



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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Single-Use Plastics Program

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

May 2026

CHAPTER 140 OF THE ACTS OF 2024

The Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) General Appropriations Act directed the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to develop and administer a grant program for small businesses to support alternatives to single-use plastics:

2200-0107 ...provided further, that not less than \$150,000 shall be expended to the department of environmental protection to develop and administer a grant program for small businesses to support alternatives to single-use plastics; provided further, that grants may be used by grantees to purchase biodegradable, compostable or reusable food service ware, water bottles, bags, packaging or other similar single-use plastics reduction efforts or activities; provided further, that small businesses located in low-income communities shall be prioritized in the grant application review process; provided further, that not later than June 30, 2025, the department shall submit a report to the senate and house committees on ways and means and the joint committee on environment and natural resources on the implementation of the grant program which shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the names and locations of the grantees; (ii) the grant amounts distributed; (iii) the implemented plastic reduction efforts through utilization of grant funds; and (iv) if possible, the estimated amount of single-use plastics reduced

SCOPE

MassDEP provided grants and technical assistance to businesses and non-profits to replace single use plastic food serviceware with reusables through three programs: the

Reduce, Reuse and Repair Micro Grants, the Recycling & Reuse Business Development Grants, and business assistance organization RecyclingWorks Massachusetts.

1. The Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grants provide from \$3,000 (minimum) to \$10,000 (maximum) to eligible businesses, non-profits, regional authorities, municipalities, and schools/colleges for short-term waste reduction projects (defined as projects lasting ≤ 1 year). In the most recent grant cycle, MassDEP awarded four (4) grants to entities pursuing efforts to reduce single-use plastics. Project descriptions and grant funds dispersed are listed below:

- Lawrence General Hospital – \$10,000 - Replace single-use pitchers and cups with reusables.
- Colrain Central School and Sanderson Academy – \$2,012 - Reusable Serving Supplies for Two Elementary School Cafeterias
- Women’s Lunch Place, Boston – \$5,000 - Replacing single-use dishware at women's shelter with reusables.
- Berkshire Environmental Action Team - \$9,440 - Replacing dishware at event space and potentially loaning to other events.

2. The Recycling and Reuse Business Development Grant Program provides grants to Massachusetts businesses and non-profit organizations to expand recycling, reuse, and composting infrastructure in Massachusetts. The grants range from \$50,000 to \$400,000, and target specific priority materials such as food materials, mattresses, textiles, construction & demolition materials and bulky reusable items. In the most recent grant cycle, MassDEP awarded two (2) grants to organizations focused on promoting reusable food service ware, as follows:

Re:Dish – \$150,000 - supporting expansion of company servicing small businesses by collecting, washing, sanitizing, re-delivering, and tracking reusable food serviceware replacing single-use products.

<https://www.redish.com/>

- Recirclable LLC – \$70,000 - reusable takeout container purchasing Customer Service Platform software to broaden the reach of reusable takeout containers in food service. <https://www.recirclable.com/>

3. RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts (RecyclingWorks) is a recycling assistance program funded by MassDEP that helps businesses and institutions reduce waste and maximize recycling, reuse, and food recovery opportunities. MassDEP contracted with RecyclingWorks (\$45,000) to provide a number of services focused on reducing single-use plastics, including:

- Producing and promoting best management practices for reuseable takeout containers at food establishments. This guidance was published on the RecyclingWorks website at <https://recyclingworksma.com/reusable-containers-guidance/>
- Conducted extensive outreach via email to key industry sectors, including restaurants.
- Provided direct technical assistance to businesses seeking to reduce single-use plastics
- Presented on the recommended best management practices at several conferences and webinars, including:
 - Massachusetts Health Officers Association, November 2024
 - New England Restaurant and Bar Show, March 2025
 - Mass Recycle Annual Conference Roundtable, March 2025
 - RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts Spring Forum, May 2025
 - Healthy Kids, Healthy Programs Summit, May 2025
 - The New England Alliance Spring Regional Conference, May 2025
 - Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM) Sustainability Workshop, June 2025
 - Mass Restaurant Association ProStart program for K-12 school administrators
- Published six blogs and one case study on business and institutional use of reusable food serviceware (<https://recyclingworksma.com/blog/>):
 - Blog 1: Re:Dish: Focus: Third-Party Warewashing
 - Blog 2: Fulfilled Goods: Focus: Consumer-Provided Containers, Filling Emphasis
 - Blog 3: Zero Waste Arlington and Recirclable: Focus: Establishment-Provided Containers, Single-Use Beverage Emphasis
 - Blog 4: CARE for the Cape and Islands: Focus: Customer Provided BYOC, Establishment Provided Straws, Establishment Provided Takeout Containers (Foreverware)
 - Blog 5: Boston University (Ozzi, Topanga.io): Focus: Establishment provided food and beverage containers. In-house washing at scale
 - Blog 6: General BMP Overview
 - Case Study: A Broad Commitment to Sustainability: Hyannis Yacht Club Business Spotlight

CONCLUSION

A summary of grants awarded under the programs identified above is provided below.

| Project | FY 25 Budget | Expended |
|-------------------|--------------|----------|
| Lawrence Hospital | \$10,000 | \$9,976 |

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| Berkshire ACT | \$9,444 | \$9,444 |
| Women's Lunch Place | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| Colrain Central School and Sanderson Academy | \$2,012 | \$2,012 |
| Redish | \$67,500 | \$67,500 |
| Recircilable | \$31,500 | \$3,363* |
| RecyclingWorks | \$4,500 | \$44,500 |
| Total | | \$141,795 |

* Expended less than budgeted - found alternative approach