



# REGIONAL RECYCLING AND EDIBLE FOOD RECOVERY GRANT (RREFR)

APPLICATION GUIDELINES  
AND INSTRUCTIONS



**Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant  
(RREFR)**

Application Guidelines and Instructions

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# Background

California Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383), known as the Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Reduction Strategy, is a state law aimed at reducing greenhouse gas impacts to the environment. The bill sets targets to reduce organic waste by 50% by 2020 and 75% by 2025, compared to 2014 levels. With 30-40% of the state's methane emissions originating from landfills, OC Waste & Recycling (OCWR) is continually looking for innovative ways to reduce landfill emissions and make an impact in supporting the state's goals.

SB 1383 also mandates that 20% of surplus edible food be recovered for human consumption rather than disposed of at landfills. According to the OC Waste & Recycling 2024 Edible Food Recovery Capacity Planning report for Orange County, between the years of 2025 and 2034, an estimated 10,000 tons of edible food will end up in landfills. This report exemplifies a need to improve an edible food recovery model that is more efficient and time-sensitive across edible food recovery organizations (EFROs), prep kitchens, food pantries, and other entities, as the backbone of the recovery and distribution infrastructure.

Most of these EFROs are non-profits with limited resources, among many other challenges. With scarce grant opportunities and tightened fiscal budgets, additional funding is needed to sustain the long-term resources required for the safe collection, storage, preparation, distribution, and tracking of edible foods. In addition, although SB 1383 requirements and enforcement are jurisdictional, the recovery and distribution of food is not. Regional collaboration is crucial among local entities to foster more efficient partnerships to meet SB 1383 goals in Orange County.

The Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant (RREFR) aims to improve the County's partnerships with Edible Food Recovery Organizations (EFROs) to better promote and expand edible food recovery infrastructure throughout Orange County, in support of County and local jurisdiction SB 1383 mandates, by providing financial support and incentives through a competitive five-year grant program.

A total of up to \$6,000,000 is available over three fiscal years (FYs) 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29, with up to \$2,000,000 allotted in total per year. The maximum requested grant funds must not exceed \$500,000 per grant award. Awarded grantees are to be advanced 50% of their total awarded grant funds within the first three years of the 5-year grant term, with the remaining awarded grant funds reimbursed on a quarterly report schedule.

Grant funding is derived from the County of Orange AB 939 Self-Haul Surcharge. The County's Board of Supervisors has directed that this funding be used to develop new programs and activities or significantly expand existing programs and activities to strengthen recycling efforts and divert valuable materials from Orange County landfills. As a result, the Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant (RREFR), aims to reduce edible food from ending up in the landfill and redirect it to our residents, jurisdictions, and underserved communities through recovery programs. Furthermore, this grant will reduce environmental impacts, which supports the goals of the preliminary County of Orange Climate Action Plan and assists the County and local jurisdictions in meeting their SB1383 mandates by supporting the necessary edible food recovery infrastructure and programs needed to meet SB 1383.

# Timeline

Applications and supporting materials are due by 4:59 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2026. OC Waste & Recycling must receive both a hard copy and a digital copy of the application package. Supplemental materials must also meet this deadline to be considered as part of the application. The following is the timeline for the Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant (RREFR).

Date	Activity
February 26, 2026	<b>Question Period Begins in OpenGov</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visit <a href="https://oclandfills.com/grants">oclandfills.com/grants</a> for OpenGov portal access.</li> </ul>
March 2, 2026	<b>Application Opens in OpenGov</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visit <a href="https://oclandfills.com/grants">oclandfills.com/grants</a> for OpenGov portal access.</li> </ul>
March 19, 2026	<b>Live Question and Answer Virtual Meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The live Q&amp;A virtual meeting will take place on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 10 a.m. Visit <a href="https://oclandfills.com/grants">oclandfills.com/grants</a> for a virtual meeting link.</li> <li>▪ All questions must be submitted via the OpenGov portal or during the live Q&amp;A.</li> </ul>
May 8, 2026	<b>Last Day to Submit Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visit <a href="https://oclandfills.com/grants">oclandfills.com/grants</a> for OpenGov portal access.</li> </ul>
May 15, 2026	<b>Due Date – Application and Supplemental Materials</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applications must be received both by mail and via the OpenGov portal by 4:59 p.m. on the due date.</li> <li>▪ Visit <a href="https://oclandfills.com/grants">oclandfills.com/grants</a> for OpenGov portal access.</li> </ul>
June 5, 2026	<b>Evaluation of Applicants</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All applicants will be notified of their evaluation results and interview dates if selected to move forward, via e-mail and postal mail.</li> </ul>
Mid-June 2026	<b>Interview Phase</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OCWR staff will schedule and conduct interviews with successful grant applicants. Applicants to be notified of their award status by Friday, June 26, 2026.</li> </ul>
July 2026	<b>Award Notification &amp; Formal Agreement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OCWR staff will schedule time to meet with successful grant applicants to finalize grant program funding details and prepare a formal agreement.</li> </ul>
September 2026	<b>Board of Supervisors Meeting to Approve Agreements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board of Supervisors meeting to approve grant agreements for disbursement of funds and Notice to Proceed.</li> </ul>
September 2031	<b>Grant Term Ends</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Final Report due.</li> </ul>

**Notice:** The County of Orange, OC Waste & Recycling reserves the right to modify the grant timeline should it deem in its sole discretion to be in the best interest of the County. If any changes are made, the County will post such changes at [oclandfills.com/grants](https://oclandfills.com/grants).

Please subscribe to both the grant webpage and OpenGov for the most up-to-date information.

For technical assistance with OpenGov, please contact OpenGov customer support.

## Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include those that provide services related to edible food recovery. These include but are not limited to edible food recovery organizations, food pantries, food banks, food prep kitchens and other food recovery organizations and entities as the lead applicant. Social services, wraparound services, and other community service organizations are encouraged to apply if they are looking to establish a new edible food recovery program.

Eligible applicants may submit only one of the following two types of grant applications:

1. **An Individual Application** – Edible Food Recovery Organizations.
2. **A Joint Application** – Edible Food Recovery Organizations may partner with other cities, agencies, organizations, or entities. A lead applicant must be designated to act on behalf of all participating applicants. The lead applicant will be responsible for adhering to the grant agreement and providing all required documentation. OC Waste & Recycling will direct all official correspondence and grant payments to the lead applicant.

## Eligible Projects

OC Waste & Recycling is seeking sustainable projects and regional infrastructure improvements that expand new and existing edible food recovery programs while supporting jurisdictional compliance to Senate Bill 1383 in Orange County. A sustainable project is defined as an edible food recovery program that will continue to operate after the grant term has ended and all OCWR grant funding has been exhausted.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to:

- New Edible Food Recovery programs that can provide expansion of Edible Food Recovery in areas of the County not currently covered or lacking services.
- Expansion of existing Edible Food Recovery capacity programs.
- Building expansion:
  - Leases, construction expansions, permits, retrofits, renovations, security upgrades, etc., subject to approval by OCWR.
- Equipment including but not limited to refrigerators, freezers, and heated holding cabinets, that directly relate to expanding edible food capacity and recovery.
- Vehicles
  - Grant application scoring prioritizes vehicles that fall under the zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) or near ZEV category, subject to approval by OCWR.
- Supplies such as heat insulated bags and heavy-duty storage totes for transportation, gloves, and other supplies related to edible food recovery activities.
- Education and Outreach Programs specific to edible food recovery and distribution.
- Pass-through extension to subcontractors with experience and proven track records, subject to approval by OCWR (may include food pantry partnerships).

- Data tracking software and equipment.
- Personnel that support the expansion of edible food recovery (limited to 10% of the total requested grant amount, excluding equipment). Personnel cannot include executive-level positions.

## Grant Application Scoring Criteria

### Total Possible Points (100 points)

With a total of 100 points, a minimum score of 75 points must be reached for the grant applicant(s) to be considered. This is a competitive grant based on the strength and merit of the applications. There is no established number of grantees to be awarded. However, the maximum grant award amount will be \$500,000. Only projects that meet the following criteria will be considered along with the merit of program. The application must address, though need not be limited to:

### Project Description (10 points)

- The description is detailed, and clear, and identifies the target audience, current successes (if any), goals, and geographical area where activities will take place. If a current edible food recovery program exists, provide a lengthy description of your current structure and success.
- Explains partnerships with other cities, agencies, organizations, or entities and grantee(s) commitments. For joint applications, the project description outlines each partner's responsibilities and anticipated contributions.

### Project Narrative: Needs, Goals and Objectives (40 points)

- Provides a thorough explanation of why the funding is needed and includes documented data or research (e.g., benefits, end products, target population, etc.).
- For existing programs, a description of the program's current successes and challenges and how award of grant funds will impact the program.
- For new programs, a description of the program and metric or data showing the service needs in the area which are not being met and how the new program will fill the existing service gap.
- Identifies challenges the project will address and how the project will provide solutions.
- Identifies the necessary resources, including specific funding sources and costs for ongoing operation.
- Outlines goals and objectives. Goals and objectives must be clear, quantifiable, and support the grant's overall mission.
- Clearly describes and demonstrates how diverse educational outreach is integrated into the grant program.
- Identifies methodologies for providing baseline and collection data.
- Describes methodologies for data tracking, ensuring project goals and objectives are being met.
- Specifies key performance indicators that must be met to achieve project goals.
- Assigns clear personnel roles and responsibilities to limit confusion, promote accountability, and minimize data entry errors.
- Describes the existing edible food recovery programs in the area, if any, and includes a description of how the project will improve or create partnerships to better promote and sustain regional outcomes over a five-year grant cycle.

- Explains how the project will increase the expansion of edible food recovery capacity and/or distribution, while benefiting the community, OC jurisdictions, and the environment.
- Specifies how materials and equipment purchased with grant funds will be retained and secured to prevent theft or damage and limit risks of injury to operators and the public. Any vehicle purchase(s) must be kept in possession for at least 5 years after the grant term has concluded or provide documentation that demonstrates the vehicle was inoperable and disposed.

**Project Sustainability (20 points)**

- List specific personnel who will be responsible for monitoring, reporting, and evaluating project sustainability over a five-year grant cycle.
- Includes a description of how the project will sustain regional outcomes over a five-year grant cycle and beyond the grant term.
- Clearly describes the source of funds the grantee will contribute financially throughout the grant term to ensure edible food recovery project sustainability.

**Work Plan (10 points)**

- Identifies major activities, tasks, committed partnerships, organizations or entities, and deliverables required to successfully complete the project within the grant term.
- Provides a clear plan for project execution, helps in managing resources, and serves as a tool for self-monitoring progress.
- Aligns with the budget and should clearly reflect how the grant funds will be used for the activities described.
- Detail how the project's goals and objectives will continue to operate after the grant term has ended. Include attachments as needed, such as a Memorandum of Understanding or letter of support with a partner agency.

**Budget Plan (10 points)**

- Provides a complete, itemized cost breakdown consistent with project activities. All line items are necessary, reasonable, and cost-effective. Line items are clearly described and justified.
- Provides bids, estimates, or other documents to support the requested eligible costs. Includes costs (dollar figures) associated with activities necessary to complete the project.
- Supporting documents must show vendor name, date, description of goods or services, additional charges, and total amount.

**Application Completeness & Quality of Proposal (10 points)**

- The proposal is clear, concise, well-organized, and provides adequate detail and data.
- The project is well-planned from beginning to end and forecasts the project's sustainability after the grant term has ended.
- Application documents are on the grantee(s) letterhead and includes Project Description, Project Narrative, Work Plan, Budget Plan, Resolution (if applicable), Letter of Authorization (if applicable), and all other relevant documents.

## Funding

- A total of \$6,000,000 is available over three fiscal years (FYs) 2026-27, 2027-28, and 2028-29, with up to \$2,000,000 allotted in total per fiscal year.
- Maximum \$500,000 per grant award.
- Awarded grantees are to be advanced 50% of their total awarded grant funds within the first three years of the 5-year grant term, with the remaining awarded funds reimbursed on a quarterly report schedule.
- The Work Plan and Budget Plan application documents must show a plan for sustaining the edible food recovery program throughout the life of the 5-year grant term. See example below for a grant project that is awarded \$250,000.

Fiscal Year	OCWR Share	Grant Applicant Share	Project Plans & Eligible Item Costs	Total Cost
2026-27	\$125,000 Advanced	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (1) Delivery vehicle</li> <li>▪ (2) Refrigerator</li> <li>▪ (2) Freezer</li> <li>▪ (2) Chamber Warming Cabinet</li> </ul>	\$125,000
2027-28	<i>Reimbursed on a quarterly basis</i>	Up to 50% of total remaining grant award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (1) staff salary directly tied to edible food recovery, limited to 10% of grant award, excluding equipment (ex. Coordinator)</li> <li>▪ Food handlers certificate training</li> <li>▪ Education and outreach materials</li> </ul>	\$50,000
2028-29	<i>Reimbursed on a quarterly basis</i>	Up to 50% of total remaining grant award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ (1) staff salary directly tied to edible food recovery, limited to 10% of grant award, excluding equipment (ex. Coordinator)</li> <li>▪ Food handlers certificate training</li> <li>▪ Education and outreach materials</li> </ul>	\$50,000
2029-30	<i>Reimbursed on a quarterly basis</i>	Up to 50% of total remaining grant award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food handlers certificate training</li> <li>▪ Education and outreach materials</li> </ul>	\$15,000
2030-2031	<i>Reimbursed on a quarterly basis</i>	Up to 50% of total remaining grant award	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Food handlers certificate training</li> <li>▪ Education and outreach materials</li> </ul>	\$10,000

**Note:** OC Waste & Recycling reserves the right to adjust payout amounts based on the number of applicants.

## Eligible Costs

Eligible costs may be incurred only during the grant term, which starts when the grantee receives a Notice to Proceed from OC Waste & Recycling. Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Operating expenses associated directly with approved grant project application.
- Special equipment that is integral to the success of the proposed grant project.
- Building expansion:
  - Leases, construction expansions, permits, retrofits, renovations, security upgrades, etc., subject to approval by OCWR.
- Education and outreach materials.
- Food handlers certification training.
- Equipment including but not limited to shelving racks, push carts, weight scales, that can be directly tied to edible food capacity and recovery.
- Vehicles that support logistics in food recovery operations.
- Personnel that support the expansion of edible food recovery (limited to 10% of the total requested grant amount, excluding equipment). Personnel cannot include executive-level positions.
- Consulting fees that support the expansion of edible food recovery are an eligible cost (limited to 10% of the total grant award, excluding equipment). Workplans must show a quantifiable increase in edible food recovery in relation to consulting work.

## Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Costs incurred prior to receipt of the Notice to Proceed letter.
- Costs for office space, office equipment, scholarships, internships, legal, and lobbying fees.
  - **Note:** Subject to approval by OCWR, building expansion directly related to edible food recovery is exempt from this ineligibility.
- Promotional items not related to the project (e.g., shirts, magnets, cups, gift cards, calendars with no educational component, trophies, awards, and plaques).
- Costs that are inconsistent with local, state, or federal laws or regulations.
- Any food or beverages. All edible food must be recovered from a partner organization.
- Any prepaid expenditures for future goods or services delivered after the end of the grant term.
  - **Exception:** the Grant Manager may consider approving products purchased in full before the end of the Grant Term but delivered after the Grant Term if the delay is caused solely by the supplier and through no fault of the Grantee(s). The Grantee(s) must request an exemption in writing and receive written approval from the Grant Manager prior to the purchase.
- Travel, including meals, not specifically related to the recovery, preparation or distribution of edible food.
- Travel or training related to lobbying or networking.
- Business, operational or overhead expenses not directly related to edible food recovery
- Membership dues.
- Overhead and overtime costs.

- Any other costs not deemed reasonable or related to the purpose of the grant by the Grant Manager.

*Note: All expenditures are subject to audit. If uncertain regarding eligibility, please submit inquiry during question-and-answer period.*

## Question and Answer Period

The question and answer period is now open and available on the OpenGov portal through 4:59 p.m. on Friday, May 8, 2026. All questions must be submitted via the OpenGov portal. Please visit [oclandfills.com/grants](https://oclandfills.com/grants) to access the OpenGov portal. All Q&As will be posted as they are received and are subject to updates. It is each applicant's responsibility to check the OpenGov portal and grant web page for the latest information.

OC Waste & Recycling will host a live question and answer virtual session on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Visit [oclandfills.com/grants](https://oclandfills.com/grants) for a virtual meeting link. The session will be recorded and made available on the grant web page.

## Grant Application Documents and Submittal

The following is a checklist of documents that are required as part of the Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant (RREFR) application package. Please review your application to ensure that everything on the checklist is included and arranged in the order prescribed.

OC Waste & Recycling must receive both a hard copy and a digital copy of the application package.

### Hard Copy (Wet Signatures Required)

The complete hard copy application, including original signatures, must be received or postmarked no later than 4:59 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2026.

Mail or deliver to:

OC Waste & Recycling  
c/o Andrew Le  
601 N. Ross Street, 5th Floor  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

To schedule a drop-off appointment, please email [grants@ocwr.ocgov.com](mailto:grants@ocwr.ocgov.com).

*Applicants should retain a copy for their records.*

### Digital Submission

A complete digital application package must also be submitted through the OpenGov portal. The digital submission must be received no later than 4:59 p.m. on Friday, May 15, 2026.

*Both the hard copy and digital submission are required for an application to be considered complete. Failure to submit both components and supplemental materials by the deadline will result in disqualification.*

1. **Project Description**
2. **Project Narrative** (not to exceed 6 pages)
3. **Project Sustainability**
4. **Work Plan**
5. **Budget Plan**
6. **Appendices**

➤ **Resolution and/or Letter of Authorization (if applicable)**

Any applicant that is under the direction of a governing body must submit a resolution that authorizes specific grant-related matters and identifies an individual or individuals with authority to act on behalf of the applicant. A copy of the authorizing resolution is a required application document that must be submitted to the Grant Manager no later than 4:59 p.m. on Friday, June 5, 2026. Resolution requirements may vary for individual or joint applications.

➤ **Individual or Joint Application Resolutions Must:**

- Authorize submittal of an application for a specifically named OC Waste & Recycling grant.
- Identify the job titles of the Signature Authorities authorized to sign all grant-related documents necessary to secure funds and implement the approved project(s). The resolution may also include language authorizing the signature authorities to delegate authority to additional job titles.
- Identify the time period during which the authorizations are valid. The minimum duration is the grant term, and the maximum duration is five years from the date of adoption. If the resolution expires during the application period or the grant term, OC Waste & Recycling will require a new valid Resolution.
- Be certified by the governing body.

In addition to the above resolution requirements, the lead on a joint application resolution (for two or more jurisdictions or non-profits) must:

- Authorize the Lead Applicant to act as the Signature Authority for the Joint grant program. This Resolution authorizes submittal of a Joint application by the Lead Applicant.
- Specifically name jurisdictional participants.

➤ **Letter of Authorization (Joint Application Only)**

A Letter of Authorization is used for Joint Applications. It is executed by the participating jurisdictions and gives the Lead Participant authorization to apply for and to act on the applicants' behalf in the implementation and administration of the grant program. The Lead Applicant must upload the Letter of Authorization no later than the grant application due date, or the participating jurisdiction(s) may be removed from the application. The letter with original signatures must be maintained in applicant/grantee(s) grant file. The letter must:

- Be on the Lead Participant's official letterhead.
- Be dated prior to the application due date.
- Authorize the Lead Participant to submit a joint application and act as Lead Agency on behalf of the participating jurisdiction.
- Authorize the Lead Participant to execute all documents necessary to implement the grant.

- Be signed by individuals authorized to contractually bind each participating jurisdiction.
- **Quotes**
- **Photos of Equipment, Construction Areas, etc.**

## Reporting Process

Grantees are required to report on the progress of their grant on a quarterly basis for the entirety of the grant term or at the discretion of the Grant Manager. Grantees must also submit a Final Report following the end of the grant term. Reporting due dates, requirements, and instructions will be established in the Negotiated Grant Financial Agreement, which grant recipients will have an opportunity to review.

**County Audit Rights:** OC Waste & Recycling reserves the right to audit and request additional reports and/or data and documents at any time during the grant term period. Failure of the Grantee to comply with our request may result in the termination of remaining grant funding and a requirement that the Grantee reimburse county.

## Payment Process

Grantees are to be advanced 50% of their total awarded grant funds within the first three years of the grant term, with the remaining awarded funds on a quarterly reimbursement schedule. The grantee's payment requests must be for eligible costs, with approval from the OC Waste & Recycling Grant Manager. Payment requests must be submitted quarterly with the accompanying quarterly report. Payment requests must include itemized documentation of eligible expenses (e.g., itemized receipts, invoices, and proof of payment). All payment requests submitted for reimbursement must be addressed directly to the Grantee. Failure to submit these documents by the deadline specified in the Negotiated Grant Financial Agreement or failure to receive the Grant Manager's approval of these documents during the duration of the grant term may result in the non-payment of otherwise eligible expenditures. Payment requests not accompanied by a quarterly report will be declined.

## Unspent Funds

If a county audit is performed, any grantee found to be in violation of the Grant Agreement must return any grant funds that were advanced.

Funds that are unspent at the end of the grant term must be returned by check to OC Waste & Recycling by September 2031. Checks should be made payable to OC Waste & Recycling. Checks must contain the Grant Number (i.e., RREFR-26-xxxx), specify "Regional Recycling & Edible Food Recovery Grant Program (RREFR)" and be mailed to:

OC Waste & Recycling  
601 N. Ross Street, 5th Floor  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Unspent funds due to OC Waste & Recycling but left unreturned may result in ineligibility for future grant and payment program funding. If there are questions or other issues related to expenditures, work with the Grant Manager to resolve these issues.

## **Grant Award Conditions**

OC Waste & Recycling reserves the right to partially fund or fund individual phases of selected proposals, and OC Waste & Recycling may fund an amount less than requested. OC Waste & Recycling reserves the right to not award any grant funds under one or more cycles.

When awarded, the Applicant or Lead Applicant must sign and return the Negotiated Grant Financial Agreement to OC Waste & Recycling by Friday, July 24, 2026.

## **Contingency of Funding & Appropriation**

Funding for the County of Orange Regional Recycling and Edible Food Recovery Grant (RREFR) is contingent upon OC Board of Supervisors approval.