

WilliamPennFoundation

Request for Proposals

Reducing Illegal Dumping in Philadelphia

Published September 10, 2025

Due October 23, 2025

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Photo: TTF Watershed Partnership

Introduction

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve environmental conditions for residents of Greater Philadelphia. The Foundation's Environment and Public Space program was created to help improve and protect the natural and built environment in communities around the region. A full description of the Environment and Public Space program, its goal, and its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website. This Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective, which was developed in consultation with many stakeholders around the region:

By 2035, reduce annual illegal dumping collections by 50% citywide.

The Foundation is interested in reducing the amount of illegal dumping that occurs in Philadelphia. We will use the amount that is collected on an annual basis as a metric to measure our progress. To ensure that there is a reduction in dumping, and not solely collecting, we will complement this with data about residents' reports of dumping.

The Foundation recognizes that sustainably reducing annual illegal dumping may well require a variety of strategies that focus on different aspects of the problem. With that in mind, we are imposing few limitations on the project designs or approaches that we will consider in response to this RFP. Proposals may focus on prevention, enforcement, or education, and may employ a variety of different tactics. Proposals may focus on one or more neighborhoods, or they may seek to make change on a citywide scale.

Regardless of the approach, all applicants should provide a compelling explanation for how their proposed work will advance the objective above. The specific criteria that will be used to assess all proposals can be found on pages 7-8 of this document.

Why is the Foundation using a Request for Proposals to advance this objective?

The Foundation has chosen to advance this objective using a Request for Proposals for several reasons. First, we believe that stakeholders across the region have a great deal of expertise and experience that can be supported to make progress on an objective that we heard was important to communities in our region. We want to hear about the impactful projects that are underway or could get underway and need funding. Second, we want to be as transparent as possible about the opportunity for non-profit organizations in the region to secure funding for work to advance this objective.

This RFP seeks project proposals that will help to reduce the amount of illegal dumping that occurs in Philadelphia, providing benefits to neighborhoods across the city.

Background

Illegal dumping is a major concern for Philadelphia residents. Sixty percent of respondents to a Lenfest Institute for Journalism/SSRS poll indicated that reducing dumping should be a top priority for the city. This concern was expressed with particular intensity by the survey's low-income, Latino, and Black respondents. The focus on reducing dumping is not surprising, since research indicates that reduced illegal dumping is related to decreases in crime, increases in outdoor physical activity, increases in property values, and more positive feelings about residents' neighbors and neighborhoods.¹

In the past year, the City of Philadelphia cleaned up 15,795 tons of illegally dumped waste and responded to approximately 2,000 cleanup requests per month.²



¹ [“To Combat Gun Violence, Clean Up the Neighborhood”](#) Eugenia C. South, New York Times, October 8, 2021; [“Around the US Illegal Dumping Creates Mental Health Challenges”](#), Noah Daly, Environmental Health News, February 5, 2024

² [Illegal Dumping | Philly Stat 360 Hub](#)

Opportunity Overview

WPF would like to support efforts that will reduce illegal dumping in Philadelphia by focusing on dumping prevention through education and enforcement efforts, and also on solutions for legal and appropriate waste disposal.

We are requesting proposals for projects **up to three years in duration**. After reviewing proposals, WPF will conduct site visits and gather additional information from a limited number of organizations.

Organizations that propose projects in partnership with other applicants will be considered on their individual merits. However, the Foundation recognizes that making significant progress on the objective is difficult and encourages organizations to include partnerships that leverage complementary strengths, resources, and expertise to reach proposed goals.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many different approaches to reducing illegal dumping. That includes, but is not limited to, proposals that focus on:

- Illegal dumping enforcement, including support for documentation, citation, and effective penalties.
- Waste management and maintenance solutions, including workforce development opportunities and waste storage solutions.
- Community organizing and education focused on dumping reduction.
- Solutions that facilitate or incentivize legal and appropriate waste disposal, through education, subsidy, improved infrastructure, or otherwise.

We welcome proposals focused on reducing dumping in any location that undermines the quality of life in a community. This includes public parks, outdoor community spaces and commercial corridors, and vacant land, particularly in overburdened communities with a history of public disinvestment or neglect.

Ultimately, the Foundation recognizes that practitioners are closest to the work, and we are interested in your ideas.

WPF has **\$2.5 million available** to advance this objective through this RFP. The maximum amount that organizations may request is \$750,000. The grant amount requested should be commensurate with the contribution that the project will make to the overall objective.

Eligibility

Applicants must be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as 501(c)3 public charities or operate under a public charity fiduciary. Public charities include community-based organizations, schools and educational institutions, and other types of public-serving groups. Government entities are also eligible to apply.

Proposed projects must occur in Philadelphia.

Before you apply, please review the questions below. If you can confidently answer “yes” to the questions, this funding opportunity may be relevant to you. If you respond “no” to any of the questions, this opportunity is not a good match for your project, and you should not apply.

Is your proposal:

YES NO

Anticipated to reduce the amount of illegal dumping that occurs in the City of Philadelphia?

☐ ☐

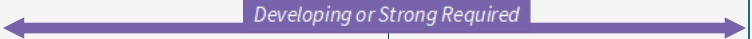
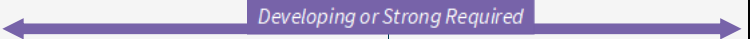
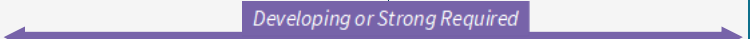
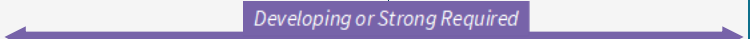
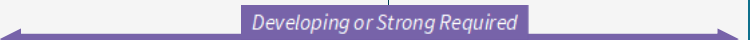
Is the lead applicant a 501(c)(3) non-profit or government entity?

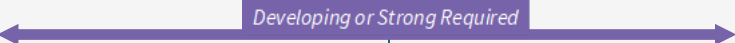
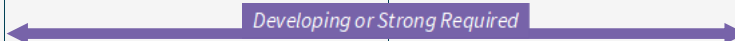
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Please also review all of the criteria on the following pages and make sure that your program aligns with those.

Review Criteria

Proposals will be judged on the criteria below. **Applicants should address these criteria in their narrative responses to the application questions.**

Alignment with Objective			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Conveys no meaningful connection to the RFP objective.	Would make a marginal and/or uncertain contribution to advancing the RFP objective.	Proposed work would make a clear contribution to advancing the RFP objective.	Proposed work would make a clear and major contribution to advancing the RFP objective.
			
Beneficiaries			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Does not identify expected beneficiaries of the project.	Identified beneficiaries of the project do not include prioritized communities.	Identified beneficiaries of the project include prioritized communities.	Prioritized communities will receive significant benefits from the project.
			
Meaningful Community Awareness of Proposed Work			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No meaningful evidence of community awareness of, interest in, or demand for proposed work.	Minimal evidence of community awareness of, interest in, and/or demand for proposed work.	Meaningful evidence of community awareness of, interest in, and/or demand for proposed work.	Specific involvement of community members and/or community-based organizations in development of proposal.
			
Meaningful Community Engagement in Proposed Work			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
No meaningful community engagement included in implementation plan for proposed work.	Limited community engagement in implementation plan for proposed work.	Significant community engagement as audience for proposed work (e.g. outreach and education).	Substantial community engagement as both audience for and also implementers of proposed work.
			
Partnership and Collaboration			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Does not address partnerships that will be necessary for success.	Explains the partnerships that will be necessary for success, but does not identify specific partners or describe the role that partners will play in the proposed work.	Identifies specific partners, provides at least a general description of the role that they will play in the work, and includes letters of support from at least some of them.	Identifies specific partners, provides a detailed description of the role that they will play in the work, and includes letters of support from each of them.
			

Organizational Capacity			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Insufficient evidence of leadership, resources, staffing, partnerships, and/or experience necessary to achieve project goals.	Evidence of leadership, resources, staffing and/or partnerships, but insufficient evidence of ability to successfully implement work of the type being proposed.	Evidence of leadership, resources, staffing and partnerships, and some experience with successful implementation of the type of work being proposed.	Evidence of all necessary leadership, resources, staffing, and partnerships in place to achieve project goal. Applicant and/or partners also have extensive experience with successful implementation of the type of work being proposed.
			
Project Design and Feasibility			
Absent	Emergent	Developing	Strong
Does not provide a clear, specific, or realistic approach to the work. Project outcomes and success are not clear and well-defined.	Provides a clear approach to the work, but some aspects of the approach are vague or seem unrealistic. Project outcomes are defined, but are of uncertain achievability, based on the details provided.	Provides a clear approach to the work and successful outcomes are defined and achievable. Some aspects of the project design may require further clarification to assess feasibility.	Provides a clear approach to the work, successful outcomes are defined and achievable, and the proposal includes a sound project design and feasible implementation plan.
			

Additional expectations and considerations:

Long-term solutions	We recognize that illegal dumpsites may need to be cleaned and cleared before prevention can take place, but cleanup activities on their own are insufficient. Any proposed cleanup activities must be explicitly connected to behavior change and long-term dumping prevention to be competitive.
Equity	Proposals that will result in the most significant impact on health, well-being, and quality of life in low-income neighborhoods and in neighborhoods of color will be the most competitive.
Advances Other Objectives	Projects that strongly advance this objective and also contribute to other WPF objectives will be given additional consideration.
Dumping Reduction Estimate	Where possible, projects should include a quantitative estimate of their annual contribution to reduced illegal dumping collections.
Budget	The requested budget should be reasonable for the proposed activities and the stated results.

Learning and Insights

Grantees will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how they have made progress toward the objective above and what they have learned during the year.

In addition, organizations funded through this RFP will be convened in a Learning Community to build networks among those advancing a common objective, to share learning and best practices, and to identify ways in which progress could be enhanced. Grantees will help to determine the frequency, content, and specific goals of the Learning Community. The overhead funding included with any awarded grants is, in part, meant to help subsidize staff participation in the Learning Community.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 11:00 AM ET.**

Register for the webinar at <https://lu.ma/willampennfoundation>.

Budget

Project budgets can cover up to three years of funding. Organizations are encouraged to build on their existing programs, using WPF funding to supplement or enhance those efforts.

Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any fees to partner organizations or consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of an organization's operating budget.

All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials and equipment, community engagement, staffing, and implementation, are eligible for funding.

In rare cases, it is possible that *everything* an organization does is focused on advancing the specific objective stated above. If that is the case, an organization may be eligible for general operating, rather than project support. If you believe that to be the case, please contact the Program Officer named below to discuss further.

Application Process

If you answered “yes” to all of the questions in the eligibility section above and meet the stated criteria, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online system at <https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by **5:00PM ET on October 23, 2025**. A WPF team will review all proposals and will notify applicants if they have been selected to move forward in the review process. **To download a working copy of the application to draft responses, please [click here](#).**

Selected organizations will take part in a site visit with WPF staff so that the Foundation can learn more about applicants’ work. Site visits will be approximately two hours in duration. We ask that organizations use this time to introduce key staff working on the proposed project, to show WPF staff where the work will take place, and to elevate the voices of the potential beneficiaries of the proposed project. Based on a combination of the written materials and the learning from the site visit, **a final slate of organizations** will be recommended to the WPF Board for consideration of their proposals.

This request or any subsequent response does not commit William Penn Foundation or the responding organization to any future funding or engagement. If you have any questions, contact Nathan Boon at nboon@williampennfoundation.org.

Timeline

September 10, 2025

Proposal submission period opens.

September 16, 2025

Informational Webinar (see page 9)

October 23, 2025

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

November 7-10, 2025

Select applicants notified that their proposals have been chosen for further consideration and a site visit. Other applicants will be notified that their proposals are not advancing in the process.

November 10-December 10, 2025

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

February 6, 2026

WPF Board review selected proposals.

February 9, 2026

Project implementation can begin.