

WilliamPennFoundation

Request for Proposals

Reducing Illegal Dumping in Philadelphia

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Illegally dumped tires/Nathan Sack

Purpose of this Request for Proposals

The William Penn Foundation (WPF) has a long history of investing in efforts to improve quality of life for residents of the Philadelphia region. The Foundation's Environment and Public Space program seeks to help improve and protect the natural and built environment in these communities. A full description of the Environment and Public Space program, its goals, and all of its objectives can be found on the Foundation's website.

This specific Request for Proposals (RFP) was created to help organizations to advance the following objective:

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

Why is WPF prioritizing this objective?

Illegal dumping, or “short dumping,” is a major concern for residents of Philadelphia. In a 2023 Lenfest Institute for Journalism and Social Science Research Solutions (SSRS) poll of more than 1,200 Philadelphians, 60% named reducing illegal dumping a top priority for the city, a share that rose to nearly 70% among Black, Latino, and low-income respondents, a pattern City officials have continued to cite as recently as 2025. That concern also shows up in how often residents report the problem: Philadelphia’s 311 system has logged more than 244,000 illegal dumping reports since 2014, and WPF tracks this call volume and the annual tonnage of illegally dumped waste removed by the Philadelphia Streets Department as measures of resident concern and progress toward this objective.¹

The City of Philadelphia has made considerable recent progress in responding to and cleaning up illegal dumpsites, collecting a monthly average of more than 1,000 tons of illegally dumped materials over the past year, according to City data. Unfortunately, illegal dumping remains a persistent problem for many, with dozens of dumpsites experiencing a constant cycle of repeated dumping. In these dumpsites, intensive cleanup activity offers only a temporary reprieve before dumping returns, often in as little as a 24-hour period.²

Widespread community interest in reducing dumping is unsurprising, with research indicating 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.³

What types of projects will get funded?

WPF would like to support efforts that will reduce illegal dumping in Philadelphia by focusing on dumping prevention through education and enforcement efforts and through solutions for legal and appropriate waste disposal. Proposals 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. We welcome proposals focused on reducing dumping in locations that undermine 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.

¹ “[For many Black, brown, and low-income residents, illegal dumping is more than a nuisance](#),” The Philadelphia Inquirer, March 29, 2023; “[Philadelphia targets illegal dumping, quality-of-life crimes in new initiative](#),” The Philadelphia Inquirer, April 2, 2025; 311 reporting figures via the City of Philadelphia’s [Philly Stat 360 Hub](#).

² “[Illegal dumping is a persistent problem in Philly. By mapping major dumpsites, this group seeks to spur city action](#),” Philly Voice, August 4, 2026

³ “[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

What has to be in my proposal?

We are requesting proposals for **up to three years of funding**.

The Foundation recognizes that there are many different approaches to reducing illegal dumping. Potential areas of focus include, but are not limited to:

- 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.



Volunteers clean up tires/William Penn Foundation

All proposals that include the elements described above and meet the criteria described in the “Proposal Review” section are encouraged.

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.

Quick Check: Is This Opportunity a Good Fit?

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.

	Yes	No
Will the project reduce the amount of illegal dumping that occurs in the city of Philadelphia?	☐	☐
Is your project focused on long-term prevention of illegal dumping?	☐	☐
Is the application a 501(c)3 nonprofit, operating under a fiscal sponsor, or a government entity?	☐	☐

! Also review **all** the criteria on the following pages to make sure your program aligns with those before you apply.

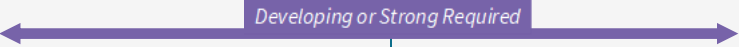
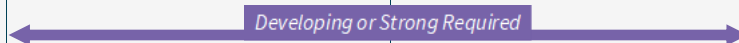
What types of organizations are eligible for funding?

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.

Proposal Review

! Applicants must address these criteria in their responses within the Project Narrative section of the application. Proposals will be judged on the criteria and additional expectations below.

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.
Developing or Strong Required			
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.
Developing or Strong Required			
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.
Developing or Strong Required			
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.
Developing or Strong Required			
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.
Developing or Strong Required			

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.
			

What else will be expected in my proposal?

Long-term solutions	Any proposed cleanup activities must be explicitly connected to long-term dumping prevention. 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.
Historically Disinvested Populations	Proposals that primarily serve historically disinvested populations, including communities of color and low-income communities, will be most competitive.
Advances Other Objectives	Projects that strongly advance this objective and also contribute to other WPF Environment and Public Space program objectives , such as Public Space Improvement, will be given additional consideration.
Dumping Reduction Estimate	Where possible, projects should include a quantitative weight 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.

Budget

How much money is available?

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.

WPF has \$3.5 million available to advance this objective through this RFP.

What should I include in my proposed budget?

Project budgets should cover **up to three years of funding**. Project budgets should be all-inclusive, including any regrants to partner organizations or fees to consultants. This information can be provided in the proposal narrative.

Except in rare circumstances, total funding from WPF should not exceed 25% of a participating organization's operating budget. All aspects of project development and execution, including planning, design, materials, community engagement, staffing, professional development, and implementation are eligible for funding.

What if my proposal includes any advocacy or lobbying activities?

The Foundation recognizes that advocacy can sometimes be a useful tactic to advance certain objectives. Advocacy takes many forms and sometimes includes activities that the Internal Revenue Service defines as lobbying. (See [Application Guidelines for Advocacy Projects](#) for general information on the IRS lobbying rules.) The Foundation is open to proposals that include advocacy and/or lobbying as part of the project and may fund projects that include lobbying so long as certain requirements are met.

Applications that include advocacy or lobbying must:

- Show in the budget submitted by the applicant that the amount requested from the Foundation is less than 80% of the total project budget.
- Identify the proportion of the total project budget, if any, that may support activities defined as lobbying under the IRS rules (the “lobbying percentage”). (You will see a specific question about this on the budget template.)
- Show that the applicant has funding commitments that will cover a minimum of 20% of the total project budget for at least the first year of the proposed grant period. In-kind contributions cannot be counted toward this portion of the budget. (Organizations will be expected to demonstrate funding commitments for at least 20% of the budget for all years of the grant period, but we recognize that it may take additional time to secure those commitments.)

- If the lobbying percentage is more than 20% of the project budget, the applicant must show that they have committed funds that exceed that lobbying percentage.

In no cases can WPF earmark funds for lobbying activities, nor can Foundation funds be used to support or oppose any candidate for public office, for voter registration efforts, or for any partisan purposes.

Anything else I should know?

If you are awarded funding, you will be expected to complete a brief written report each year describing how you have made progress toward the objective above and what you have learned during the year.

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.

How to Apply

If you answered “yes” to all the questions in the “Quick Check” on page 5 and address all the review criteria and expectations in the Proposal Review section on pages 6 and 7, the application process begins by completing a proposal on our online submission system at <https://wpf.my.site.com/grantee>.

Submit your application by **5:00PM ET on Thursday, October 22, 2026**. 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 us 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.

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, Interim Program Director for Environment and Public Space** at nboon@williampennfoundation.org.



Webinar

Interested organizations are invited to participate in an optional informational webinar on **Wednesday, September 16, 2026 at 1:00PM ET.**

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

Timeline

September 9, 2026

Proposal submission period opens.

September 16, 2026

Informational Webinar (see bottom of this page)

October 22, 2026

Proposals due by 5:00PM ET

November 11-16, 2026

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 16-

December 14, 2026

Site visits conducted by WPF staff with selected applicants.

February 5, 2027

WPF Board review selected proposals.

February 8, 2027

Project implementation can begin