

Attachment 3 – Green Partners Project Ideas for Environmental Action

Hennepin County Green Partners program contracts with 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 Applications (RFA) 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](#) 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.

Reducing 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 drop-off site](#) 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

Protecting 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. Clean-up litter around the neighborhood, school, park, or your local lake or stream to prevent litter from entering storm drains and ultimately our lakes and rivers.

- **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 residents and homeowners in making changes to protect water:** Educate homeowners about best practices they can do on their property to protect the environment. 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. Provide educational workshops and a tour of demonstration sites to showcase what residents can do. For those with shoreline, encourage them to take the [Lake Pledge](#).

Caring for habitat and wildlife

- **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.
- **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](#). Support [birds](#) and [bats](#) and their [habitat](#) by providing shelter, food, and water.

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](#).