

# HENNEPIN COUNTY

MINNESOTA

## Business Recycling Grants Midterm Report Template

Final Report Check-list

- Receipts
- Photos
- Waste hauling chart updated

Organization Name: A Place to Think Ad Agency  
Project Leader(s): Joanne Fischer

**Thank you for your hard work and dedication!**

Documentation is required as a part of your grant agreement (contract) in the form of invoices and receipts. Please e-mail or mail your budget documentation to:

**Mail to:**

**E-mail to:**

Attn: Mallory Anderson, Grant Manager  
Hennepin County Environment & Energy  
701 Fourth Ave. South, Suite 700  
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1842  
Mallory.Anderson@hennepin.us

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*The information in your reports is crucial to our efforts to continue this grant program.*

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## Introduction

For our project we implemented a waste management plan that is easy to use and has reduced our waste significantly. Our goal was to reduce our trash by 20% within one year. We planned to accomplish this through improving recycling and starting organics recycling.

Our first step was to create a uniform waste collection system that promotes recycling. We removed all desk-side trash cans and replaced them with a recycling bin and clearly communicated that staff would have to collect their trash and get rid of it at the waste stations throughout the office. These stations were located in main areas: the kitchen, meeting rooms, and printer area.

Our second step was to introduce organics recycling. This took more education and support to ensure staff knew all of the materials that can be put in our organics bin. This included labeling our trash bins in the bathrooms to make it clear only paper towels should go in the bin, and trash should be put in a smaller bin under the sink. That way we can collect paper towels for organics recycling.

We are excited to report that after these two steps were completed we saw a decrease in trash by half, and received training from Hennepin County staff to help our staff know how to reduce waste in the office and how to sort all the materials that come in and out of the office for trash, recycling, and organics.

## Project Summary

Before the grant, what type of materials did you collect?	Now, what type of materials did you collect?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper (e.g. office papers, magazines, shredded paper)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper (e.g. office papers, magazines, shredded paper)
<input type="checkbox"/> Paper boxes (e.g. cereal and cracker boxes, gift boxes)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper boxes (e.g. cereal and cracker boxes, gift boxes)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cardboard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cardboard
<input type="checkbox"/> Cartons (e.g. milk cartons, juice boxes, broth cartons)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cartons (e.g. milk cartons, juice boxes, broth cartons)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glass bottles & jars	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glass bottles & jars
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic bottles & jugs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic bottles & jugs
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic cups and containers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic cups and containers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal cans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal cans
<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic wrap (e.g. plastic film, plastic bags.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic wrap (e.g. plastic film, plastic bags.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Organics (food waste, non-recyclable paper)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Organics (food waste, non-recyclable paper)

**Please attach photos and receipts showing activities** (such as container set-ups, trainings, people sorting their waste) from your recycling project. Complete all questions to the best of your ability. Contact county staff with any questions.

## Cost and Benefits of Project

We have increased our cost by \$35.75, but think we can continue to reduce our trash service to meet that break-even point. The important thing is that it is a big cost and we expect to continue to reduce it. Further, our staff is happy to have the opportunity to do the right thing. We have also had many clients take note of our system when they come to our office. We always provide them information on resources on how they can take steps to improve their office. We're pleasantly surprised by the comments we've received.

Have you had cost savings from adding recycling or improving your recycling? \$35.75 more a month

Costs prior to project		Costs since project	
Cleaning service monthly	\$50	Cleaning service monthly	\$60
Trash bags	\$15/month	Trash bags	\$8/month
		Compostable liners	\$32.75/month
Trash Hauling	\$80	Trash Hauling	\$50
Recycling Hauling	\$20	Recycling Hauling	\$20
		Organics recycling Hauling	\$30
\$165/month		\$200.75/month	

## Environmental Benefits

Our most significant impact was that we significantly decreased our trash by improving recycling and starting organics for composting. We hope to be able to follow these up with more innovative ideas like encouraging communal meals, meal sharing, and reducing our waste from eating out. We also hope to continue these efforts by only purchasing from caterers that have similar practices that comply with our recycling and organics recycling practices so we don't create waste during meetings and events.

We are most excited about this project inspiring a Green Team. As we needed a small group to help sticker and place the bins we had a nice group of staff who is now interested in meeting every other month to look into more opportunities to green our office, come up with new staff events around green topics, and to answer questions when they come up.

Each client that walks through the door may or may not notice our new system, but we do our best to ensure that if they have questions or have to throw something away they do it the correct way.

## Other

Are there any unexpected (positive or negative) results from your project? – not that we can think of.

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## Successes and Challenges

We have been pleasantly surprised by how well staff has sorted and made a positive impact. Since organics recycling is still new we still struggle to get everyone to put all their organics in the right bin and it'll end up in the trash, we also see some people tossing recyclable items, but we hope that improves over time as we continue to highlight the importance of recycling at Place to Think Ad Agency.

We were disappointed that we could not reduce our trash service enough to pay for the organics, and are wondering if there is a less expensive compostable liner. We also did not expect our cleaning service to increase the price for adding another bin, but understood that they'd have an extra step in their routine. We've also struggled to ensure that everything is continuing to be sorted into the right dumpsters and carts out back. The first few weeks we had someone checking and had to consult with the company when we found an organics bag in the trash.

## Lessons Learned

One training and signage is not enough to ensure nothing gets mistakenly put in the trash. It takes practice and time to ensure people know the new system, especially when not all the staff cares that deeply and is more focused on getting to their next meeting or back to work. We've luckily got our new Green Team who has been looking for little reminders to go out in our newsletters to keep people engaged.

## Sustaining the Project

For us the cost to buy new containers just wasn't in our budget for this year, and with the excitement over organics recycling we knew it was something we should do. The grant helped immensely for us to replace trash containers and add organics containers in our new "waste stations". We also now have a green team, which is allowed to keep any funds it saves through other projects for their annual budget to reinvest. For 2017 (next year) they were given a \$500 budget to support holding events or investing in small projects. Hopefully that will grow and they can start making more changes.

## Recommendations

The grant program was very helpful for us to jump-start our program. We struggled with knowing how long it would take to get our money, but felt our grant manager helped us understand the process.

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## Waste hauling

Refer to the **waste hauling** estimate you completed for your grant application.

		Volume or size (yards, gallons)	# and type of container (#, dumpster, cart or compactor)	# of pickups per week (1-7 or on call)	Cost of service (cost per month)	Fullness at pickup
Before the Grant (from your application)	<b>Trash</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	96 gallons	2 carts	1	\$80	100%
	<b>Mixed recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	96 gallons	1 cart	1	\$20	50%
	<b>Cardboard recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	N/A				
	<b>Organics recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	N/A				
After the grant (current)	<b>Trash</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	96 gallons	1 cart	1	\$50	75%
	<b>Mixed recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	96 gallons	1 cart	1	\$20	90%
	<b>Cardboard recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	N/A				
	<b>Organics recycling</b> <i>Fill in hauler here</i>	96 gallons	1 cart	1	\$30	100%

**Weight data from hauler (optional)** Some haulers will provide this information as a part of their service; others will provide it for a fee.

Waste stream	Weight (lbs or tons)	Time period (month/year)	Method of weighing (truck scale, average, volume estimate)
Trash			
Recycling			
Cardboard recycling			
Organics			

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## Financial Report

Please include all costs incurred to date. Provide as much detail as possible.

In the example, the business has had one year of organics hauling. Grant funds covered the first three months of hauling, but the business covered the remaining nine months of the year. The second line item is workplace bins, which were mostly covered using grant funds. However, the total grant was for \$1,350; therefore, the remaining \$12.50 was paid by the business.

Program Component	Date(s) Purchased	Vendor	Item Number	Unit Cost	Number	Grant Funds (spent of first payment and costs to be reimbursed)	Other Funds (not covered through grant but relevant to project)
Organics Hauling	Started Jan 2014	Hauler Name	N/A	\$30/mo	12	\$90.00	\$270.00
Compostable bags – 23 gal	See invoices Jan '14-Dec '15	Supplier XYZ	197225-C	\$55/box of 100	3	\$82.50	\$82.50
Compostable bags – 10 gal	See invoices Jan '14-Dec '15	Supplier XYZ	187255-D	\$35/box of 100	1	\$52.50	\$52.50
Cleaner fee change	Started Jan 15	Cleaning Company	N/A	\$10/month	11 months	N/A	\$110
<b>Total</b>						<b>\$225.00</b>	<b>\$515.00</b>

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