

2023 Investment and Innovation Grants

Investment and Innovation grants are intended to build lasting private-sector and nonprofit-sector capacity to reduce waste through prevention, reuse, repair, recycling and composting. At the same time, the grants support efforts to advance racial equity in the garbage and recycling system, including expanding services and employment opportunities for underserved communities and reducing harms from garbage and recycling operations. The Investment and Innovation program advances progress toward multiple goals of the [2030 Regional Waste Plan](#) and Metro's [strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion](#).

Capital grants are awarded to private businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations for infrastructure upgrades and equipment. Businesses and universities are required to provide a cash match of at least 100 percent of the grant amount. Program grants support personnel costs, operations and equipment associated with programming at businesses, universities and nonprofit organizations. Program grants require business and university applicants to provide a match of at least 20 percent of the grant amount in cash, in-kind support or both.

Below is a summary of the 2023 Investment and Innovation (I&I) grants. The **19 grants represent a total Metro investment of \$1,982,921** to local businesses and nonprofits in greater Portland. Metro's funding will leverage an additional \$798,087 in matching funds provided by six business grant recipients.

I&I CAPITAL GRANTS

Birch Community Services

Preserving rescued food

Grant amount: \$103,489

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$103,489

Birch Community Services will replace a failing 10-door freezer at its Gresham facility to keep donated and rescued food cold. The freezer is essential infrastructure for Birch's program that rescues more than 11 million pounds of food annually from over 300 local food growers, processors, distributors and retailers. This nutritious food that would otherwise be wasted is redistributed to more than 900 families a year through Birch's Sustainable Families Program. An additional 25,000 people have access to nutritious food through Birch's work to supply food to over 60 community-based agencies.

Bold Reuse

Upgrading reusable food packaging infrastructure in greater Portland

Grant amount: \$42,157

Match amount: \$42,157

Total investment: \$84,314

Bold Reuse will upgrade its washing and drying systems to support increased demand for its reusable food packaging products and services. The grant will fund conveyor systems and drying equipment apparatuses and will incorporate artificial intelligence to enhance quality control and manage inventory. This added capacity will support Bold Reuse's efforts to bring reusable food service ware to large vendors, including partnerships in development with Portland Community College, Portland Public Schools District (focusing on bringing reusables to Title I schools), the Moda Center and McMenamins. In addition to creating efficiencies, the new dishwashing and drying system will improve working conditions for Bold Reuse frontline staff.

City of Roses Disposal & Recycling

Adding organic waste recovery to create animal feed

Grant amount: \$217,130

Match amount: \$217,130

Total investment: \$434,260

City of Roses Disposal and Recycling (COR) will retrofit an existing building to add dry organics recovery processes. The project will enable COR to accept, remove packaging, and prepare previously landfill-bound items including baking goods and mixes, nuts, dehydrated fruits and vegetables and other dry organics to become animal feed. Diversion for animal feed is third most beneficial way to manage food waste according to the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy. The organics waste stream will come from food products suppliers and manufacturers, distribution centers, and grocery stores and consist of scraps, trimmings or extras from processing that were never meant to be sold to consumers. An estimated 27,300 tons of organics will be recovered through this new process, and four full-time living wage jobs will be created to operate the new system.

Denton Plastics

Plastic recycling facility expansion

Grant amount: \$500,000

Match amount: \$500,000

Total investment: \$1,000,000

Denton Plastics will construct a new three-sided building at their facility in Gresham to increase the amount of rigid polyethylene (plastic recycling symbols #2 & #4) and polypropylene (plastic recycling symbol #5) plastics that can be processed at the facility. The building will prevent stormwater pollution from the large volumes of plastic material and will protect the material from degrading while it is stored for processing. Denton is the largest processor of recycled plastics in Oregon. Processing recycled plastic locally has significant environmental and human health benefits when compared to sending materials to distant and potentially unknown end markets.

Outgrowing Hunger

Upcycling rescued food

Grant amount: \$200,477

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$200,477

Outgrowing Hunger serves a racially and ethnically diverse group of organizations, growers, producers and community members in East Multnomah County. This network is strengthening the

food ecosystem and preventing waste so that food is used for its highest nutritional and economic potential. Funds will be used to purchase equipment for producer entrepreneurs to transform food that would otherwise be wasted into valuable products. Sources of food that will be rescued for upcycling include overgrown and unsold crops, farmers market “leftovers,” excess grain production by mills, imperfect foods from distributors, and leftover food from restaurants. The project partners will transform these unsellable but nutritious foods into soups, salads and preserved products. They will sell these products at the proposed grocery store at Rockwood Market Hall to generate revenue, as well as provide the products to BIPOC youth summer camps and transitional housing hotels, among other outlets.

I&I PROGRAM GRANTS

Association of Oregon Recyclers

Transcreating the Recycling 101 online course

Grant amount: \$25,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$25,000

Association of Oregon Recyclers will transcreate its online course, Recycling 101, into Spanish and offer the course for free to Spanish-speaking communities throughout Oregon. Recycling 101 is a self-guided 8-part online course hosted online by Oregon State University that includes comprehensive information about sustainable materials management. A Spanish Recycling 101 course will provide a deeper level of bilingual education than what is currently available to Spanish speakers in Oregon. Transcreation is a creative process to adapt content from one language to another while keeping the same intent, tone and context. Instead of word-for-word translation, the transcreated text will ensure that industry specific terminology doesn't lose its meaning or nuance. Grant funds will be used to migrate and translate the course on a new digital platform, transcreation services with a Spanish speaker experienced in the garbage and recycling industry, and updated marketing materials to promote the free opportunity for Spanish speaking communities.

Community Warehouse

Equitable furniture pickup services

Grant amount: \$85,590

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$85,590

Community Warehouse will implement a sliding scale fee for its furniture pick-up services. The sliding scale fee will allow the nonprofit to engage more furniture donors through equitable programming, and help meet the growing needs of its low-income clients. Grant funds will be used to support staff salaries and vehicle expenses for the donation pick-up program. Community Warehouse anticipates an annual increase of 125 tons of waste diverted from an additional 2,760 sliding scale pick-ups of bulky items. The increase in donated items will help Community Warehouse support 550 more families as they move into stable home environments. By reusing and repurposing furniture and household items, Community Warehouse reduces illegal dumping in the region. An investment in the furniture pick-up program also helps build capacity at Community Warehouse so it can be a key location for mattress reuse after the launch of the Oregon Mattress Stewardship Program.

Edúcate Ya

Educadores de reciclaje (recycling educators)

Grant amount: \$75,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$75,000

Edúcate Ya will develop a train-the-trainer program for waste reduction and recycling education within the Latine community in greater Portland. Edúcate Ya will recruit and train 40 to 50 community members to become recycling educators, who will teach community members through presentations in Spanish about waste prevention, reduction and the recycling system. The program aims to reach up to 300 individuals each year through prevention education workshops, presentations and community events. Grant funds will support a new full-time coordinator for the program, stipends for participants and program supplies. The program will emphasize coalition-building with other Spanish-speaking organizations to further spread community knowledge about waste reduction and recycling.

Frog & Toad

Expanding Frog & Toad's reuse program

Grant amount: \$59,000

Match amount: \$11,800

Total investment: \$70,800

Frog & Toad will hire a new reuse program manager to maximize the materials diverted from its junk hauling operations through reuse and repair. Frog & Toad shares a collaborative warehouse space in Portland's Old Town neighborhood with Frog & Toad and the nonprofit Trash for Peace. The space provides a community hub, retail operations, and space for reuse and repair activities. The reuse program manager will oversee reuse and repair operations at the warehouse with a goal of diverting over 48,000 pounds of items for reuse during the grant period, a 20 percent increase over current levels. The reuse program manager will also coordinate five skill-share events to increase community access to repair trade skills. Frog & Toad is a woman- and trans-owned business that is dedicated to equitable relationships with its workers, contractors, partners and customers. The business aims to offer as many low-cost and free services as it can, such as reducing barriers to bulky item removal for low-income residents.

Junk It Junk Removal

Reclaiming lives through reuse

Grant amount: \$60,000

Match amount: \$12,000

Total investment: \$72,000

Junk It Junk Removal will develop a comprehensive workforce development program to facilitate employment opportunities in the reuse and repair industry to those who face barriers, particularly among communities of color and the formerly incarcerated. The project will focus on hard and soft skills, sustainability education, reuse and repair training, and digital skills training in partnership with Trash for Peace. The program will incorporate classroom instruction, exercises and on-the-job training. Reuse and repair skills will include furniture repair, basic woodshop skills, safety, industrial sewing skills and furniture upholstery. The program will create new opportunities for those traditionally left out of the economic mainstream and growth within the waste reduction and

reuse industry. Grant funds will support staff time, contracted services for digital literacy training, equipment and supplies.

Lift Urban Portland

Improving food system equity

Grant amount: \$75,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$75,000

Lift Urban Portland will expand its food rescue efforts to support the 3,500 low-income residents living in 50 affordable housing buildings in Downtown and Northwest Portland. Grant funds will support staff time, stipends for resident advocates, supplies and upgrades to gleaning vehicles. This grant will enable Lift UP to maximize its gleaning efforts, with a goal to increase food rescue by 10,000 pounds annually. Lift UP aims to increase participant voices in shaping the organization's services and reduce food waste by more efficiently and strategically meeting community needs. As part of the project, Lift UP will conduct focus groups and surveys to better understand residents' current uses of food, the relevance of food provided, and to measure impacts on the social determinants of health.

LoveOne

Increasing food recovery for rural Clackamas County

Grant amount: \$71,250

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$71,250

LoveOne will build capacity for its rural food pantry serving vulnerable, food insecure residents in Clackamas County. Each year, the program rescues and redistributes over 36,000 pounds of food that would otherwise go to waste from farms, grocery stores and restaurants. Grant funds will be used for staff time, supplies and equipment upgrades to support food rescue activities. LoveOne sources culturally specific foods for the diverse residents it serves in rural Clackamas County, including refugees, immigrants, migrant workers and BIPOC communities. Through this program, LoveOne will continue to provide food security, nutritional support, economic relief, community support and access to additional resources for individuals facing hunger.

MCK PDX

Staffing support for food gleaning efforts

Grant amount: \$32,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$32,000

Milk Crate Kitchen is a community-based, BIPOC-led organization working to fight food insecurity in greater Portland while reducing food waste. The nonprofit will use grant funds to hire part-time staff and stabilize its volunteer-driven program that gleans food from local sources and provides family meals to food-insecure households. The organization currently rescues 7,000 pounds of local food annually and aims to increase food rescue efforts by 50 percent by the end of the grant term. Milk Crate Kitchen works with local farmers, farmers markets, businesses, and food distribution hubs to collect thousands of pounds of produce and other food that would otherwise spoil or be

discarded. Milk Crate Kitchen’s services are low barrier and over 40 percent of participants identify as having a disability, low-income and/or are from BIPOC communities.

Resource Recycling Systems

NextCycle Oregon feasibility study

Grant amount: \$75,000

Match amount: \$15,000

Total investment: \$90,000

NextCycle is a program to spur innovation and provide guidance for circular economy businesses and nonprofits. NextCycle offers consulting and technical support for organizations working to expand models that reuse, rescue, repair, recycle, or compost materials that would otherwise be landfilled or incinerated. Grant funds will support a feasibility study to determine the potential for developing a NextCycle program in Oregon, centered in the greater Portland region. Resource Recycling Systems plans to partner with Start Consulting, Cascadia Consulting, and Traversal Designs to complete the project and ensure equity is incorporated throughout the research and design processes. The study will result in a comprehensive report that identifies needs and opportunities for advancing reuse and recycling. The study may include a plan for launching a potential NextCycle in Oregon, including how the program would be funded.

Sabin Community Development Corporation

Pass it On reuse and upcycle program

Grant amount: \$26,828

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$26,828

Sabin Community Development Corporation launched the “Pass it On” program as a way for residents of Sabin’s 16 affordable housing sites to easily donate furniture and household items that can be reused. Sabin Community Development Corporation’s residents are predominantly African American, with over 70 percent of residents identifying as Black or multiracial. More than 40 percent of residents are over the age of 65, and 15 percent have a physical disability. The Pass it On program removes barriers for residents who need to get rid of large items from their homes in a way that discourages illegal dumping and prioritizes reuse and recycling. Grant funds will be used to support an AmeriCorps volunteer position to coordinate Pass it On events and to purchase a trailer for hauling items to reuse partner organizations such as Community Warehouse, Free Geek, Repair PDX and Cracked Pots.

SCRAP Creative Reuse

Expanding creative reuse for youth and adults

Grant amount: \$45,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$45,000

SCRAP Creative Reuse programming diverts waste from landfills by using arts and crafts to upcycle discarded materials. The nonprofit will expand five programs that provide creative reuse access to underserved communities: free school workshops and field trips, scholarships for youth and adults to participate in SCRAP classes, material donations to community-based organizations through the

SCRAP Gives Back program, Fill Minds Not Landfills community events, and a business material donation program. Grant funds will support a new staff position to build long-term partnerships with businesses to divert manufacturing byproducts that can be used by SCRAP's creative reuse programs. The grant will also support supplies, events and staff time to increase creative reuse programming. Through this grant SCRAP aims to increase business material donations by 25 percent, or approximately 6,000 pounds per year.

The Arc Portland Metro

Support for neurodivergent reuse staff

Grant amount: \$90,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$90,000

The Arc Portland Metro creates opportunities for individuals who experience neurodivergence to achieve their greatest potential. The organization receives more than 278 tons of donated materials at its donation center each year. Grant funds will be used to add a full time receiving manager and job support position responsible for grading donated items for resale, reuse or recycling. The new position will also support two new part-time staff who experience neurodivergence. These new staff will increase the number of donated items that are reused locally, through The Arc's retail store and other reuse organizations in the community.

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization

Reuse to support immigrants and refugees at the New Beginnings Market

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

The Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization recently launched the New Beginnings Market to respond to an unprecedented need to support the resettlement effort for incoming Afghan and Ukrainian refugees and parolees. The New Beginnings Market will supply household items, furniture, personal care items and more throughout the Portland Metro region. The market team is working on obtaining donations and "surplus" materials by building a network of business partners and donors. Grant funds will support market staff to develop services to better provide and track household items, furniture, and personal care items, as well as build a network of donors and partners to grow and sustain this work far beyond the grant.

Urban Gleaners

Expanding food recovery and redistribution for food-insecure families

Grant amount: \$100,000

Match amount: \$0 (not required for nonprofit organizations)

Total investment: \$100,000

Urban Gleaners rescues fresh food before it can go to waste and redistributes it to food insecure children and families in a sustainable, equitable, and dignified way. One of their programs brings food into communities through pop-up pantries. The organization currently serves 8,000 food-insecure children and their families each week in high-poverty communities throughout Multnomah and Washington counties. Urban Gleaners fills a unique niche in the food recovery

ecosystem by gleaning prepared foods. Grant funds will be used to purchase a new van, food containers, and kitchen equipment, along with staff time to support the project. As a result, Urban Gleaners estimates it will increase the volume of food rescued by 15 percent, or approximately 200,000 pounds of food during the grant term.