



Waste Not Washington School Awards Guidelines and Scoring Criteria

Waste Reduction in Washington Schools

Washington State Department of Ecology

Olympia, Washington

Publication 21-07-030

Published September 2021, Revised October 2023



Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:

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Introduction

The Waste Not Washington School Awards (School Awards) program was established by [RCW 70A.214.100](#) to encourage waste reduction and recycling in public and private schools, grades kindergarten through high school, in Washington State. The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) implemented this program to reward schools meeting the statutory intent by building and expanding waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting programs and curricula.

Since its revival in 2021, the School Awards has grown in funding and impact. In 2019, \$84,483.32 was awarded to fund 20 projects ranging from the installation of water bottle filling stations to creating education focused on food waste. The 2022 award cycle granted 25 projects just under \$100,000 towards food sharing tables, durable serviceware in cafeterias, composting projects, and more. And in 2023, the program funded projects in 41 schools in 12 counties across the state.

For the 2023-2025 biennium, the School Awards program has a budget of \$100,000 for each annual award cycle, with each award providing up to \$5,000 in funding.

Ecology encourages schools to be role models in environmental stewardship for students and community members. Through projects funded by this program, schools have the opportunity to generate impacts that extend beyond the immediate scope of the projects themselves. This means that in addition to implementing practical waste reduction measures, schools should use these projects as opportunities for hands-on learning. Students can gain a deeper understanding of environmental issues and sustainability practices by actively participating in or observing the projects. This educational component can help instill lifelong values of environmental responsibility. To that end, Ecology recommends that all projects incorporate educational elements, as well as the involvement of different departments or school groups in their implementation.

Find examples of school programs and resources for ideas and partnership opportunities on our website: <https://ecology.wa.gov/schoolawards>

Contact Information

Need assistance? For questions, concerns, or guidance in applying for the School Awards, please email schoolawards@ecy.wa.gov or contact the Eastern Washington Waste Reduction and Recycling Specialist at 509-202-6946.

Timeline and Deadlines

Beginning in 2022, the School Awards timeline will be standardized. Unless specifically mentioned on the application forms, the below dates apply:

Application period: August 1st – October 31st
Application deadline: **October 31st at 5pm**
Awardees announced: December 1st
Award checks sent: December
Implementation Begins: January

Details

Each award category has a separate application form. Please fill out the appropriate application form for the award category in which you intend to apply. Emailed submissions using the downloadable PDF form are strongly encouraged.

Be sure to read the instructions and guidelines before completing the application. Please limit your entire application to four pages or less and use no less than 11-point font.

Ecology will not consider any applications submitted after the deadline.

All applications should be addressed to:

E-mail	Standard Mail (USPS)	Priority Mail (All other carriers)
schoolawards@ecy.wa.gov	Solid Waste Management Program Attn: School Awards Department of Ecology PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504-7600	Solid Waste Management Program Attn: School Awards Department of Ecology 300 Desmond Drive SE Lacey, WA 98503

Award Announcements

Ecology will announce successful applicants/proposals by no later than December 1st of the award cycle. Applicants will be notified via email in regard to the outcome of their application(s). If successful, the email will outline the next steps in the award process to secure award funds (e.g. provide school district federal ID number).

Feedback Reports

All projects are required to submit monitoring data, progress, and status reports to Ecology by the application deadline (October 31st) of the following award cycle. These reports and data are crucial to improving and refining the School Awards program and provide future applicants with a foundational knowledge of how to create successful programs.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants may be eligible to receive awards if they meet the following criteria:

- Applicant must be a staff member of a K-12 public, private, or tribal school or school district applying on behalf of a school or classroom.
- Project must show a focus on waste reduction, recycling, green purchasing, food waste reduction, and/or composting.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs

Eligible Costs

- Durable materials to replace single use items (i.e.: durable lunch trays, reusable silverware, reusable cups for beverage dispensers, etc.)
- Bulk food/beverage dispensers (milk, juice, water)
- Gloves and protective gear for program activities (i.e.: waste audits, compost operations)
- Equipment for composting
- Printing, translation of educational materials
- Equipment for recycling

Eligible Costs at Discretion of Department of Ecology

- Wages and stipends
- Computer equipment or electronics – only if solely dedicated to waste reduction, composting, recycling, education, and outreach

Ineligible Costs

- Architectural designs
- Hauling costs
- Disposal fees
- “Green” office supplies (e.g. recycled paper)
- Non-toxic cleaning supplies
- Feasibility studies or plans
- Promotional materials, giveaways, or swag (e.g. water bottles, magnets, t-shirts)

Award Categories

There are three categories of awards, each with a separate application form.

Seed Award

This category awards funds **to implement** school waste reduction and recycling programs in K-12 public, private, or tribal schools.

This award can be used to buy educational aids and equipment for waste reduction/recycling programs, such as reusable silverware/trays/flatware in school cafeterias, food waste reduction through bulk dispensers for milk/juice/water, educational signage, composting equipment, etc.

Sustainable School Award

This category recognizes a K-12 public, private, or tribal school or school district's ongoing efforts to maintain and expand waste reduction, composting, and recycling programs. This is intended to not only recognize a school for its **past efforts** but to support the continuation and future goals of its programs. Ecology may recognize sustainable school programs created and implemented within five (5) years of the application date.

Projects and curriculum must still be in place and funds awarded must be put toward continuing or expanding these programs.

Creative Curriculum Award

This category funds curricula that:

- Introduces and advances the knowledge students, teachers, and staff have in the areas of waste prevention, waste reduction, recycling, composting, and the circular economy
- Strives to inspire a sense of environmental stewardship in the students and staff

All developed materials must be made publicly available through the Open Educational Resources (OER) Commons portal.

Award Scoring Criteria

Regardless of which award category your application falls under, a successful application must address the following criteria:

- How the outcome of the program will likely lead to one of the following:
 - Reduced waste
 - Reduced contamination in the recycling and/or compost waste streams
 - Increased materials recycled or composted
 - A greater understanding of waste and waste processes
- Full project costs with estimates/quotes included or proof of costs
- How the project will be financially self-sustaining in the long-term, without the ongoing need for monetary support from Ecology.

Optional criteria that will result in up to 5 additional points:

- Include at least one letter of contribution or letters of general support for programs from school staff (administrative, janitorial, nutrition services) or outside organizations. Multiple letters are encouraged.

Ecology reserves the right to award additional points to applications that demonstrate that the project:

- Focuses on a population with a Washington Tracking Network (WTN) Environmental Health Disparity index rating of 8 or above. For point details, see the School Awards Application Screening and Evaluation Criteria
- Focuses on a population with higher percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch. For point details, see the Application Screening and Evaluation Criteria.

****For the 2023-2024 Award Cycle only, Ecology will award an additional 10 points to projects transitioning away from single-use plastics (including expanded polystyrene foam trays) to reusable, durable serveware items.**

Appendix A. Application Screening and Evaluation Criteria

Screening Checklist

Ecology uses a screening checklist to determine whether your application meets eligibility criteria. If you fail to meet any of these conditions, you will not be eligible for funding. All eligible applications will be scored.

Topic	Evaluation	Required Answer
Application	Was the application received before the deadline?	Yes
Applicant	Is the applicant part of a K-12 public, private, or tribal school or school district in Washington State?	Yes
Project	Does the proposal fit the intent of the school awards program?	Yes
Award Category	Which award category does the proposal qualify for consideration?	(Fill-in)

Appendix B. Score Cards

Seed Award Evaluation Scorecard

Priorities

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
1.1	<p>The proposal’s goal is one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste prevention (10 points) • Waste reduction/recycling (5 points) • Food waste prevention (10 points) • Composting (5 points) 	10
1.2	Project incorporates a teaching element for students and/or staff that could contribute to waste reduction outside of the school environment.	5
1.3	<p>Project location has a WTN Environmental Health Disparity index ranking of:</p> <p>10 = 5 points 8-9 = 3 points 1-7 = 0 points</p> <p>The index can be found at: https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/</p>	5
1.4	<p>As per the National Center for Education Statistics,¹ the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low- income students within a school. The indicator is reflected in this score point ranking.</p> <p>High-Poverty Schools: 75.0% or greater of students eligible for FRPL = 5 points Mid-high Poverty Schools: 50.1 – 75.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 3 points Mid-Low Poverty Schools: 25.1 – 50.0% or less of students eligible for FRPL = 2 points Low Poverty Schools: Less than 25.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 0 points</p>	5

¹ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp

Budget

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
2.1	Proposal describes project costs. Estimates, quotes, or proof of costs are included.	5

Scope of Work

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
3.1	Clear description of the project and its objectives (2.5 points) Alignment with waste reduction and recycling goals (2.5 points)	5
3.2	Potential environmental impact and waste reduction goals (5 points) Scalability or long-term impacts discussed (5 points)	10
3.3	Detailed plan for engaging stakeholders (5 points) Allocation of necessary resources and timeline provided (5 points) For full points, proposal must address who will implement and staff the project, how/ when will it be done, and who will continue to staff the program to ensure continued success (no questions are left for who/when/where/why of this project)	10
3.4	Plan for involving students, staff, and community (2.5 points) Collaboration with local organizations or partners highlighted (2.5 points)	5
3.5	Methodology for measuring project effectiveness clearly outlined (2.5 points) Involvement of participants in data collection (2.5 points)	5
3.6	Strategies for sustaining the project beyond implementation (5 points) Integration of waste reduction into school policies or curriculum (5 points)	10
3.7	Previous experience or letters of support	5
3.8	Award recipient is ready to proceed with project within 2 months of receiving award (Yes, 5 points; No, 0 points)	5
Total		85

Sustainable School Award

Evaluation Scorecard

Priorities

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
1.1	<p>The proposal’s goal was one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste prevention (10 points) • Waste reduction/recycling (5 points) • Food waste prevention (10 points) • Composting (5 points) 	10
1.2	Project incorporated a teaching element for students and/or staff that could contribute to waste reduction outside of the school environment.	5
1.3	<p>Project is within a population living in poverty with a WTN Environmental Health Disparity index ranking of:</p> <p>10 = 5 points 8-9 = 3 points 1-7 = 0 points</p> <p>The index can be found at: https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/</p>	5
1.4	<p>As per the National Center for Education Statistics,² the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school. The indicator is reflected in this score point ranking.</p> <p>High-Poverty Schools: 75.0% or greater of students eligible for FRPL = 5 points Mid-high Poverty Schools: 50.1 – 75.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 3.5 points Mid-Low Poverty Schools: 25.1 – 50.0% or less of students eligible for FRPL = 2 points Low Poverty Schools: Less than 25.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 0 points</p>	5

² https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp

Budget

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
2.1	Proposal describes project costs and proof of costs are included	5

Scope of Work

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
3.1	Clear description of the project and its objectives (2.5 points) Alignment with waste reduction and recycling goals (2.5 points)	5
3.2	Demonstrated benefits to the school community (5 points) Quantifiable and measurable outcomes provided (5 points)	10
3.3	Valuable lessons and insights shared (5 points) Recommendations for future projects provided (5 points)	10
3.4	Clear plans for project continuation (5 points) Strategies for ensuring long-term impact discussed (5 points)	10
3.5	Involvement of students, staff, and community members highlighted (2.5 points) Collaboration with local organizations or partners mentioned (2.5 points)	5
3.6	Utilization of data or feedback to assess project success (5 points) Plans for future evaluation and improvements discussed (5 points)	10

Other

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
4.1	Letter(s) of pledges/contribution for the project from other organization(s) are included = 5 points More general letter(s) of support for the project are included = 2 points No letters of support or pledges of contribution = 0 points	5
Total		85

Creative Curriculum Award Evaluation Scorecard

Priorities

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
1.1	<p>The proposal’s goal is one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste prevention/circular economy (10 points) • Waste reduction/recycling (5 points) • Food waste prevention (10 points) • Composting (5 points) 	10
1.2	<p>Project is within a population living in poverty with a WTN Environmental Health Disparity index ranking of:</p> <p>10 = 5 points 8-9 = 3 points 1-7 = 0 points</p> <p>The index can be found at: https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/</p>	5
1.3	<p>As per the National Center for Education Statistics,³ the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL) under the National School Lunch Program provides a proxy measure for the concentration of low- income students within a school. The indicator is reflected in this score point ranking.</p> <p>High-Poverty Schools: 75.0% or greater of students eligible for FRPL = 5 points Mid-high Poverty Schools: 50.1 – 75.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 3.5 points Mid-Low Poverty Schools: 25.1 – 50.0% or less of students eligible for FRPL = 2 points Low Poverty Schools: Less than 25.0% of students eligible for FRPL = 0 points</p>	5
1.4	<p>Proposed curriculum will be developed and translated in multiple languages = 4 points + 0.5 points for each additional language with a maximum of 5 total points</p>	5

³ https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clb.asp

Budget

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
2.1	Proposal describes project costs and estimates/quotes or proof of costs are included	5

Scope of Work

Number	Criteria	Possible Score
3.1	Clear description of the curriculum's objectives and target grade levels (5 points) Alignment with waste reduction and sustainability education goals (5 points)	10
3.2	Expected learning outcomes for students (5 points) Integration of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (5 points)	10
3.3	Adaptability of the curriculum to different school settings (5 points) Consideration for diverse teaching environments and resources (5 points)	10
3.4	Provision of training resources for teachers (5 points) Ongoing professional development opportunities outlined (5 points)	10
3.5	Potential collaborations with educational institutions or organizations (2.5 points) Involvement of teachers and stakeholders in curriculum development (2.5 points)	5
3.6	Methods for assessing curriculum effectiveness (2.5 points) Incorporation of feedback from teachers and students (2.5 points)	5
3.7	Relevant experience in curriculum development (2.5 points) Testimonials or references from educators or stakeholders (2.5 points) (Letter(s) of pledges/contribution for the project from other organization(s) are included)	5
Total		85