HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Residential Waste Reduction and Recycling Funding Policy

January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2028

I. Policy Overview

A. Background

The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners has determined that residential waste reduction and recycling programs support county goals to make progress toward zero waste, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and eliminate disparities associated with waste disposal. The county has adopted the goals established in State Statute and by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in its Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan and developed a Residential Waste Reduction and Recycling Funding Policy to help reach a 75% recycling rate by 2030.

B. SCORE funds

The county receives funding from the state's Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) for the development and implementation of waste reduction and recycling programs. SCORE funds are based on revenue received by the State of Minnesota from the solid waste management tax (SWMT) on garbage services and are subject to change based on the SWMT revenue received by the state and funds allocated by the legislature.

C. Support for city programs

City recycling programs play an important role in the county's integrated solid waste management system. The county has funded city recycling programs for over 30 years and will use this policy to make available all SCORE funds to cities for residential waste reduction and recycling programs. SCORE funds will be dedicated to four different purposes: 1) general funding for waste reduction and recycling programs, 2) curbside organics recycling programs, 3) organics drop-off sites, and 4) multifamily waste reduction and recycling. Funds distributed to cities for a calendar year will be based on SCORE funds received by the county in the state's corresponding fiscal year.

D. Term of the policy

Hennepin County is committed to implementing this policy from January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2028. The county may revise this policy to align with strategic priorities developed in the zero-waste plan or solid waste management plan. In addition, the county may revise this policy, if it determines changes are needed to assure compliance with state law and MPCA goals established for metropolitan counties. If SCORE funds are eliminated from the state budget or significantly reduced, the county will consult with cities at that time and develop a recommendation to the board on future funding for residential waste reduction and recycling programs.

E. Grant agreements

Each city seeking funding under the terms of the Residential Waste Reduction and Recycling Funding Policy must enter into a grant agreement with the county for a term concurrent with the expiration of this policy, December 31, 2028. The grant agreement must be accompanied by a resolution authorizing the city to enter into such an agreement. If cities form a joint powers organization responsible for waste reduction and recycling programs, the county will enter into a grant agreement with that entity and distribute funds to that organization.

II. Allocation of Funds

SCORE funds will be dedicated to the following purposes:

- General funding for waste reduction and recycling programs
- Curbside organics recycling programs
- Organics drop-off sites
- Multifamily waste reduction and recycling

A. Waste reduction and recycling programs

The county will dedicate 40% of SCORE funds to provide funding for city waste reduction and recycling programs. For the purposes of this policy, city waste reduction and recycling programs include organics recycling. Funds will be allocated based on number of eligible households with curbside recycling service. The following formula will be used to calculate a city's grant amount.

$$\frac{\text{Number of eligible households with curbside recycling in city}}{\text{Total number of eligible households with curbside recycling in county}} \times \text{40\% of SCORE funds available} = \text{Waste reduction and recycling grant amount available to the city}$$

Eligible households are defined as households in single family through fourplex residential buildings or other residential buildings where each household has its own recycling collection container to set out for curbside collection. The number of eligible households will be determined by counting the number of eligible households on January 1 of each funding year. The city will report the number in its application for funding.

B. Curbside organics recycling programs

The county will dedicate 50% of SCORE funds to provide funding for curbside organics recycling programs. Funds will be allocated using participation targets for each city. Funding is not contingent upon meeting the participation target. The following formula will be used to calculate a city's grant amount.

Target number of households with curbside organics recycling in city --- Total target number of households with curbside organics recycling in county	x	50% of SCORE funds available	=	Curbside organics recycling grant amount available to the city

The county will provide a minimum grant of $3,300 per city for curbside organics recycling programs.

Participation targets (as a percent of households with curbside recycling service):

- 60% for cities that contract for organics recycling service
- 30% for cities that require haulers to offer organics recycling service

C. Organics drop-off sites

The county will dedicate $3,300 per eligible city to provide funding for organics drop-off site expenses. Cities with an organics drop-off and a population of less than 10,000 are eligible.

E. Multifamily waste reduction and recycling

The county will take 10% of SCORE funds, subtract the amount allocated to organics drop-off sites, and dedicate the remainder to provide funding for multifamily waste reduction and recycling programs. For the purposes of this policy, city waste reduction and recycling programs include organics recycling. Funds will be allocated based on the number of multifamily households. The following formula will be used to calculate a city's grant amount.

Number of multifamily households in city --- Total number of multifamily households in county	x	10% of SCORE funds available minus organics drop-off funds	=	Multifamily waste reduction and recycling grant amount available to the city

If cities do not apply for available multifamily grant funds, the unclaimed funds will be re-allocated to the cities that applied in proportion to the number of multifamily households in those cities.

Multifamily households in cities with organized recycling collection are defined as 1) households in buildings where each household does not have its own recycling collection container to set out for curbside collection, or 2) households in buildings that do not receive recycling collection service through the city, including apartment buildings, condominiums, townhomes, and cooperative housing units where a property manager or association coordinates collection service. Multifamily households in cities with open recycling collection are defined as households in residential buildings larger than a fourplex.

III. Application for Funding

A. General program and curbside organics application

To receive funding for waste reduction and recycling programs and curbside organics recycling, each city must complete an annual grant application by February 15 of that year. The application consists of a web-based report that requests the following: contract, program, tonnage, and financial information. The participation rate for the curbside recycling program must also be included in the web-based report. The city must calculate its participation rate during the month of October. The methodology for measuring participation must be provided to the county upon request. The county may request additional information, such as a planning document with a description of activities the city will implement to increase recycling and make progress toward county objectives.

B. Organics drop-off sites and multifamily supplementary application

To receive funding for organics drop-off sites and multifamily waste reduction and recycling, a city must submit a supplementary grant application form annually. The county will provide this form by February 15, and the city must complete it by March 15 of that year.

IV. Use of Funds

A. Conditions applying to all funds

The following requirements apply to the use of all funds:

1. Funds must be expended on eligible activities per Minnesota Statutes §115A.557.

2. All grant funds accepted from the county must be used in the year granted unless the county agrees to an exception. The county will not provide any funds in excess of actual expenses. Funds not spent must be returned to the county.

3. A city or joint powers organization may not charge its residents through property tax, utility fees, waste fees, environmental fees, or any other method for the portion of its waste reduction and recycling program costs that are funded by county grant funds.

4. Cities must track expenditures for waste reduction and recycling programs, curbside organics recycling, organics drop-off sites, and multifamily waste reduction and recycling and establish accounting mechanisms to provide the information requested in the financial section of the annual grant application.

5. Waste reduction and recycling activities, revenues, and expenditures are subject to audit.

B. Curbside organics use of funds

Curbside organics grant funds may be used for program expenses, including the following:

- Incentives for participation (service discounts, countertop pails, compostable bags)
- City contract costs
- Education and outreach
- Carts
- Other expenses approved by the county

Yard waste expenses are not eligible. If organics are co-collected with other waste, the organics expenses must be tracked separately. If a city passes funds through to a hauler, 100% of those funds must be credited to residents' bills.

C. Organics drop-off sites use of funds

Organics drop-off site grant funds may be used for program expenses, including the following:

- Hauling and disposal
- Dumpsters or carts
- Site construction
- Education and outreach
- Incentives for participation (countertop pails, compostable bags)
- Other expenses approved by the county

D. Multifamily waste reduction and recycling use of funds

Cities that choose to apply for multifamily waste reduction and recycling funding will work with

the county to identify eligible activities that are customized to the city's goals and needs. These activities will be determined through the supplementary grant application process.

Multifamily resources provided by the county, including reusable tote bags/baskets and multifamily specific signs and labels, are not eligible expenses.

V. City Requirements

A. Materials accepted

A city's curbside collection program must accept a list of mixed recyclables as selected by the county in consultation with haulers, local material recovery facilities, and end markets. The county will update the list of materials as needed, distribute the list to city recycling coordinators, and post the list on the county's website.

B. Education and outreach

The partnership between the county and cities has been highly effective in educating residents and motivating behavior change. To continue this partnership and increase these efforts, city waste reduction, recycling and organics recycling activities must be coordinated with county and regional efforts. Municipalities must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Use county terminology on promotional and educational materials when describing recycling and organics recycling guidelines, including the description of materials accepted and not accepted, as well as when describing preparation guidelines.

2. Use images approved by the county if using images of mixed recyclables and organic materials.

3. Provide the following information on the city's website:

    - Recycling and organics recycling materials accepted and not accepted
    - Curbside collection calendar
    - Contact information for the city's recycling coordinator
    - Links to city recycling resources and programs
    - Organics drop-off site(s) information
    - Links to county recycling resources and programs

4. Provide a guide on recycling and organics recycling to residents each year. The guide shall contain information on curbside collection, materials accepted and not accepted, organics drop off site information (if applicable), and a curbside collection calendar.

5. Complete two or more waste reduction, recycling and organics recycling educational activities annually that include the promotion of curbside collection. The county will provide a list of activities to city recycling coordinators. These activities are in addition to the provision of an annual guide.

6. If a city develops its own educational materials, does not use a template produced by the county, does not utilize design services offered by the county, or relies on a hauler to provide an annual guide, then the city must submit the materials to the county for approval.

C. Waste reduction and recycling performance

On an annual basis, cities must demonstrate that a reasonable effort has been made to improve waste reduction and recycling programs. If a city does not demonstrate measurable progress, a waste reduction and recycling improvement plan must be submitted by the city within 90 days of being notified by the county. The waste reduction and recycling improvement plan must be negotiated with the county and specify the efforts that will be undertaken by the city to improve its program to yield the results necessary to achieve county objectives. In cooperation with the county, the city may be required to participate in waste sorts and community engagement to identify strategies to improve waste reduction and recycling outcomes.

D. Cities of the first class

Cities of the first class must comply with the county's measurable performance standards and report recycling rates and compliance rates to the county annually by February 15 and semi-annually thereafter. Cities of the first class must also report bi-annually on specific steps for implementation that address the county's priorities.

The county will determine annually whether the cities have implemented and satisfied performance standards. If the cities do not implement and satisfy the performance standards, a waste reduction and recycling improvement plan must be submitted by the city within 60 days of being notified by the county. The improvement plan must specify the efforts the city will take to implement and satisfy the performance standards identified by the county. The improvement plan must be negotiated with the county and approved by the county. If the county does not approve the improvement plan, then SCORE funding will be withheld.

VI. Grant Payments

The county will make two payments to cities each year. Those two payments will provide the sum of each city's total grant amount for general waste reduction and recycling programs, curbside organics recycling programs, organics drop-off sites, and multifamily waste reduction and recycling. One payment will be made after the county receives the applications for funding. A second payment will be made after basic program requirements, education and outreach

requirements, and performance have been confirmed and approved. If the city meets the county requirements, both payments will be made during the same calendar year.

Cities are expected to fulfill the conditions of this policy and the requirements of the county's Ordinance 13. It is the responsibility of each city to meet the requirements of Ordinance 13. The implementation of the county requirements for cities shall be the responsibility of each respective city. If any city fails to establish or implement any or all of the city requirements in Ordinance 13, all SCORE funding will be withheld until the city meets the requirements or a waste reduction and recycling improvement plan is negotiated with the county.