

Guidelines

Food Rescue Innovation Grant



Applications are due by 11:59 pm on April 26, 2024

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is now accepting grant applications to improve the distribution of edible, unsold food to feed people while reducing food going to waste. This is one critical way of helping people have enough to eat while keeping valuable food out of compost and garbage collection. Studies show that food is the single largest material going to garbage from Seattle businesses and is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases. This grant will provide seed funding to test innovative approaches that could ultimately be scaled or replicated with private sector, nonprofit, or philanthropic funding.

Grant Program Objectives

- Support innovation in collecting and distributing unsold, edible food to people in need.
- Protect natural resources and the climate by reducing the amount of food going to waste.
- Demonstrate potential for wider adoption or replication that can be sustained without City funding.

Funding Overview

- Grant requests may range from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Up to two projects will be funded.
- There is a 5% match requirement. Example: \$50,000 grant + \$2,500 match = \$52,500 total project budget.
- Grant awards are paid on a reimbursement basis. Award recipients may request up to 10% of the total grant award in advance to support project start-up costs.
- Projects may begin no sooner than late-June 2024 once agreements are signed. Work must be completed within one year.

About Food Rescue

Food rescue involves collecting (often through donation) unsold, edible, food from grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, or other high volume food businesses and redistributing it to people who are experiencing food insecurity. These dynamic operations frequently involve sorting, transportation, storage, and communication challenges.

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) seeks to improve the distribution of edible, unsold food to feed people instead of sending it to landfills or compost. SPU has funded transportation and storage for hunger relief organizations (HROs), conducted pilots with grocers and food banks, partnered with the University of Washington on transportation research, and convened stakeholders across the City to foster collaboration and solutions. This grant invites new solutions or expansion of existing approaches that solve these challenges and show the potential for replication across Seattle.

Toward Food Rescue Innovation

In 2022, SPU found that food waste was approximately 19% (or 21,773 tons) of all garbage coming from Seattle businesses. This number would be even higher without the existing food rescue operations across the city. However, gaps in these operations result in missed opportunities to save healthy food, increased costs for HROs, and climate emissions from waste.

Edible, unsold food needs reliable distribution systems to foster replicability, cut food waste, and increase the quality and quantity of the donated food. Solutions might involve:

- Prototyping on-site or adjacent food redistribution (avoiding or reducing transportation altogether).
- Piloting a third-party transportation system to collect donated food across multiple businesses and deliver to multiple HROs.
- Improving and standardizing communication between food donors and HROs to reduce the number of missed collections, provide food desired by HROs, and increase quality of donations.
- Other creative ideas that partner food donors and recipients, harness accurate data, increase quality and quantity of donated food, and test new models to reduce the amount of edible food going to garbage and compost in Seattle.

Project Requirements

Projects must meet all the following requirements to be eligible:

1. **Activities must increase the quality or quantity of commercially donated or discounted food going to people in need while reducing overall food waste going into garbage or compost.**

The project must measure, collect, and make data available to show whether this approach *reduced overall food waste* for all involved parties.

2. **Activities must take place within Seattle city limits and benefit food access in Seattle.**

Project must clearly demonstrate a strong connection to reducing food waste going into Seattle's waste stream; Seattle businesses with unsold, edible food; and residents of Seattle who could benefit from this food. Applicants may be located outside Seattle if the project still provides these same benefits.

3. **Project work must include development of a funding plan for how activities will be financially sustained without relying on City funding after the grant period ends.**

4. **Activities must advance at least two of the following priorities:**

- A. **Innovation:** Test or expand new approaches or technologies for distributing edible, unsold food from businesses.
- B. **Scale of potential impact:** Prototype a solution that builds in collaboration across entities, establishes standards to improve effectiveness across the City, and/or demonstrates how benefits can be replicated beyond the participating parties.
- C. **Equity:** Involve economic opportunities and participation by people, non-profit organizations, and businesses representing frontline community members (*these include BIPOC communities, immigrants, refugees, youth, elders, people experiencing homelessness, formerly incarcerated people, disabled people, LGBTQ communities, people with low income, and people who work in outdoor occupations).

Who Should Apply

SPU encourages applications from:

- Businesses
- Nonprofits
- Community and neighborhood groups
- Schools, colleges, and universities
- Institutions (such as health care or housing)
- Faith-based organizations

Applicants may submit more than one application but are only eligible to receive one grant award.

All applicants must have Washington State and City of Seattle business licenses to receive grant funds, or work through a Fiscal Agent with the required licenses. A Fiscal Agent takes responsibility for receiving and administering grant funds for a project.

City of Seattle business license information: <https://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/small-business/food-businesses/licensing>

Washington State business license information: <https://dor.wa.gov/>

Funding & Match Requirements

Funding

- Grant requests may range from \$50,000 to \$100,000.
- Work must be completed within one year of the signed agreement.

Eligible Expenses

The following are examples of expenses that may be eligible for grant funding:

- Staff time assigned to the grant project (may include overhead)
- Stipends and other incentives for project participation
- Project supplies, materials, and equipment
- Services such as interpretation, printing, and design
- Space or vehicle rentals or leases for project activities
- Mileage and parking for project activities (valued at the federal mileage rate)
- Fiscal agent fees (up to 10% of the grant request)

Expenses that are NOT Eligible

- Ongoing operating expenses to sustain activities at their current food rescue levels
- Composting unused food
- Purchasing trucks or other vehicles

Match Requirements

Applicants are required to share in the costs of grant-funded projects.

- The match must be at least 5% of the grant request.
- Example: \$50,000 grant request + \$2,500 match = \$52,500 total project budget.
- Match contributions must be specific to the grant project. This may include cash or other grant funds that will be used to fund a portion of the project, and donations that support grant project activities, such as volunteer hours, space, services, equipment, supplies, and other in-kind contributions. The value of food donated/rescued through this project does not count toward a match.
- Unpaid volunteer hours are valued at \$34.87/hr based on Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time for Washington State.
- City of Seattle resources such as City staff time, usage of City facilities, and/or other City funding may not be counted as part of the match.

Contracting & Payment

Fiscal Agents

Applicants may choose to work through a Fiscal Agent that takes responsibility for receiving and administering grant funds for the project. Applicants are responsible for identifying their own Fiscal Agent and confirming that the Fiscal Agent has current Washington State and City of Seattle business licenses. Fiscal Agents may charge a fee of up to 10% of the grant award. Applicants may include this fee in the grant request or apply it to the match contribution.

Contracting

Each award recipient or their Fiscal Agent must submit a W9 form and sign an agreement with SPU to receive grant funds. The agreement will include additional terms and conditions of the grant.

The grant will only reimburse for project activities that take place after the agreement with the City is signed.

Insurance Requirements

Grant recipients or their Fiscal Agent must maintain levels of insurance as typical for businesses performing work that is similar in scope and nature to the grant project, and no less than required by Washington State law. Workers compensation insurance must also be maintained if required by Washington State law.

Payment

Grant awards are paid on a reimbursement basis. Award recipients will submit invoices based on completion of specific milestones identified in the grant agreement or based on actual expenses. SPU will mail reimbursement checks 30 days after receipt of each invoice. Payment will be delayed if invoices are incomplete or missing required reports and documentation.

Award recipients may request up to 10% of the grant award in advance to support project start-up costs. The request must clearly explain the need and how the advance funds will be used. Proof of use of the funds must be submitted and approved by SPU before the grant recipient will be allowed to request reimbursement for the remainder of the grant award. SPU will require the return of some or all advance funds if the award recipient does not provide sufficient supporting documentation.

Reporting

SPU will work with each award recipient to develop a customized report template to document project activities, outcomes, challenges, successes, and lessons learned. The frequency of these reports will be established once the project is known. These reports will be used for high-level sharing with the City and the public.

Reports must be submitted with each invoice, and the final report must be submitted before receiving the final grant payment. SPU may request a meeting with each award recipient to review the final report and ask clarifying questions.

Application Review

Review Criteria

The grant review committee will evaluate proposals based on applicants' abilities to meet these requirements (page 2).

1. Increase the quality or quantity of commercially donated or discounted food going to people in need while reducing overall food waste going into garbage or compost. The project must measure, collect, and make data available to *show whether this approach reduced overall food waste.*
2. Activities must take **place within Seattle city limits** and **benefit food access in Seattle.**
3. Project must show how the activities would be **economically viable without City funding after the grant.**
4. Activities must **advance at least two priorities:**
 - Innovation
 - Scale of potential impact
 - Equity

The review committee will also evaluate how well applicants describe project staffing, project partners, and the budget in achieving their proposed project. The committee will consider diversity in geographic location, impacted communities, and types of projects. SPU may contact applicants with follow-up questions before making final funding decisions.

Application Process

Schedule

Grant Applications	March 1, 2024
Open Virtual Information Sessions (optional)	March 14 and March 18, 2024
Applications Due	April 26, 2024
Interviews (potential)	May 13-17, 2024
Notice of Decisions to Awardees	By May 24, 2024
Agreements with City Signed (projects may begin)	By June 24, 2024
Work Completed	Within 12 months of a signed agreement

Application Steps

Step 1: Read the Guidelines and view the recorded Grant Information Session before completing your application.

Step 2: Contact us if you have questions or want project advice:
SPU_FoodRescue@seattle.gov or
(206) 615-0516

Step 3: Complete an application.

Applications must be no longer than 10 pages (not including instructions or letters of commitment).

Step 4: Submit your grant application and supporting documents by 11:59 pm on April 26, 2024.

Call (206) 615-0516 if you do not receive an email confirmation of receipt within 2 business days.

Late submissions will not be considered.

Step 5: The review process may include a virtual interview component. If applicable, applicants will be contacted to schedule a virtual interview for the week of May 13th.