds for personnel/staff, they should indicate so in their proposal and provide necessary justification so that MassDEP can review during the evaluation process. Applicants can also consider matching funds for this expense.

Q79: NOTE: This question was submitted for consideration under the Waste Reduction Project grant category but may be better suited for the Food Waste Collection equipment option within the Drop-off Equipment Grant. However, we are including the response here because it is where the applicant is likely to look. Is it possible to obtain grant funding to add additional public compost drop-off bins and to support the cost of pickup of the food waste by our vendor instead of purchasing bins for households? We have two locations with public compost drop-offs currently that have been successful, and we would like to add other locations. **(Spring 2025)**

A79: MassDEP is offering up to \$12,000 for municipalities to establish or expand residential food waste collection at up to four drop-off sites (\$3,000 per site). This equipment may include carts or dumpsters and other public space containers. The sites must be publicly accessible and located on municipal property. For full details of the grant opportunity, see the [Drop-off Equipment Details Document](#).