# Reuse Impact Fund Pilot

Multi-year funding for reuse, repair and share

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## Executive summary

The 2030 Regional Waste Plan prioritizes reuse as a key priority for reducing waste. The proposed Regional System Facilities Plan supports this priority by outlining essential investments needed to achieve regional waste reduction goals. One proposed investment is to develop a more robust reuse, repair and share economy through consistent funding to organizations to support their services in the region.

The Reuse Impact Fund Pilot is a proposed three-year program that would provide funding to reuse, repair and share nonprofit organizations in greater Portland. The funding will help to advance the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan by supporting the organizations' efforts to divert materials from the landfill. Metro staff developed the pilot in response to the June 2024 Metro Council budget amendment directing staff to assess sustainable funding approaches for supporting local reuse organizations.

The pilot provides ongoing, predictable funds that can be used to:

- Support existing reuse, repair and share programs.
- Help existing reuse, repair and share organizations achieve financial sustainability through strategic hiring or investments.
- Facilitate the expansion of existing reuse, repair and share organizations to advance the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan.

The pilot program will prioritize materials with the greatest environmental impacts including textiles, building materials, appliances, electronics, bicycles and large items, such as furniture. Annual funding amounts are expected to range from $10,000 to $200,000, with disbursement anticipated within 12 months following Metro Council budget approval. If the program extends beyond the three-year pilot, in subsequent three-year funding cycles, a portion of the funding may be exclusively reserved for organizations that have previously received funding, designating them as Reuse Impact Fund "Strategic" partners. In this model, the remaining funds would be available for general applications, enabling organizations to qualify as Reuse Impact Fund "Rising" partners.

Metro staff will use information and data from the pilot to inform effective long-term investment strategies for maximizing environmental benefits through reuse, repair and share initiatives. The gathered information will enhance tracking systems to evaluate reuse, repair and share performance against Regional Waste Plan indicators, better target high-impact material waste diversion opportunities, and explore the feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion.

The Reuse Impact Fund is proposing a multi-year funding approach to support nonprofit reuse, repair and share for Council consideration. Each phase assumes annual increases to match inflation over the three-year pilot period. The total cost for **Phase 1** is $1.3 million for FY26, while **Phase 2** will cost $2.3 million. The total anticipated impact to the FY26 Regional System Fee for Phase 1 is an increase of $0.82. This includes the 1.5 FTE and materials and services budget.

## Background

Metro is working toward a future where we use fewer new materials, throw away less and recover more. Reuse, repair and share organizations play a crucial role in diverting waste from landfills by providing low- to no-cost options for people to get rid of unwanted items and access affordable items. In 2022, if all the

tons recovered for reuse had instead entered the waste stream, waste generated per capita would have increased from 2,784 pounds to 2,950 pounds (Metro, 2023).

Oregon has a statewide goal of cutting total waste generation to 15 percent below 2012 levels by the year 2025. To help the state meet its goal, greater Portland will need to generate approximately 25 percent less waste than we do today – that means reducing our current level of about 2.56 million tons of waste per year by 725,000 tons. By 2050, the goal is 40 percent below 2012 levels (Metro, 2023). To generate less waste and make progress toward these goals, it is essential to reduce the number of materials that enter the waste stream. In other words, the most effective way to reduce waste is to not create it in the first place, and that requires increased opportunities for reuse, repair and share. While both recycling and reuse are promoted for waste reduction, reuse is typically the more environmentally friendly choice because it preserves the product in its original form and makes use of the energy, resources and impacts already expended in its creation.

To grow a more robust reuse, repair and share economy, organizations need consistent funding to support the services they provide to the region. Based on interviews with 11 local organizations, the main investment gaps include ongoing funding for reuse services; space for storage, processing, repair and retail; collection and delivery services; access to reusable items in the waste stream; and marketing and visibility (Start Consulting, 2022). Additionally, while engaging with Metro staff on the Regional System Facilities Plan development, reuse organizations reiterated their need for stable funding and support to maintain their contributions to regional waste reduction efforts.

In recognition of the significant role that reuse, repair and share organizations may play in achieving statewide and regional waste reduction efforts, as well as the organizations' need for consistent funding support, Metro Council adopted a budget amendment in June 2024, which directed staff to:

> *Assess approach for sustainable funding for private and nonprofit to support reuse. Bring recommendations to Council by November 2024 with funding recommendations, whether new resources or reallocation of existing resources, to establish ongoing, predictable funding grants, or similar mechanisms, for reuse organizations, that can measure effectiveness in diverting reusable items from the landfill.*

## Purpose

This document presents Metro staff's recommendation to create the Reuse Impact Fund to improve access to reuse, repair and share systems while advancing the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. The purpose of the fund is to continue and increase the recovery of high-impact materials for reuse, repair and share. It responds to Metro Council's direction and addresses gaps identified in the Regional System Facilities Plan research and engagement, as well as prior insights from reuse, repair and share organizations.

Nonprofits disproportionately shoulder the burden of funding and managing reuse systems. Although Metro invests in waste prevention education that emphasizes and encourages the public to reuse, the reuse, repair and share system lacks the financial resources necessary to meet regional demand. The proposed Reuse Impact Fund Pilot will provide multi-year funding to nonprofit organizations dedicated to reuse, repair and share. Eligible organizations in the pilot will divert high-impact materials that offer significant climate benefits when reused, repaired and shared.

Multi-year funding refers to ongoing, predictable funds that can be used three ways: support existing reuse, repair and share programs; help existing reuse, repair and share organizations achieve financial sustainability through strategic hiring or investments; and/or facilitate the expansion of existing reuse, repair and share organizations to advance the goals of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. Reuse, repair and share organizations aim to extend the lifespan and use of products and materials already in circulation, directly contributing to waste prevention and reduction. The term "share" refers to the practice of renting or borrowing items instead of buying, selling or discarding in a landfill.

# Pilot focus

## Nonprofits

Nonprofit organizations rely on a combination of earned income, grants and other fundraising mechanisms to support their operations and further their missions. Grant funding is an unreliable way to sustain general operations due to its competitive nature, expenditure restrictions and potential to incentivize mission drift as organizations try to meet funders' requirements. While traditional grants are more effective for launching new initiatives or one-time projects, the Reuse Impact Fund Pilot proposes using multi-year funding to provide reliable, flexible and ongoing support for the continuous work of reuse, repair and share organizations.

Nonprofit organizations dedicated to reuse, repair and share are often uncompensated for their efforts in reducing waste and the positive impacts they create for the community, such as providing free or low-cost items to the region's most vulnerable residents. In exchange for funding, participating organizations will collaborate closely with Metro to develop a three-year workplan that incorporates goals and measurements, data, and financial reporting. Insights gained from the pilot program will shape future funding rounds, which may include funding private organizations.

## Goals

1. Help financially sustain reuse, repair and share programs and activities.
2. Achieve measurable environmental benefit.
3. Advance equity within organizations, and through programs and services.
4. Enhance economic and environmental measurement tools and processes.
5. Inform future planning of Metro's investments in the reuse, repair and share systems.

## Objectives

1. Increase or maintain levels of reuse, repair and share across the region measured through factors such as tonnage diverted, growth in the number of materials diverted, employee count, volunteer count and number of volunteer hours, sales numbers and the number of individuals served.
2. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other sources of pollution from discarded waste and materials.
3. Advance equity through workforce development, benefits and rising wages, and increasing access to underserved populations through programs and services.
4. Facilitate ongoing collaboration between Metro and participating organizations to improve tracking systems to measure reuse, repair and share performance against the Regional Waste Plan indicators.
5. Better target high-impact material waste diversion opportunities and explore the feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion.

## High-impact materials

The pilot will focus on materials that pose significant negative environmental impacts, which could be mitigated through practices such as reuse, repair or remanufacturing (DEQ, 2016). These materials include textiles, building materials, appliances, electronics, bicycles and large items like furniture. Data on reuse businesses and nonprofits in Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah and Washington counties show that approximately three-quarters of the organizations focus on these materials.

A literature review suggests that textiles have significant impacts across their life cycle. Left unchecked, textiles will be responsible for more than a quarter of the world's global carbon budget by 2050. Clothing alone represents 60 percent of the total textiles used and this figure is anticipated to grow, with total clothing sales anticipated to exceed three times the current amount by 2050. Textile manufacturing relies on non-renewable resources including oil and water. Approximately 20 percent of global industrial water pollution is attributable to the dyeing and treatment processes in the textile industry. Today's textiles also have multiple negative societal impacts including modern slavery, child labor and hazardous working environments due to unsafe processes and the use of harmful chemicals (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017).

Building materials are all around us and account for 20-30 percent of waste generation in the municipal solid waste stream. The production and transportation of both original and replacement materials are estimated to account for 6-55 percent of the environmental impacts over the 70-year lifespan of a typical home. Most of these impacts stem from production, with transportation contributing no more than three percent (DEQ, 2016).

The 2009/10 Oregon Waste Composition Study showed that approximately 0.62 of municipal solid waste collected in Oregon was appliances. Research in the UK discovered that up to one-third of discarded appliances, both large and small, could still be functional. These items had the potential for an extended lifespan through direct reuse or minor repairs. The same UK study revealed that small appliances constituted most of the appliances disposed of in landfills or not properly reused or recycled. These findings suggest that many small appliances currently being discarded in Oregon could be repaired and reused (DEQ, 2016).

Electronic waste is rapidly becoming the most prevalent type of waste; around 80 percent of electronic waste ends up in landfills and incinerators. Oregon's Electronics Recycling Law, initially enacted in 2007 and later amended, created the Oregon E-Cycles program, which mandates that electronic manufacturers offer free and convenient statewide recycling for televisions, computers, monitors, printers and computer accessories like keyboards and mice. In the U.S., about 2.7 million tons of electronic waste is generated annually with about 25 percent being recycled. From an environmental standpoint, reuse is generally more beneficial than recycling as the production of electronic devices is highly resource intensive. Analysts suggest that the environmental impact of producing electronic products significantly surpasses that of other household materials. In some instances, the energy demands during the materials and manufacturing phase are greater than those during the usage phase (DEQ, 2016).

Reusing, repairing or remanufacturing furniture significantly reduces environmental impacts throughout its lifecycle including the supply chain, manufacturing and disposal stages. The U.S. furniture industry continues to grow faster than the overall economy, driven largely by strong sales in bedroom and dining room furnishings, with an annual growth rate of 6-7 percent. In the 2009/10 Waste Composition Study for

Oregon, furniture accounted for approximately 3 percent of the waste category. Specifically, wood furniture made up 1.68 percent, while mixed material furniture constituted 1.3 percent of the solid waste disposed (DEQ, 2016).

Bicycles are included in the pilot because cycling has a remarkable impact on the environment. Bicycles do not emit greenhouse gases during use, making them an ideal solution for reducing air pollution in cities. While bicycle manufacturing leaves a carbon footprint, the more you ride, the less you contribute. Bicycles also offer high opportunities for reuse, even after entering the waste stream—a unique feature compared to other reusable materials.

## Data-driven future insights

### Challenge

Oregon and the Metro region measure tons of waste generated, which is the total amount of materials and products thrown away. This includes all garbage, as well as materials sent to recycling, composting and energy recovery facilities. When this number decreases, it is associated with lower environmental impacts since it implies that, overall, the region is consuming fewer goods—at least by weight. It indicates that people and businesses may be wasting less, reusing and repairing more goods, or buying products with less packaging. However, this is not a perfect measure of the environmental impact of materials and products because it only measures the weight of what we throw away, not the actual environmental impact.

Metro staff are actively working to gain a clearer understanding of the size, scope and impact of reuse, repair and share organizations within the region. One initiative involves distributing the Reuse Sector Impact survey through postcard mailers and emails to more than 800 organizations in fall 2024. The survey aims to estimate the amount of goods being reused or repaired in the greater Portland area and assess the related environmental and economic benefits. One of the survey questions will ask if the organization measures the tonnage of materials diverted.

Data on the amount and type of items reused is not widely available. Given the limited data available, Metro currently measures the number of employees who work in the sector as an indicator of how much is being reused and diverted from the landfill. Drawing on information from six reuse organizations, an average of 70 tons of items are collected for reuse per employee (Start Consulting, 2022). However, given the small sample size, there is considerable variation in the estimated tons per employee among the organizations. More information is needed from additional organizations to refine the data and make it more representative of the reuse and repair sector across the region, and the Reuse Impact Fund Pilot provides the opportunity for new data collection. Further details on what types of items are reused, among other things, would provide an even fuller picture of the positive impact of the sector.

The table below demonstrates the potential for discrepancy when using Metro's current method for measuring reuse. For example, the average tons of material collected per employee at Habitat for Humanity ReStore is approximately twice the amount collected per employee at Goodwill; however, Goodwill's reuse tonnage is 11 times higher than that of Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

| Organization | Total reuse in tons | Number of reuse employees | Average tons of material per employee | Number of locations |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Goodwill | 107,000 | 1,500 | 71.3 | 33[1] |
| Habitat for Humanity ReStore | 9,278 | 48 | 193.3 | 3 |
| ReBuilding Center | 1,500 | 10 | 150.0 | 1 |
| ReClaim It | 40 | 4 | 10.0 | 1 |
| ReDeploy | 50 | 2 | 25.0 | 1 |
| Trash for Peace | 2.5 | 10 | 0.3 | N/A |

Feedback from the September 2024 Reuse Roundtable suggested that the Reuse Impact Fund establish a funding framework connected to waste diversion – such as fee-for-service – based on the amount of tonnage diverted (Gross, et al., 2024). The capacity of prospective organizations to report on diverted tonnage is currently uncertain, and relying solely on tonnage is challenging since different materials have varying weights. Measuring only the tonnage diverted may be insufficient, as it overlooks the contributions of labor and other beneficial factors, especially in repair and share contexts. Additionally, emphasizing tonnage favors higher weight items which might encourage the movement of more and heavier materials, rather than fostering repair and share activities.

The selection of high-impact materials was guided by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's *Strategic Plan for Reuse, Repair, and Extending the Lifespan of Products in Oregon* (DEQ, 2016). It is important to note that various studies use different methods to identify high-impact materials. Some studies focus solely on global warming emissions, while others consider multiple impacts. Additionally, studies vary in their criteria for ranking materials, leading to inconsistencies in what is deemed "high impact" (DEQ, 2016). Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) reviewed eight studies to provide a general indication of which materials or product types may have higher environmental impacts. The figure below summarizes the key findings from the eight studies reviewed:

[1] Goodwill Industries of the Columbia Willamette includes locations outside of the Metro service area and into southwest Washington.

| Study/ Material | DEQ's Consumption-Based Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory | Washington State Consumer Environmental Index | United Nations Environment Program | Comprehensive Environmental Data Archive | European Commission – Environmental Impacts of Products | Weidma 1: Denmark Integrated Product Policy | Weidma 2: Denmark Integrated Product Policy | U.S. EPA 2020 Vision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clothing | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Footwear | | | | X | | | | X |
| Appliances | | X | | | X | | | |
| Household equipment | | | | X | | | | |
| Furnishings & supplies | X | X | | | | | | X |
| Furniture | X | | | | X | | X | |
| Televisions | | X | | | | | X | |
| Heavy machinery | X | | | | | | | |
| Vehicles | X | X | | | | | | X |
| Construction | X | | | | X | | | |
| Sporting goods | X | X | | | | | | |
| Animal products | | | X | | | | | |
| Plastics | | | X | | | | | |
| Metals | | | X | | | | | |
| Toys | | | | | | | X | |
| Carpets & rugs | X | | | | | | | X |
| Computers | X | | | | | | X | |

*Oregon DEQ, 2016*

**Opportunity**

The Reuse Impact Fund Pilot provides Metro staff with the opportunity to gather essential information and data to help determine the most effective investment strategies for maximizing environmental benefits through reuse, repair and share initiatives. The gathered information will enhance tracking systems to evaluate reuse, repair and share performance against Regional Waste Plan indicators, better target high-impact material waste diversion opportunities, and explore the feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion.

Two of the pilot's five objectives will aid in gathering information, with Metro analytics staff working closely with pilot organizations to analyze inbound and outbound data, volunteer numbers, material characterization, material reuse percentages, repair and share rates, disposal fees, recovery tonnage and the growth in the number of materials diverted. Additionally, there is an opportunity to identify consumer savings by comparing the costs of reused, repaired or shared items to retail prices. Through co-learning opportunities, Metro and pilot organizations will test innovative measurement approaches to reduce reporting burdens and open new tracking possibilities. One such approach is a publicly available reuse impact calculator, which allows users to input counts of common items to estimate their environmental and economic impact.

Furthermore, sharing detailed data and maintaining ongoing relationships will enhance Metro's understanding of the materials used by regional organizations. This will provide nuanced insights into their impact and the varying speeds at which materials move. Ultimately, this effort will enable Metro to highlight the sector's positive impact, connect the community with reuse, repair and share services, and direct funding to where it is most needed.

# Funding

## Cycle and disbursement schedule

Metro staff recommend the approach outlined in the following sections, with additional details to be provided in the solicitation. Pilot funding will provide support over a three-year period to ensure predictable, stable funding for at least that period. Two local funding programs provide examples of annual funding over three years: Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) "core" partner track and the City of Portland's Children's Levy.

Nonprofit organizations that divert textiles, building materials, appliances, electronics, bicycles and large items like furniture within Metro's service area are eligible for the pilot. Nonprofit thrift stores focused on these categories are also eligible. Metro staff suggest establishing methods to verify responsible end markets. Reuse, repair or share must be a significant part of the organization's programs and activities. Prospective organizations will be screened to ensure their status with all required state and federal nonprofit filings is current.

If the program extends beyond the three-year pilot, in subsequent three-year funding cycles, a portion of the funding may be exclusively reserved for organizations that have previously received funding, designating them as Reuse Impact Fund "Strategic" partners. In this model, the remaining funds would be available for general applications, enabling organizations to qualify as Reuse Impact Fund "Rising" partners.

Both Strategic and Rising Reuse Impact Fund partners would sign a contract with Metro every three years. All partners are invited to join Metro staff trainings, with the possibility of participating in learning groups. Both Strategic and Rising partners will be expected to incorporate equity considerations into their work.

Metro staff recommend solicitations for funding take place in the fall, with funding notification in February and March. This timing aligns well with Metro's financial obligations at the end of the fiscal year, avoiding staff capacity conflicts in June, July and August. This funding cycle also incorporates learnings from Metro's Investment and Innovation (I&I) program solicitations, which typically take a minimum of six months between issuing of the request for proposals and finalizing funding.

## Amount

Staff recommends offering annual funding to partners ranging from $10,000 to $200,000. When asked about their preferred disbursement schedule, reuse organizations expressed a preference for quarterly disbursements (Gross, et al., 2024).

## Partnerships

The Strategic and Rising partner model ensures continuity and stability in supporting valuable work. All partners will collaborate with Metro staff to create a workplan that incorporates goals and measurements, data, and financial reporting. To ensure fairness, it is essential to balance the advantage early-stage funded

partners have in securing funds over later-stage prospective partners. To mitigate this, it is recommended to allocate ample time to raise awareness and promote each solicitation round to prospective organizations. Additionally, guaranteeing a minimum amount to Strategic partners every three-year cycle will keep the funding flexible, providing opportunities for later-stage prospective Rising partners. Another suggestion is to plan for funding increases every three years, in addition to inflation and cost of living adjustments.

### Strategic partners

Strategic partners have previously received funding as Rising partners and are invited by Metro for renewal every three years. Their organizational mission aligns with the 2030 Regional Waste Plan. Strategic partners may possess the following attributes, with Metro finalizing these attributes after the pilot:

- A commitment to reuse, repair or share work, codified through the organization's mission, goals and objectives, or through another form of organizational direction that guides their work.
- Annual volume increase of materials recovered for reuse, repair or share.
- Established Rising partner with Metro, with proven data and financial reporting.
- Possess distinctive outreach capabilities and operate as a community-informed entity that reflects and is deeply embedded in the communities it serves.
- Makes diverted materials accessible and affordable for the communities it serves.

### Rising partners

Rising partners are organizations actively working toward becoming Strategic partners and workplans may involve tasks aimed at preparing the organization. Rising partners may possess the following attributes, with Metro finalizing these attributes after the pilot:

- Establishing connections and developing a plan to become a community-informed entity that reflects and is deeply embedded in the communities it serves.
- Ability to provide inbound and outbound data and collaborate with Metro to implement tracking measurement tools.
- Makes diverted materials accessible and affordable for the communities it serves.

## Scoring criteria

Additional details on the criteria and scoring system will be provided with each proposal solicitation. The pilot solicitation may ask prospective organizations how the funding would support the 2030 Regional Waste Plan; its impact on maintaining or expanding reuse, repair and share activities; its high-impact materials; its outreach capabilities and efforts to reduce barriers; its data collection abilities; and the organization's staff capacity to collaborate with Metro to improve tracking tools and processes.

## Eligible expenses

Reuse Impact Funds are intended to be as flexible as possible while meeting the purpose of continuing and increasing the recovery of high-impact materials for reuse, repair and share. This flexibility enables partners to assess and determine where funds are most needed on an annual basis, with the ability to adjust as necessary in collaboration with Metro throughout the year. Organizations must establish financial systems to track expenditures. Each participating organization must allocate a portion of the funding for data tracking and collaboration with Metro.

Pilot eligible expenses may include the following, with a final list provided at solicitation. Overhead and related expenses may have a cap, which will be determined during solicitation development.

- Salaries, wages and benefits
- Contracted labor and services
- Communications and marketing
- Insurance
- Training and professional development
- Data management and evaluation
- Business, strategic and/or program plan development
- Translation or interpretation
- Materials, supplies and software
- Rent, lease and purchase
- Vehicle purchases, lease, maintenance and repair[2]
- Vehicle fuel[3]
- Equipment purchases, lease, maintenance and repair
- Storage and disposal costs
- Capital improvements

## Investment

The Reuse Impact Fund is proposing a multi-year funding approach to support nonprofit reuse, repair and share for Council consideration. Each phase assumes annual increases to match inflation over the three-year pilot period.

- Phase 1: $1M in funding for annual awards from $10,000 to $200,000. The anticipated Regional System Fee cost impact is $0.64 per ton.

- Phase 2: $2M in funding for annual awards from $10,000 to $200,000. This phase would begin after an evaluation in year three of Phase 1. The anticipated Regional System Fee cost impact is $1.28 per ton.

Both phases include the addition of 1.5 FTE: 1.0 FTE for a program manager, 0.5 FTE for analytics support, and $50,000 for contractor support and necessary data collection supplies, such as scales. The personnel, material and services cost in FY26 is expected to be $285,000 with an anticipated Regional System Fee impact of $0.18 per ton.

The total cost for Phase 1 is $1.3 million for FY26, while Phase 2 will cost $2.3 million. The total anticipated impact to the FY26 Regional System Fee for Phase 1 is an increase of $0.82. This includes the 1.5 FTE and materials and services budget.

The anticipated pilot roles and primary responsibilities, include:

[2] Diesel-powered vehicles—engines and fuel—must meet clean air standards
[3] Diesel-powered equipment—engines and fuel—must meet clean air standards

| Role | Primary responsibilities |
|---|---|
| Program manager<br>(1 FTE) | • Create, oversee and assess pilot evaluation<br>• Develop, execute and manage pilot solicitation<br>• Approve contracts, workplans and budgets<br>• Facilitate feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion<br>• Develop long-term program |
| Analytics<br>(0.5 FTE) | • Develop, test and implement universal tools and reporting system<br>• Manage and coordinate analytics contractor<br>• Lead analytics engagement with pilot partners<br>• Provide economic and environmental data to program manager<br>• Co-lead feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion |
| Policy<br>(0.25 FTE; current resource) | • Lead stakeholder and public comment engagement<br>• Co-lead feasibility of a funding framework connected to waste diversion |
| Contractor and supplies | • Develop, test and implement universal tools and reporting system<br>• Support analytics engagement with pilot partners<br>• Support economic and environmental data to program manager |

## Timeline

Metro anticipates that funds will be disbursed to pilot partners within 12 months from Metro Council budget approval. Metro staff developed this timeline with an understanding of the substantial work required to implement the fund. This includes onboarding potential new hires, creating the handbook and solicitation in multiple languages, developing the evaluation plan, outreach and implementing the new agency-wide process for recruiting committee members. Additionally, the agency is looking to convert all grant programs to a new software.

Ensuring the pilot funding announcement reaches as many prospective organizations as possible requires both time and intention and will help mitigate the advantage early-stage partners have in securing funds compared to later-stage prospective partners. Additionally, it is recommended to invest in outreach efforts to engage organizations that may not identify as part of the reuse, repair and share sector but still divert waste within the region as part of their day-to-day community work.

# Research appendix

## Project-based funding models

Securing ongoing, predictable funding to sustain existing reuse organizations remains uncommon. A sample review of reuse grants across the U.S reveals that most funding is project-based, with completion expected within one to two years of receiving the award.

In Washington, the King County Re+ Circular Economy Grant prioritizes prevention, reuse and recycling projects involving plastic, paper and organic materials. The funding opportunity spans approximately a year and a half, with awards ranging from $20,000 to $300,000 of a total grant budget of $1.8 million (King County, 2022). Re+ is funded by King County's solid waste division which implemented a fixed annual charge in January 2024 (King County, 2023).

Another funding initiative is Colorado's Front Range Waste Diversion (FRWD or "forward") enterprise fund, managed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment which will provide an estimated $15 million in grant dollars per year (FRWD, n.d.). Colorado grant opportunities occur approximately every four months, with alternating application cycles between general focus areas (such as community zero waste) and special focus areas (such as construction and demolition). Awarded funds must be utilized within two years from the contract effective date, and the minimum award is between $20,000 to $50,000 depending on grant opportunity.

StopWaste, a public agency reducing waste in Alameda County, California, offers one-year reuse and repair grants that fund activities related to reuse, repair, recovery and redistribution (excluding food waste). The grants provide funding of up to $25,000 from a total budget of $1.1 million. While grantees can only submit one application per year, StopWaste's FAQs suggest that previous grantees in good standing may be eligible to apply for additional funding. Also, according to StopWaste's FAQs, requests for ongoing program support are eligible; however, priority will be given to projects that develop or expand businesses and services (StopWaste, n.d.).

DEQ relaunched the Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine Grants Program, which is funded through statewide landfill tipping fees (DEQ, n.d.). The program aims to enhance local capacity and promote community solutions that tackle environmental, social and health impacts arising from material production, consumption, use and disposal. The 2024 grant cycle focuses on waste prevention, and projects within this topic area are eligible for funding with a project funding range of $25,000 to $125,000 of a total state-wide budget of $1.1 million. The projects can take up to two years to complete.

The Oregon Material Impact Reduction and Reuse Program (MIRROR), administered by DEQ, is likely to launch the program's first grant and loan award cycle in fiscal year 2026-27. The program aims to reduce environmental impacts associated with covered products included in the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act, such as packaging, printing and writing paper, and food service ware. The total amount of annual statewide program funding will not be determined until winter 2024. Metro's policy advisor on the Plastic Pollution and Recycling Modernization Act recommends conservatively planning for $15 million in annual program funding. Eligible recipients include public bodies, tribal governments and nonprofit organizations. Private entities may receive funding if DEQ determines that the funds will be used for public benefit (DEQ, 2024).

Metro's Investment and Innovation (I&I) grant program, while currently paused to assess and update programming, supports efforts to prevent and reduce waste through reusing, repairing, recycling or composting in greater Portland. Since 2018, Metro has awarded $12.7 million in I&I grants over five funding cycles. During the most recent funding cycle, in 2023, Metro awarded 19 I&I grants totaling nearly $2 million to local businesses and nonprofits in greater Portland, supporting projects lasting up to 24 months. Excluding food rescue or reusable food service ware and packaging grants, the 2023 I&I grants allocated 18 percent of total funding to nonprofits and 6 percent to businesses for reuse and repair projects. Over the period from 2018 to 2023, the overall percentages were 12 percent for nonprofits and 5 percent for businesses for reuse and repair projects, representing 39 projects out of 84 total grants.

## Sustaining funding models

Within the local context, there are two funding opportunities that do not specifically focus on reuse; however, the models may illuminate what could be achievable. Both opportunities offer funding for a duration of three years.

Portland's Children Levy, funded from the proceeds of a five-year property tax levy most recently re-approved by voters in 2018, "invests in programs that support" early development, school engagement and academic achievement, high school graduation, and family safety and stability (City of Portland, 2023). Through a competitive application process, programs must demonstrate that they are cost effective and have a proven record of success to be eligible for funding consideration.

In spring 2020, $68 million was approved to fund three years of large grant investments in 85 programs (Portland Children's Levy, n.d.). The large grant program runs through June 30, 2025 with awards typically ranging from $75,000 to $850,000 annually. In 2020, the Small Grants Fund was established in response to community feedback. Its purpose is to enhance equity of access for smaller nonprofit organizations that have not previously received Levy funding. In November 2020, the Allocation Committee approved a total of $1 million for seven small grants, which the Portland City Council subsequently endorsed a month later. Currently, small grants fall within the range of $20,000 to $70,000 annually (Portland Children's Levy, n.d.).

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) "core" partner track is intended for organizations that already have, or are working toward, a long-standing commitment to delivering travel options work as a key organizational function. In exchange for funding, core partners work closely with Metro to create a three-year workplan limited to five tasks measured either annually or at the end of three years. The "emerging" partner track is project-based, and the corresponding workplans may involve tasks aimed at preparing the organization for a future core partner track. Invitations to apply for a core or emerging partner track involve interested awardees from either RTO's "general" or "small grants" track reaching out to Metro staff to explore the best-fitting funding opportunities. Seven million dollars was allocated to support core and emerging partners in 2023.

Metro's I&I and RTO grantees receive resources and training opportunities to advance equity, diversity and inclusion. RTO workplans contribute structure and resources to further this effort, while I&I awardees are invited to participate in Metro trainings offered to staff, with many partners taking advantage of these opportunities. This is crucial because a 2021 report highlighted the need for support related to equity, diversity and training for reuse, repair and share organizations (Start Consulting, 2021).

## Payment cycles

Expense reimbursement cycles are common for grant awards, with quarterly payments. Metro's RTO program utilizes federal dollars and must be reimbursed this way. The Portland Children's Levy follows a quarterly reimbursement model, but advances may be requested with the maximum advance amount being 25 percent of the annual budget for the grant.

Moving away from reimbursement, Metro's I&I program advances 50 percent of the grant upon execution of the funding agreement, then the next 40 percent installment after the first 50 percent is spent, and the final 10 percent is paid on a reimbursement basis after deliverables are confirmed to be completed. DEQ's relaunched Reduce, Reuse, Reimagine Grants Program now employs this disbursement model. Disbursing the majority of funds in up-front installments helps organizations effectively manage their cash flow.

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