

March Information Session Q and A: Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine Grant Program 2026 Grant Cycle

Eligibility

Are new construction and remodeling projects eligible?

Yes. Both new construction and remodeling projects are eligible if they reduce exposure to toxic chemicals in building materials. This includes affordable housing, multi-family housing, and small-scale commercial buildings.

Are single-family and multi-family homes eligible?

Yes. Single-family and multi-family homes are eligible regardless of ownership type, but projects must demonstrate community benefit and scale. An organization acting as a contractor that builds affordable homes with healthier materials or performs repairs across multiple homes would qualify. Individual personal home remodels are not eligible.

Are tribal businesses eligible for the prioritized Tribal funding?

Yes. If the business is owned by one of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, it qualifies under the Tribe-prioritized funding (\$500K). If not one of the nine federally recognized Oregon Tribes, it may still be eligible under the small business category (50 employees or fewer).

Eligible projects and costs

Are projects involving functional chemicals like flame retardants eligible?

Yes. This program supports projects that avoid the use of and exposure to toxics in building materials, especially those with significant health effects. Many products that once served a function (such as asbestos and lead) have been phased out due to health hazards. The goal is to either avoid these chemicals or use alternatives with no known significant adverse health effects.

Can concrete-related projects qualify?

Yes. Concrete can contain hazardous substances (e.g., chromium 6) depending on its mix and additives. A qualifying project must identify the specific toxic substance being removed, explain where and how exposure is reduced, and describe what it is being replaced with. For example, substituting chromium 6-containing cement with a natural mineral alternative would be in scope.

Can grant funds be used to replace mold and asbestos-laden materials in historic buildings?

Yes. A strong proposal would use grant funds to afford greener replacement materials rather than defaulting to business-as-usual renovation. Think of it less as a cleanup project and more as an upgrade to safer materials.

Would a project recycling plastic into alternative building materials for tiny homes fit this grant?

The key concern is what type of plastics are being used and what emissions the reformulation process generates. The grant focuses on reducing toxic exposure across the full life cycle of the building material, not on diverting materials from landfills. A proposal should explain what toxic substances are being eliminated and why the replacement material is a safer choice.

Would a mattress sanitization center that diverts mattresses from landfills qualify?

This is not a strong fit given the grant's focus on reducing exposure to toxic substances in building materials rather than landfill diversion. However, because some mattresses contain flame retardants, a proposal could be eligible if it specifically addresses reducing this toxic exposure and replacing it with safer materials.

How are projects scored if they address multiple classes of chemicals?

Projects addressing multiple classes of chemicals do not receive additional weight in scoring. Scoring guidance and criteria will be shared when the application opens. Projects may demonstrate significant reduction by addressing a larger number of materials or by focusing on eliminating specific chemicals across multiple projects.

Do all building materials in an accepted project need to be environmentally friendly?

Not necessarily. Each project has different needs. Applicants should align their proposals with the scoring criteria, which includes potential reduction of toxic exposure. Significant reduction can be demonstrated through various approaches — such as testing the elimination of all six classes of chemicals or focusing on specific chemicals across multiple projects.

Ineligible projects and costs

Would statewide technical assistance or training on waste reduction qualify?

Only if the training is specifically focused on reducing exposure to toxic substances in building materials. General waste reduction or pollution prevention training that does not center on this funding area would not be eligible.

Would a broader landfill diversion operation qualify?

No. The grant's focus is specifically on reducing exposure to toxic substances, not on landfill diversion.

Are playground structures eligible?

Playground equipment by itself is not eligible. However, proposals that actively remove exposure to chemicals and toxins in public play areas will be considered.

Application process and timeline

What is the expected award timeline?

Recipients are expected to be announced in late 2026, with grant agreements finalized in early 2027. Work on projects can begin as soon as grant agreements are finalized.

When can we grant work begin?

Grantees can only receive reimbursement for work that occurs after the grant agreements are signed. Awardees will have about six weeks to sign the agreement once it is received. When signed, grantees have up to two years to complete their project.

How does disbursement of grant funds work?

Funds are spent by the recipient then the recipient submits receipts. DEQ will reimburse funds so long as everything is spent in accordance with the grant agreement. Some purchases may be available for upfront funding on a case-by-case basis.

Are grant recipients required to carry additional insurance? Can grant funds cover that cost?

DEQ's procurement office conducts a risk and insurance assessment for each recommended awardee. What additional insurance, if any, is required will depend on that review. Grant funds cannot be used to purchase required insurance, as funds cannot be used for legally required items.

Can grant funds be used for a project that is already underway?

Yes. Existing or in-progress work is eligible, if the specific items being funded are included in the grant agreement. If a project proposal exceeds the DEQ grant request, DEQ will ask how the applicant plans to fund the remainder, to ensure the project can be completed. Grant funds can supplement other sources of funding.

Is DEQ envisioning multi-year investments, or primarily one-time project funding?

The current model is one-time, two-year project grants. Awardees have two years to complete their project. A new grant cycle opens every two years, with different funding area priorities for each cycle. There is currently no built-in pathway for continuation within the current award.

What metrics does DEQ prioritize? Are quantifiable outcomes required?

Scoring criteria for each application question will be publicly available when the pre-application launches. Projects are not expected to demonstrate quantifiable waste reduction, as this cycle is not about waste reduction. Community impact and behavior change are important factors in scoring.

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