

VIABILITY™

VINYL INSTITUTE
RECYCLING GRANT PROGRAM

CASE STUDY

AWARD: \$177,423 (May 2023 and June 2024)

The Vinyl Institute launched VIABILITY in January of 2023, a first-of-its-kind, industry-wide recycling grant program aimed at accelerating post-consumer PVC recycling nationwide. The grant program makes available up to \$1 million in funds per year over three years from four PVC resin manufacturers in the U.S. (Formosa, Oxy, Shintech, and Westlake.)



Every
Shelter

Every Shelter—a nonprofit located in Houston, Texas—designs shelter solutions for displaced communities and refugees. In the United States, Every Shelter repurposes vinyl billboards into tarps for temporary roofing to stabilize the homes of disaster victims. Where the tarps currently provided by FEMA last ~30 days, upcycled vinyl billboard tarps have an average service life of 24 months. These tarps present an opportunity to increase the amount of post-consumer recycled PVC and to create longer lasting solutions for families in need. Every Shelter received their first VIABILITY recycling grant in May of 2023, receiving \$39,750 in funding and a second for \$137,673.

WHY VIABILITY

Every Shelter's purpose in applying for a VIABILITY grant was to demonstrate the feasibility of repurposing vinyl billboards into emergency roof tarps for disaster relief in the United States. Every Shelter noted several objectives in their first round VIABILITY application, including the establishment of relationships with out-of-home advertisers to secure sources for vinyl billboards, proving their business model costs, and qualifying a tarp manufacturer in Mexico. They also sought to create a channel to market their completed tarps and produce 2,000 finished tarps.



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VIABILITY IN ACTION

During their first VIABILITY grant period, Every Shelter was able to repurpose 74,250 pounds of vinyl bound for landfills into 1,650 emergency tarps. Four hundred emergency tarps were distributed through Good360 to help an estimated 1,000 disaster survivors in Tennessee and an additional 1,250 tarps were stored in warehouses for use when needed. In addition to the aid they provided to survivors, Every Shelter secured a supply chain through which they can scale up to a production of 22,000 tarps a year. Every Shelter also created marketing materials including a website, specification sheet, and sales sheet with the help of their VIABILITY grant and launched a preliminary side-by-side product durability test in comparison to polyethylene 'blue' tarps. Finally, they launched Emergency Tarp as a compelling product into the marketplace. (www.emergencytarp.org)

LOOKING FORWARD

With a successful VIABILITY grant under their belt, Every Shelter will look to build on their achievements with the award of the second grant. The nonprofit will move from proof-of-concept to self-sustainability, with the goal of diverting 450,000 pounds of PVC from landfills. They also have the goal of assisting 12,500 disaster victims. As part of this viability initiative, Every Shelter is seeking partnerships with VSC companies to donate these kits to volunteer and relief organizations. The goal is to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season, specifically focusing on the Gulf Coast region, where timely and effective solutions are crucial in response to frequent natural disasters.

CONCLUSION

Every Shelter's first round VIABILITY grant is a shining example of the economic, sustainable, and humanitarian possibilities that await with breakthroughs in post-consumer PVC recycling. Every Shelter was able to divert tens of thousands of pounds from landfills while increasing the quality of life for thousands of disaster victims. Their sights are set at increasing both of those figures. VIABILITY has opened doors for Every Shelter, and in turn has given back to our Earth and our fellow humans.