



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Vinyl Institute (VI), founded in 1982, is a U.S. trade association representing the leading manufacturers of vinyl, vinyl chloride monomer, vinyl additives, and modifiers. The VI works on behalf of its members to promote the benefits of the world's most versatile plastic, used to make everything from PVC piping to flooring, roofing and vinyl siding. For more information about the Vinyl Institute, visit <https://www.vinylinfo.org>.

Grant Program Background

The vinyl resin manufacturer members of the VI have pledged to fund a post-consumer PVC recycling program in the amount of \$1 million per year for three years. The grant program seeks to leverage the recycling initiatives of downstream vinyl organizations by providing targeted resources to foster recycling growth. The program seeks to leverage grant funds by preferentially selecting proposals that would attract additional investments in selected projects from other vinyl value chain associations and recycling interests. This approach enables VI to selectively apply resources to promising programs and help ensure success without being responsible for the full cost of the program or the need to apply human resources.

Grant funds will be committed to specific projects approved by a 7-member Grant Committee as described below. The maximum amount of grant funding in a given year is \$1 million. VI reserves the right to adjust this amount based on the number of eligible projects submitted to, and awarded, by the Grant Committee.

Grant funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis, meaning that grantees must incur the initial expenses or make the initial purchases of grant-related materials and then request reimbursement as part of the grant reimbursement process.

Grant funds may not be used to fund VI or VSC activities apart from the grant program. Grant funds also may not be used for the purpose of licensing technology or intellectual property rights.

Eligibility Criteria: Generally, VI recycling grants are available for any:

- (1) Vinyl recycling projects or activities that are located within the United States;
- (2) Industry initiatives or collaborations, including trade associations, working to advance post-consumer recycling of vinyl products;
- (3) Public, private, and non-profit owned and operated materials recovery facilities (MRFs), recycler or construction and demolition waste management facilities

- seeking equipment or process investments that will facilitate collection, sortation, and recycling of post-consumer vinyl; and
- (4) Public and private colleges and universities for research and development to advance the recycling of post-consumer vinyl materials.

Given the trade association context and VI resin manufacturer member involvement, the program is intended to operate without potential conflicts of interest. Thus, the four resin producer members, and any raw material suppliers, vinyl product producers and other companies or their subsidiaries that have a direct commercial relationship with any of the four VI resin manufacturers funding this grant program are not eligible to receive grants. The grant application should disclose ownership or commercial interests that might raise a conflict of interest or that represent a commercial relationship with a resin producer member or the vinyl value chain. Interests in the vinyl value chain do not preclude the award of a grant but disclosure is essential to ensure that potential conflicts are properly vetted and that competitors are not unfairly disadvantaged.

Because applicants will be required to execute a contract authorizing the grant, the applicant must be a legal entity with the power to enter into contracts, typically an incorporated organization or government agency. Applicants must be willing to agree to acknowledge receipt of the Vinyl Institute recycling grant in public communications about the project, including using The Vinyl Institute recycling program logo on written materials released for public communications. Applicant also must be willing to agree to the Vinyl Institute's use of applicant organization's name and logo in materials advertising the grant program, applicant's award, and subsequent information regarding awarded program progress and results.

Projects identifying additional sources of grant funding beyond the VI will be given preference. In-kind and/or cash expenditures equal to at least 50% of the grant request are encouraged and would be viewed as a more competitive application. The VI reserves the right to adjust matching requirements to facilitate project implementation. Applications that are overly reliant on reimbursement of personnel or consulting costs will be less competitive.

Grant awards will range from a minimum of \$10,000 to a maximum of \$500,000 per grant. Decisions on grant amounts and timing are subject to the availability of grant funds and the proposed grant's likelihood of advancing this program's goals and objectives. The VI reserves the right to adjust the maximum award for a project.

Supported Activities: Grant funding will be available for equipment, process investments, educational programs, and recycling program management that supports long-lasting and sustainable recycling of vinyl products. Examples of acceptable projects include, but are not limited to:

- Equipment:
 - Mechanical sortation equipment
 - Conveyor systems
 - Bunker or other storage systems for sorted material
 - Equipment focused on processing other materials that results in PVC acceptance or improved PVC processing
 - Collection bins, compactors, and bailers

- Dock space or related investments that facilitate PVC product shipment and similar recycling logistics
- Educational programs that increase vinyl product customer awareness and demand for vinyl recycling or recycled vinyl products
- Logistical systems to facilitate collection and delivery of post-consumer vinyl materials for recycling
- Prepare and/or implement vinyl recycling process training for contractors and sub-contractors
- Research and development on vinyl recycling technology, particularly post-consumer recycling of vinyl products

Grants will not be approved, and grant funding must not be used, for land or building purchases, or any other purposes not directly related to PVC product recycling or the promotion of PVC recycling. Grant funds also may not be used for the purpose of licensing technology or intellectual property rights or to fund other activities prohibited under Federal and state laws governing VI's not for profit status.

Grant Application Process and Submittal: Grant applications will be accepted for as long as funding is available according to the following schedule:

- Period 1 due date: February 9, 2024
- Period 2 due date: September 6, 2024

The Grant Committee will strive to make decisions and notify applicants within 60 days after the due date. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis for as long as funding is available. The VI reserves the right to add or delete application due dates based on the availability of funding. Any applicant with questions regarding this grant program or interested in applying is strongly encouraged to contact Jay Thomas at jthomas@vinylinfo.org prior to submitting a grant application to:

Mr. Jay W. Thomas
 Vice President of Sustainability
 The Vinyl Institute
 202-256-9531
jthomas@vinylinfo.org
 (email submittal is preferred)

Selection Process: Selection will be based on several criteria including,

- Conformity to eligibility requirements
- Total potential post-consumer vinyl recycling volume
- A well-defined project plan, budget, and timeline
- Multifaceted outreach plan
- Thorough supporting documentation
- Amount of matching project funding
- Business case and likelihood for increasing the recycling of vinyl products

Grant Management and Application Process: The grant program is managed by a Grant Committee consisting of four voting individuals from VI member company resin producers, and three non-voting participants consisting of the VI CEO, VSC Executive Director, and V-Cycle Chairperson. Grant approvals require unanimous approval by the voting members and will be reviewed by VI Counsel for conformity to the program requirements.

Judging criteria will be based on the applicant's conformity to the eligibility requirements, the funding targets identified, and how the application helps realize the program's goal of a significant and long-term increase in recycling PVC products released to the waste stream.

The Grant Committee may ask applicants for additional information or interviews or request the submission of a revised application.

If an application warrants support or expertise that the Grant Committee members lack, the committee can engage other experts or consultants if needed.

After finalizing decisions on the March 2023 grant applications, the Grant Committee may decide whether to accept grant applications on an ongoing basis provided funding is available or use rolling due dates for applications.

The Grant Committee will strive to make decisions and notify applicants within 60 days after the due date or the submittal date if grant applications are authorized on an ongoing basis.

Grant Application Format: To facilitate the Grant Committee's review, grant applications must be a Microsoft Word or .pdf document using the structure and content below.

Applications should address, at a minimum, items 1-12. Applications addressing items 13-16 will be more competitive:

1. Applicant name and contact information;
2. Eligibility of the applicant, including disclosure of ownership interests that may raise conflicts of interest;
3. Project points of contact;
4. Project description;
5. Analysis of impact on recycling volume;
6. Techno-economic analysis describing technical and financial viability of project or technology;
7. Location of the project and activities;
8. Project timeline, recalling that grant agreements may be written for a term of one year, renewable for up to three years;
9. Description of project metrics and reports that will be utilized to measure progress on project implementation and results;
10. Funding request, with grant awards having a target cap of \$500,000. Include itemization of project budget by activity and/or equipment;
11. Expense reimbursement forecasting, including progress payments for capital expenditures;
12. Applicant's financial or in-kind contributions to the project;

13. Collaboration, demonstrated by allowing on-site visits and consultations and receiving technical or other support regarding best management practices in implementing the program. When necessary, the Grant Committee will sign limited non-disclosure agreements to facilitate on-site visits while protecting the applicant's intellectual property rights;
14. Grant matching efforts besides those of the applicant because these grants are intended to encourage or leverage the efforts of others;
15. Letters of support for other fundings or partnerships.

Contract: Grant winners must enter into a grant agreement with the VI prior to the distribution of any funds. The term for a grant contract is anticipated to be at least one year, renewable for up to three years as may be appropriate and determined by the Grant Committee, with the actual term to be based on the date the project will be initiated. The goal is to have the contract term extend beyond the date of actual equipment installation or program implementation to accommodate adequate measurement of project impacts. It is possible, depending on project timelines, that applicants may be offered multi-year contract agreements. Adjustments may be made to actual project start dates and contract periods by mutual, written agreement. Each grantee must expend funds and submit a final report within the grant contract period unless the term of the grant is extended by written agreement. Requests for contract extensions should be submitted by the grantee at least sixty (60) days prior to the grant contract end date.

Distribution of grant funds will take place within thirty (30) days of receiving a properly prepared invoice and required documentation of expenditure from a grantee. Total grant distributions will not exceed ninety percent (90%) of reimbursable costs until the submittal of a final project report by the grantee. The remaining percentage of grant funding shall be paid upon the Grant Committee's acceptance of a final report by the grantee. Funds not expended by the end of the grant contract term will be forfeited. No reimbursements will be made for expended before the effective date of the grant contract or after the term specified in the contract..

Data and Reporting Requirements: The program's work is data driven. Applicants must agree to provide written reports on project investments and results, with reporting terms to be included in the grant agreement.

Site Visits: The grant recipient must agree to site visits by the Grant Committee or its agents or similar evaluation and verification processes, such as video communications. Non-disclosure agreements will be considered to protect grant award recipients' pre-existing confidential business information and intellectual property.