



# EPA RECYCLING EDUCATION AND OUTREACH GRANTS (ROUND 2)

A Quick Reference Guide for Evaluating  
Progress and Reporting Achievements  
Over Time



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Conservation and Recovery  
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## About This Guide

EPA is thrilled about the interest in the new [Recycling Education and Outreach \(REO\) grant program](#), funded by the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. EPA developed this Quick Reference Guide to provide the Recycling Education and Outreach grant recipient with information about the measures of success they will need to report on over the course of their projects. This guide is for the second round of REO funding (i.e., the 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity). EPA will provide the grant recipient with additional resources and technical assistance to measure their projects' success and share information about the projects' impact. Thanks to all who are considering applying for this funding opportunity!

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## I. Background

EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management is implementing the [Recycling Education and Outreach \(REO\) grant program](#) under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Public Law 117-58, Section 70402, commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law or BIL. This guide is specific to the second round of REO funding, hereafter referred to as "REO Round 2." REO Round 2 will fund one grant recipient to complete three projects. For REO Round 2, the grant recipient must include all three projects listed in Section I.F. Scope of Work in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (which can be found on EPA's REO grant program web page):

- Develop and Implement a National Consumer Wasted Food Reduction Campaign
- Expand the Market for and Sales of Compost
- Increase Education and Outreach to Households on Composting

This funding opportunity under the Recycling Education and Outreach grant program aims to fund projects that will meet the following objectives and reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs):

- Decrease wasted food from households (project #1)
- Expand markets for and sales of compost (project #2)
- Inform the public about new and existing food waste composting programs; provide information about the materials that are accepted as part of a residential food waste composting program; and increase collection rates and decrease physical contamination in residential food waste composting programs (project #3)

The BIL also directs EPA to develop a [Model Recycling Program toolkit](#) that states, Tribes, and units of local government can use in carrying out components of the grant program. One of the required resources in the toolkit is a guide to measure the effectiveness of a recycling education and outreach grant. This Quick Reference Guide provides guidance on how the grant recipient can report on the required outputs and outcomes that result from activities funded with the grant in semi-annual performance reports required under 2 CFR 200.329. The grant recipient may also choose to report on additional outputs and outcomes that result from activities funded with the grant.

## II. What measures of success will the grant recipient need to report on over the course of their REO Round 2 grant projects?

There are different measures of success that can help tell the story of progress for the projects funded under this grant program.

The measures of success that the REO grant recipient must report on include:



Extent of outreach and engagement as reflected in metrics such as the number of communities in which outreach campaigns are implemented, including disadvantaged communities (as defined in NOFO *Section I.C. Key Definitions*) and/or U.S. Territories; number of people reached by ads during campaigns; number of educational materials distributed; number of social media engagements; number of collaborators involved in campaigns; and number of people or groups reached who make decisions as to whether to purchase compost for non-agricultural uses.



Change in the amount of household food waste being discarded nationally and in communities who implement consumer wasted food campaigns locally and GHG emissions reduced (in MTCO<sub>2e</sub>). (Specific to project #1)



Change in the percentage of compost and compost products sold for non-agricultural uses in an area where outreach and education are conducted on use of compost in applications outside of agriculture. (Specific to project #2)



Change in the amount of food waste recycled through composting in communities where campaigns are implemented. (Specific to project #3)



Change in the participation rate of the food waste composting program in communities where campaigns are implemented. (Specific to project #3)



Reduction of physical contamination in the food waste composting stream in communities where campaigns are implemented. (Specific to project #3)



Number of temporary or permanent jobs created.

Of these measures of success, some focus on activities or work products that are developed through a project. These are often referred to as **project outputs**. The term “output” means an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal and objective that will be produced or provided over a specified period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period. An example of a project output is the number of outreach campaigns implemented.

Other measures of success focus on the results achieved because of a project activity—the results could be behavioral, environmental, or health-related. These are often referred to as **project outcomes**. The term “outcome” means the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective. Outcomes may be qualitative and environmental, behavioral, health-related, or programmatic in nature. Applications must include a description of anticipated project outcomes resulting from the project outputs, even if an outcome is likely to be achieved beyond the assistance agreement funding period. Include the quantitative target associated with the outcome, as appropriate. An example of a project outcome is a change in the amount of food waste recycled through composting in communities where campaigns are implemented.

For additional information on outputs and outcomes, please refer to NOFO *Section I.L. Measuring and Reporting Environmental Results: Evaluation, Outputs and Outcomes*.

### III. How will the grant recipient be asked to report on each measure of success?

The REO Round 2 grant will have a five-year term for the grant recipient to complete their projects. Over those five years, the grant recipient will be expected to share meaningful information and progress towards the measures of success on a semi-annual basis, as specified in the NOFO. Short-term reporting is typically focused on output measures, such as the **number of communities reached through outreach activities**. For other measures of



success, the grant recipient may need more time to collect information on the progress of their projects. These longer-term measures are typically outcome measures, such as the **amount of household food waste being discarded nationally and in communities who implement wasted food campaigns locally**, or **reduction of physical contamination in the food waste recycling stream**, because these measures are a result of outreach activities funded by the grant. A brief overview of the ways the grant recipient can estimate each measure of success is provided below.

## Extent of Outreach and Engagement

This category of outputs will cover **both** the audience/communities reached and the way those communities interact with the outreach materials produced.

- **Why This Output Is Important:** Helps to communicate the project’s level of effort and audience reached. (This is an output, not an outcome, because it does not measure the overall impact of the activities on solid waste management.)
- **What to Measure:** There are many ways that extent of outreach and engagement could be measured. The NOFO lists a few examples of metrics that could be used:
  - Number of communities in which outreach campaigns were implemented, including disadvantaged communities and/or U.S. Territories. Reports should share information about the communities reached, including land area, population, location, type of community (e.g., city, township, village, tribal), and any other descriptive factors, such as whether the communities are designated rural or disadvantaged communities or U.S. Territories (as defined in the NOFO).
  - Number of people reached by ads during campaigns.
  - Number of educational materials distributed.
  - Number of social media engagements.
  - Number of collaborators involved in campaigns or education and outreach activities.
  - Number of people or groups reached who make decisions on purchasing compost for non-agricultural uses.

## Change in Amount of Household Food Waste Being Discarded and GHG Emissions Reduced (Specific to Project #1)

- **Why This Outcome Is Important:** Communicates the impacts of the national wasted food campaign on the amount of household wasted food being discarded (i.e., the amount of wasted food that goes uneaten) as well as the campaign’s impact on the environment (measured by the amount of GHG emissions reduced) by comparing conditions before and after the grant project.
- **What to Measure:**
  - Amount of household food waste being discarded (i.e., not being eaten) before project activities and after project activities—both nationally and in communities where the national campaign is implemented locally. The amount of food waste being discarded can be measured by taking measurements of solid waste at the gate of a waste facility, by conducting waste audits of selected communities, or by other methods. The amount of food waste not being eaten should include not only food sent to landfill and incineration but also food sent to compost or sent down the drain. Because the focus of this project is the prevention of wasted food that could have been eaten, it is recommended that the grant recipient focus

on measuring the portion of food waste that could have been eaten (rather than inedible food waste such as bones, pits, and rinds). The grant recipient can report progress as a change in volume (measured in tons) and as a percentage change from the baseline.

- GHG emissions reduced nationally as a result of reductions in household food waste discarded. The grant recipient may use [EPA's Waste Reduction Model \(WARM\)](#) to produce high-level estimates of potential GHG emissions reductions, but other tools to measure this metric are acceptable.

### Change in the Percentage of Compost and Compost Products Sold for Non-agricultural Uses in an Area Where Outreach and Education Are Conducted on Use of Compost in Applications Outside of Agriculture (Specific to Project #2)

- **Why This Output Is Important:** Helps to communicate the project's impact on expanding the markets for and sales of compost for non-agricultural applications in areas where outreach and education are conducted on the use of compost outside of agriculture.
- **What to Measure:** The grant recipient can use the metrics below or create their own set of metrics. The focus should be on the areas where outreach and education are conducted as a result of this grant.
  - Total amount, in tons, of compost and compost products sold for non-agricultural uses.
  - Number of new compost businesses that are created.
  - Number of new non-agricultural end users of compost.
  - Revenue in dollars, or the percentage of sales revenue, from non-agricultural buyers of compost.

### Change in Amount of Food Waste Recycled Through Composting in Communities Where Composting Campaigns Are Implemented (Specific to Project #3)

- **Why This Outcome Is Important:** Helps to communicate the project's impact on changing composting behavior by comparing the amount of food waste composted by households before and after the grant project.
- **What to Measure:** Total tonnage of food waste composted before grant project activities and after grant project activities, in the communities where composting campaigns are implemented as a result of this grant. This could be done by taking measurements of collected food scraps at the gate of a compost facility, or it could be done by conducting waste audits of selected communities. The grant recipient can report progress as a change in volume (measured in tons) and as a percentage change from the baseline.

### Change in Participation Rate of the Food Waste Composting Program in Communities Where Campaigns Are Implemented (Specific to Project #3)

- **Why This Outcome Is Important:** Helps to communicate the project's impact on changing composting behavior by comparing composting program participation before and after the grant project.
- **What to Measure:** The change in participation rate of the composting programs in communities where a composting campaign is funded by the grant. This means defining participation for each composting program and then developing a method for measuring a change in participation resulting from the project. Consider the options listed below.

#### **Possible Metrics for Participation Rate**

- Number of households that put out curbside food waste collection bins on a regular basis.

- Number of residents utilizing a food waste drop-off site for composting on a regular basis.
- Number of households who opted in or who are registered to participate in a composting program.

**Possible Metrics for Participation Rate Change**

- Number of households participating in the curbside pickup program divided by the total number of households in the community, calculated both before and after the grant project.
- Number of drop-offs per month at the food waste drop-off site divided by the number of households the site serves, calculated both before and after the grant project.
- Number of households who opted in or who are registered to participate in a composting program divided by the total number of households in the community, calculated both before and after the grant project.

Reduction of Physical Contamination in the Food Waste Composting Stream in Communities Where Campaigns Are Implemented (Specific to Project #3)

- **Why This Outcome Is Important:** Helps to communicate the project’s impact on changing composting behavior by comparing physical contamination in the composting stream before and after the grant project.
- **What to Measure:** The reduction of physical contamination in the food waste composting stream as a result of the grant project activities. What constitutes physical contamination varies from community to community, depending on the range of acceptable materials in a food waste composting program. The grant recipient will need to define physical contamination for the food waste composting stream and then develop a method for measuring the reduction of that contamination as a result of the grant project activities.

After defining physical contamination, the grant recipient will need a corresponding metric for measuring the reduction in physical contamination as a result of the grant project. The grant recipient can use the metrics below or create their own set of contamination-related metrics:

- Amount of physical contamination in food waste collected for composting from haulers or facilities in the community.
- Number of “rejected loads”: number of loads that were turned away from the compost facility due to excessive physical contamination.

EPA recognizes that there are many ways to collect physical contamination data. For example, to measure inbound physical contamination:

- Data collection at the compost facility can involve data on how many loads were “rejected” by the facility due to excessive physical contamination or how much contamination was removed manually or mechanically before composting.
- Route- or neighborhood-level data collection can involve auditing what is collected by trucks.
- Household- or building-level data collection can involve curbside sampling or container audits, lid flipping, and/or cart tagging and tracking (visual audits).

Number of Temporary or Permanent Jobs Created

- **Why This Output Is Important:** Helps to communicate the grant projects’ contributions to and impacts on the local economy through waste prevention and composting-related activities.



- **What to Measure:** The grant recipient may consider using the metrics below or create their own set of metrics to better reflect a specific project.
  - Number of temporary and/or permanent jobs created through grant project activities.
  - Number of employees paid using grant funds (include hours per week for part-time employees).

#### IV. When will the grant recipient be required to report results to EPA?

For some outcomes that are measuring a change (e.g., change in amount of household food waste being discarded and GHG emissions emitted), the grant recipient will need to establish a baseline measurement at the beginning of the grant period in order to measure the change as a result of grant activities. The grant recipient will need to share information, including progress towards their measures of success, semi-annually over the five-year project period. After the grant period ends, the grant recipient will have 90 days to share information on all their measures of success in a final technical report. Both the semi-annual reports and the final report should describe progress made on the measures of success. The reports may include information on numeric targets set, a description of the methodology used to measure progress, and/or discussion of planned actions that are intended to achieve progress on the measures of success (for activities that haven't started yet). EPA will provide reporting templates to help the grant recipient complete their semi-annual and final reports.

#### V. What other resources are available to help grant applicants and the grant recipient think through measures of success?

- EPA is here to help! Please visit the [REO website](#) for resources to help interested applicants prepare an application.
- EPA hosted a webinar to explain more about this funding opportunity and to answer questions. The recorded webinar will be available on the [REO website](#).
- [Preventing Wasted Food in Your Community: A Social Marketing Toolkit](#): This toolkit, developed by EPA, is a resource for states, Territories, local governments, Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations who want to start a behavior change campaign to prevent food waste in their communities.
- [Composting Food Scraps in Your Community: A Social Marketing Toolkit](#): This toolkit, developed by EPA, is a resource for states, Territories, local governments, Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations who wish to create composting campaigns in their communities.
- EPA's [Sustainable Management of Food](#) webpages offer many resources on food waste reduction, composting, and more. Sustainable Management of Food is an approach that seeks to reduce wasted food and its associated impacts over the entire life cycle, starting with the use of natural resources, manufacturing, sales, and consumption, and ending with decisions on how to manage wasted food.
- Email EPA with any grant questions at [RecyclingEd@epa.gov](mailto:RecyclingEd@epa.gov).