

Attachment 3- 2024 environmental action potential projects

Hennepin County Green Partners program supports organizations to actively educate, engage, and motivate residents to become environmental stewards and make positive behavior changes, such as taking action to prevent waste, recycle, reduce household hazardous waste, combat climate change, care for trees, protect pollinators, and improve our air and water quality.

This is a list of projects that Hennepin County is interested in funding, along with links and resources to support projects. **These are not the only projects that will be funded**, any project that meets the criteria listed in the Green Partners Environmental Action Request for Proposals (RFP) will also be considered.

Visit hennepin.us/greenpartners to read about projects funded in the previous grant round. Visit hennepin.us/environmentaleducation to access environmental education resources.

Preventing waste and recycling

Preventing waste

- **Reduce food waste:** Encourage participants to improve meal planning, properly store food, and preserve food before it spoils. See the Hennepin County [food waste activity guides](#), [food storage advice](#), and the [Stop Food Waste Challenge](#) for ideas. Ask participants to try [new activities to reduce food waste](#) and share challenges, creative tips, and advice for others. Utilize tools like the [FoodKeeper](#) app, Eureka Recycling's [Food Storage Tips](#), Save the Food's [interactive food storage guide](#), and the University of Minnesota Extension's page on [preserving food safely](#).
- **Replace disposables, packaging waste, and single use plastics:** Ask participants to assess the packaging for items they purchase and the disposable, "convenience" items they commonly use. Encourage participants to purchase items with less plastic and less packaging. Provide tips and tools to replace those items with reusable items. See Hennepin County's [top 10 list of disposal items to replace with reusables](#), the [Plastic Free Challenge](#), and the [reducing waste activity guide](#) for ideas.
- **Reuse and repair:** Encourage participants to repair household items. Recruit fixers from your community and host a fix-it event in your community. See ReUse Minnesota's [repair](#), the Rethos [education](#), and Hennepin County [Fix-It Clinic](#) websites for ideas.
- **Make buying used cool:** Engage participants in examining their household waste and identifying items they could purchase used. Share information about reuse stores and purchasing strategies. Host a swap event and consider a theme, such as books, music, toys, kitchen items, clothes, or tools. View the county's [reducing waste activity guides](#) and learn about the [Choose to Reuse website](#).

Recycling waste

- **Recycling:** Encourage recycling in areas of low participation. Contact your city recycling coordinator to find out which neighborhoods have low recycling rates in your area (see the list of city recycling coordinators at hennepin.us/recycling). See the Hennepin County [recycling guide](#), [recycling presentation](#), the [Recycling Exists](#) website, and [recycling activity guide](#) for ideas.
- **Organics recycling:** Encourage residents to sign up for curbside organics recycling or use a drop-off site, help them participate regularly to divert their organic waste and minimize contamination. See hennepin.us/organics, the [organics recycling guide](#), [tips for getting started with organics recycling](#), and [organics recycling activity guides](#) for ideas.
- **Recycle or reuse bulky waste:** Encourage participants to recycle, reuse, or donate unwanted items like mattresses, household items, and electronics. See Hennepin County's [recycling website](#), [drop-off facility guide](#), and [green disposal guide](#) for ideas.

Household hazardous waste

- **Identify and choose the least hazardous options:** Provide samples of household cleaning products and read labels, have participants assess products they have at home, explore options for less hazardous products, conduct side-by-side comparisons of products. [Tour a drop-off facility](#) to learn what happens to materials. Purchase supplies to make green cleaners or green cleaning products currently on the market. See the [green cleaning recipes](#) and [hazardous waste activities guide](#) for ideas.
- **Properly dispose of household hazardous waste and other special wastes:** Educate participants about the [dangers of household hazardous waste](#). Organize a tour of Hennepin County's [Brooklyn Park drop-off facility](#) for your participants. Provide information about retail drop-off sites for items such as, mercury-containing light bulbs, electronics, used paint, [medicine](#), plastic bags, and more. Help residents plan to drop-off their household's hazardous waste at a [county](#) or county-sponsored community [collection event](#). Promote the [Green Disposal Guide](#) to find the best way to recycle, reuse, or dispose of items from your home. Grantees are not allowed to collect household hazardous waste or host collection events.

Protecting natural resources

Water

- **Adopt a storm drain:** Keep leaves and trash out of our water, post yard signs and host clean-up events. [Sign people up to adopt a storm drain](#) and receive reminders each season. Provide information to participants about storm drains and your local watershed. See the [maintain your drain and storm drain detectives activity guides](#) for ideas.

- **Reduce salt use to protect water:** Encourage homeowners to reduce their salt use in the winter. See the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's [smart snow removal tips](#) and the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization's [Improved winter maintenance: Good Choices for Clean Water video](#) for tips and ideas.
- **Support homeowners in making changes to their yard to protect water:** Encourage homeowners to make changes to capture rainfall on their property instead of letting it runoff. See Hennepin County's [protecting natural resources](#), [Lawns to Legumes](#), and the [Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water](#)® websites for ideas.
- **Work with rural landowners to identify sustainable practices on their land:** Encourage and educate landowners about best practices they can do on their property to protect the environment. Educate about conservation easement and ways they can improve habitat on their property, stabilize eroding areas, protect shoreline, and infiltrate water instead of letting it run off into lakes and streams. For those with shoreline, encourage them to take the [Lake Pledge](#). Help landowners learn about resources and financial assistance to implement their project. Provide educational workshops and a tour of demonstration sites to showcase what landowners can do. See Hennepin County's [managing rural and agricultural land](#) and [land protection and restoration](#) websites for landowner resources and project ideas.

Trees

- **Care for trees:** Engage homeowners in conducting tree inventories, learn about the benefits of trees, and provide hands-on training opportunities to practice tree planting, trimming, and watering. Work with Hennepin County foresters to select trees to giveaway to participants in your community. See hennepin.us/trees, hennepin.us/ashtrees, and [Minnesota DNR residential tree care](#) for resources.

Wildlife

- **Protect birds, bats, and pollinators:** Encourage people to make changes in their community and [lawn care practices](#) to protect pollinators, including reducing the use of pesticides, providing habitat, and using [pollinator-friendly plants](#). Limited plant giveaways are allowed when participants will be trained and supported to care for native plants. Educate participants about [pollinators](#) and how to help [pollinators](#). Educate on how to [maintain bird baths and feeders](#), [build and maintain a bird house](#), and [build and maintain a bat house](#).

Environmental science

- **Share Indigenous science and cultural knowledge:** Engage Indigenous elders and cultural leaders in sharing traditional science and knowledge of the environment and ecosystems and practices that protect the environment. Provide participants

opportunities to partake in traditional practices that they can do to benefit the environment.

- **Community science:** Involve participants in collecting environmental scientific data to benefit the environment by helping scientists do research and get them engaged in specific actions related to the topic they are investigating. Help participants see the connection between the environmental problem they are investigating, the scientific data they are collecting, and what changes they can make in their own life to protect the environment. [Learn more about community science opportunities](#), and find resources for [pollinator science](#) and [additional opportunities](#).

Taking action on climate change

Energy and air pollution at home

- **Conserve energy:** Learn about energy use, encourage residents to get an energy audit, and take action to save energy by weatherizing homes, installing programmable thermostats, turning off lights, unplugging electronics, using solar chargers, and more. See the [energy conservation, air quality and climate change activity guides](#) and Hennepin County's [climate action](#) website for ideas.
- **Reduce air pollution at home:** Engage residents in learning about household sources of [air pollution](#), [health impacts](#), and [actions they can take](#) to reduce it, like eliminating burning or replacing gas-powered lawn equipment with cleaner options. See the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's [what you can do about air pollution](#) site for ideas.
- **Use renewable energy options:** Sign people up for green energy options like WindSource®, Renewable*Connect, or community solar. Learn more about [renewable energy options for residents](#) from the Clean Energy Resources Teams.

Sustainable transportation

- **Choose sustainable transportation:** Motivate people to get out of cars and instead walk, get on a bicycle, car pool or use a car share program, purchase an electric vehicle, or ride public transit. Involve residents in discussions about air pollution and climate change. Provide incentives and help signing up and planning routes so that participants have successful trips. For educational resources, see the encouraging biking and walking activity guide at [hennepin.us/bike](#), Drive Electric Minnesota's [resources](#), education resources from Move Minneapolis about [car share](#) programs and [e-bikes](#), and Metro Transit's [How to Ride](#) program.

Increasing resiliency

- **Growing food sustainably:** One way to increase climate resiliency is to support local and sustainable food systems. Encourage residents to grow their own food in an environmentally sustainable manner, in community gardens or their own backyard. Incorporate [environmental lessons](#) related to food, such as pollinators, water use, soil health, organic waste and composting, packaging waste, reuse, transportation, energy, and more. See the [Hennepin County Master Gardeners](#) website and [Transition Twin Cities](#) website for project resources.
- **Climate conversations that lead to resiliency and action:** Engage people in climate change conversations, talk about the actions they are taking on climate and build support for community-led solutions. Conversations promote social change, develop social norms, and can be deeply influential to the people involved. See Hennepin County's climate action website for [tips for talking about climate change](#).

Projects that are not a good fit include projects to address structural barriers or infrastructure changes. Learn about resources for [recycling at organizations, businesses, multifamily buildings,](#) and [schools](#) and support to install projects to [protect water and natural resources](#).