
Cook Family Foundation

Catalytic Recycling and Resource Recovery Grant Guidelines

Purpose

The Cook Family Foundation seeks to serve as a catalyst for positive community change, promoting a more equitable and sustainable society. This program is an outcome of the Shiawassee Work Group Charter in which we envision Owosso and Shiawassee County with robust recycling and resource recovery systems that strengthen the local economy, reduce environmental impacts, and improve quality of life for all residents.

Through a new grant making program, the Foundation will support projects and partnerships that advance sustainable practices, create employment opportunities, reduce environmental harm, and promote social equity.

Funding Objectives

The Cook Family Foundation will prioritize support for projects that deliver on the following three equally-important objectives:

Environmental Impact

- Reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills through increased recycling, waste prevention, and new markets for recoverable materials
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate impacts and/or,
- Prevent pollution and protect natural resources, including natural areas, and agricultural lands in the Shiawassee River watershed

Equity and Inclusion

- Advance a more equitable and inclusive society by providing new or expanded local educational and economic opportunities
- Enable greater community access to implement and lead sustainability efforts
- Prioritize projects that serve underserved or marginalized populations, and/or
- Support initiatives that improve quality of life for all residents, ensuring benefits are accessible and fairly distributed

Economic Benefit

- Create sustaining, long-term economic value within Shiawassee County
- Support local job creation and new business opportunities, especially for those facing barriers to employment and/or increasing local wages.

- Strengthen the local economy through projects that catalyze economic opportunities for other organizations
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Funding Details

Proposal Due Date: October 1st, 2025

Length of Performance Periods: Not to exceed 18 months

Eligibility

Eligible applicants must be either:

- Nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status, or
- Local governments in Shiawassee County

Partnerships with private sector entities are encouraged.

Project Categories

Applicants should indicate the stage of their project when applying. Funding ranges and expectations differ by stage:

- **Planning Grants (\$2,500–\$25,000):** Support for collaboration, outreach, research or studies, and pre-development activities that lay the groundwork for future implementation.
 - **Pilot Grants (\$2,500–\$25,000):** Funding to test and refine a proof-of-concept approach before scaling up.
 - **Implementation Grants (\$5,000–\$100,000):** Funding to launch, expand, or sustain a new initiative with clear plans for lasting outcomes and community impact.
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Project Criteria

Proposals should include:

1. **Alignment with Local Plans**
 - Demonstrate consistency with the Shiawassee County Materials Management Plan, once established, and/or include a letter of support from relevant local units of governments confirming alignment with the local jurisdiction's priorities
 - Describe if existing community assets, both private and public, will be leveraged to support waste reduction, recycling and sustainability efforts
2. **Documented Need and Goals**
 - Clearly define the need and goals of the project
3. **Environmental Benefits**

- Provide specific, quantifiable environmental impacts. Priority will be given to projects with clear climate benefits
 - Quantify goals of materials recovered, recycled, prevented, or diverted from landfills
- 4. Economic Benefits**
- Quantify goals for job creation or new business opportunities. Emphasize long-term economic viability and sustainability
- 5. Community Impact and Equity**
- Define the geographic area served
 - Identify and describe the beneficiaries, with emphasis on improving quality of life for Shiawassee County residents
 - Demonstrate commitment to advancing equity and serving underserved populations
- 6. Leverage and Match Funding**
- Preference will be given to projects that secure additional funding from federal, state, or local sources, or from private philanthropy. (For larger grants, matching funds of 50% are expected; limited exceptions apply for smaller projects)
- 7. Sustainability of Impact**
- Address both immediate and long-term benefits
 - Plan for financial and operational sustainability beyond the grant period
- 8. Charter Commitment**
- Agree to the principles of the Shiawassee Work Group Charter. Awardees will be required to sign the Charter in support of this common vision.
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Example Types of Projects

Grants should support projects that emphasize building a stronger local recycling economy and help to advance sustainable materials management in Shiawassee County and lead to landfill prevention.

Collaborative Planning and Pilot Initiatives

These smaller grants are intended to help organizations and partners design, test, or launch innovative approaches, such as:

- A new business conducting research to increase recycled content in its products
- A pilot program to launch food scrap collection for local organizations
- A study or commissioned report to support planning or implementation efforts to be shared among community partners

- Stakeholder engagement activities to plan for launching a reuse program
- A partnership between a local hauler and city staff to develop and distribute marketing materials for a new compost collection service
- A nonprofit organization piloting a local food rescue program with equipment and supplies
- A new approach for collecting cardboard from small businesses
- Initiatives to capture and divert last-chance goods headed to the landfill for repair or reuse

Community-Based Implementation Projects

These grants are intended to help organizations and partners implement sustainable practices, such as:

- Supporting the launch of a permanent curbside recycling program serving residents and small businesses
- Expansion of a local composting service with collection infrastructure and community education and outreach
- Establishment of a regional drop-off center for hard-to-recycle materials
- Support for an existing reuse/repair center that creates local jobs and diverts waste
- Integration of recycling education into school curricula with teacher training and materials
- Partnerships with local businesses to increase the use of recycled materials in production

Scoring Framework

Proposals will be evaluated based on:

Criteria	Points
Equitable Community Benefit	25
Environmental Impact	25
Economic Benefit	25
First-Time Applicant	5
Organizations Focused on Underserved Populations	10
50% Matching Funds Leveraged	10

Total Possible Points: 100

Note: Environment, Equity, and Economic impact are equally weighted priorities. Economic benefits should demonstrate a viable, sustainable model contributing to a strong local economy.

Funding Range

- Planning and Pilot grants will range from \$2,500–\$25,000 and Implementation grants will range from \$5,000–\$100,000.
 - Grant amount requests should be reasonable based on project scope and need.
 - Expectations for match funding apply, especially for larger grants.
 - Limited grants may be awarded for planning or pilot projects.
 - Contact the Foundation at the email address listed below for additional details or to discuss your idea before applying.
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Application Process

Applicants should submit:

- A completed grant application form ([Google Form](#))
- A project narrative addressing above criteria ([Sample Narrative to follow](#))
- Budget and funding plan, including documentation of matching funds, if applicable
- Evidence of alignment with county and/or local materials management priorities and goals
- Letters of Support

Completed Google forms are due by midnight May 1, 2026 and remaining application materials are due by midnight on May 15, 2026. The submission portal can be found here: [Google Form](#).

Questions or Submissions

For more information or to discuss your project idea:

- Visit our website: <https://www.cookfamilyfoundation.org/grants/recycling-grants/>
- Email: Rachel at Rachel@CookFamilyFoundation.org
- Phone: 989-725-1621

Applicants are encouraged to reach out early in their planning process for guidance, if needed.

Additional Notes

The Foundation is committed to flexibility where appropriate but strongly encourages alignment with these guidelines to ensure best use of resources and greatest community impact.
