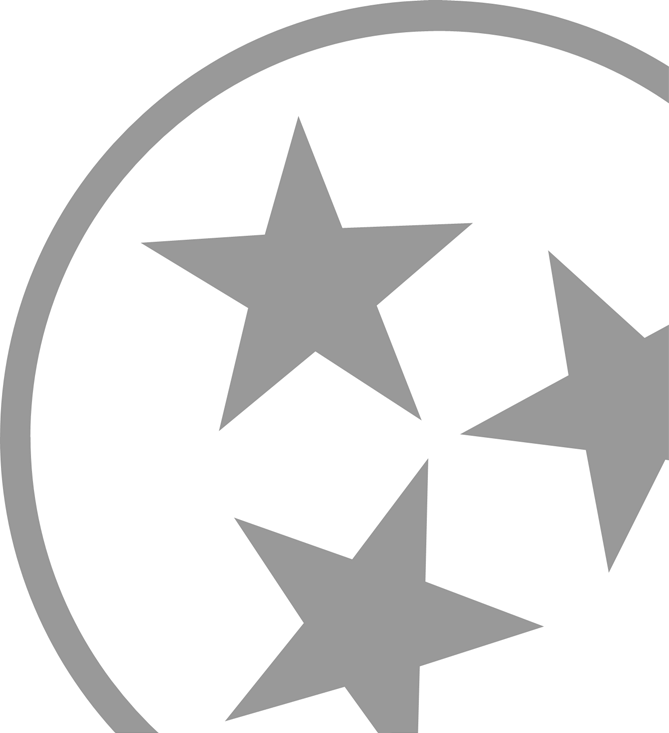
Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation | Grant Manual | FY26

**Convenience Center**

**Grant Manual**

Opportunity for Funding



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**Convenience Center Grant**

**FY26**

**Application Manual**

Prepared by:

**Division of Solid Waste Management**

Materials Management Program

Davy Crockett Tower, 7

th

Floor

500

James Robertson Parkway

Nashville, TN 37243



P a g e | **1**

Convenience Center Grant FY26

# Overview

According to the public policy statement in the Solid Waste Management Act of 1991, Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 68-211-801 to -874 (“Act”), the State of Tennessee (“State”) has a responsibility to protect the public health, safety, and well-being of its citizens and to protect and enhance the quality of its environment. Under the Act, the State must institute and maintain, through the Department of Environment and Conservation (“Department”), a comprehensive, integrated, statewide program for solid waste management. This will assure that solid waste facilities, whether publicly or privately operated, do not adversely affect the health, safety, and well-being of the public and do not degrade the quality of the environment.

With this intent, section 824 of the Act directs the Department to offer matching grants from the Solid Waste Management Fund to counties for the purpose of establishing or upgrading convenience centers. Counties are required to meet a minimum level of service by a network of convenience centers throughout the county. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-211-851. The Act also provides that the goal of the State is to reduce by twenty-five percent (25%) the amount of solid waste disposed at Class I municipal solid waste disposal facilities. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68211-861.

The Department acknowledges that not all local jurisdictions are the same and they may wish to take different approaches toward achieving the State’s solid waste reduction and diversion goals. Counties with smaller populations may focus efforts toward achieving qualitative goals, while more populous regions and the state might focus on quantitative goals. Qualitative goals include expanding the types of materials collected, providing a service to an underserved area, improving efficiencies, and improving quality of material recovered. Quantitative goals include increased recovery rates, capture rates, participation rates, set out rates, or decreased costs per household served.

# Purpose of the Grant

The purpose of this grant is to provide funding assistance to counties to meet or exceed the minimum level of collection assurance, as required by Tennessee Code Annotated section 68-211-851. It assists eligible applicants to enhance their collection assurance requirements through elimination of unattended county collection systems, also known as Green Boxes, upgrade existing convenience center sites, and establish new convenience center sites.

This grant also supports the implementation of the Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan Objectives. It is the Department’s intent with this grant to support local governments’ efforts toward developing a fully integrated solid waste management system. Successful proposals will demonstrate how the requested funding will improve collection assurance through its network of convenience centers, and highest rated applications will also reference their efforts on the following:

* Promote Material Processing and End Use in Tennessee
* Ensure sufficient and environmentally sound disposal

# Eligibility

Tennessee counties needing grant assistance for the purpose of upgrading or establishing convenience centers, as required by Tennessee Code Annotated section 68-211-851, may apply. Applications for requests to cover costs used for regular operation expenses of a reoccurring nature cannot be considered.

There are five (5) priorities for this grant:

* 13 Counties in the Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Helene
* Applicants that are updating existing convenience centers for safety and compliance standard needs.
* Applicants that are establishing a new convenience center that provides access to an under-served area.
* Applicants that do not meet the minimum level of service for the number of convenience centers under Tennessee Code Annotated section 68-211-851 and Tennessee Comprehensive Rules and Regulations, Rule 0400-11-01-.10(2).
* Applicants that are eliminating unmanned county collection systems (i.e., “Green Boxes”) and replacing them with convenience centers.

Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

* Paving, fencing, shelters for attendants, power connection, roll-off containers, basic equipment including, but not limited to, balers, crushers, grinders, fencing, as well as compactors, receiver boxes, and identified collection containers; and,
* Land or Property Purchases are permitted and subject to the following:
* When purchasing land, no other equipment can be purchased on the grant contract. All pertinent land purchase information needs to be uploaded with the application and a detailed diagram showing property boundaries, lot dimensions, easements, and other features, essentially outlining the planned development on a piece of land.
* Additionally, a letter of explanation stating that the applicant will seek permits in compliance with Rule 0400-11-01-.10, and the land will be utilized as a convenience center with services as such provided to the public.
* Developing and printing of operating manuals, and operational signage needed for center operation.

# Non-Eligibility

The Department will not award any grant funds to any region that is not in compliance with the States rules and regulations. This includes, but is not limited to, financial assurance, violations, solid waste reporting, and annual solid waste fees.

Furthermore, applicants previously awarded a grant of this type that remains open, as well as Grantees who have failed to meet the obligations of previously awarded grant contracts in the last three years, are ineligible.

# Funding

The Department has allocated $1,250,000 for the Convenience Center Grant offering for Fiscal Year 2025. Applicants may request up to $150,000 to upgrade or build a new convenience center facility. A match of 10% - 50% is required as indicated in the Convenience Center Grant Match Requirement (Attachment 2). The local match set forth in shall be determined by the Department, using an economic index based upon the United States Census Bureau, including per capita income and property values of the county applicant.

Reimbursement may not exceed 50% of the approved total eligible project costs.

Grant awards will be made based on the estimates included in the grant application. It is important that applicants research the equipment or facility they are seeking to purchase and obtain accurate price information prior to submitting their application. Applicants must provide multiple quotes for items that would require a bid and at least one quote for items that will not require a bid. Only equipment or facility improvements identified in the application and approved on the executed contract will be funded for purchase by the installation deadlines in the executed grant contract. In the event of a delay in receiving equipment or materials, the Grantee should immediately notify and request approval by contacting the Program Administrator 1 with a justification letter on letterhead and an estimated timeline.

# Selection Criteria

Applications shall first be reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Applications shall be rated based on **two** categories, and **seven** possible modifiers, averaged among rating completed by a minimum of **three** anonymous raters. The Scoring Rubric is provided as Attachment 3. Seventy percent (70%) of the application’s weight shall be based on the proposed project s value, including but not limited to:

* Does the project increase the level of service in the county?
* Does the project add or expand a program?
* Does the project offer a significant return on investment, as measured in tons of waste diverted from landfills or positive environmental impact?
* Is the project for the benefit of the citizens of a given region or is it an attempt to set up a for-profit venture?

Forty percent (30%) of the application’s weight shall be considered based on the proposed project’s feasibility, including but not limited to:

* Is the grantee financially able to meet any applicable matching funds?
* Has the project been thoroughly and carefully considered? (Detailed project plans, maps, quotes, and studies will increase the application’s value)
* In the past three (3) years, has the applicant had significant delays in completing other grant projects, or failed to follow established administrative procedures, or has any fines or penalties for convenience centers, transfer stations, or Landfills?

Modifiers shall be applied to an application lastly, and are considered as follows:

Major Disaster Area County + 10

Distressed County + 10

At-Risk County + 5

Top 5 County - 5

Received Same Grant Type in Past 3 Years - 10

No Utilization of Tennessee-based Landfill - 10

Past 3 Year History of Grant Delays or Termination for , Cause or Facility - 10 Fines and Penalties?

# Funding Conditions

Applicants selected for grant funds, must follow all terms and conditions within the grant contract. Awardees will be expected to submit or maintain for inspection during normal hours operational data relative to daily operations to include but not limited to weights, feed stocks utilized, temperatures, residual disposal or diversion, marketing, and project maintenance logs.

If non-profits that support or benefit State agencies seek to apply all necessary State approvals, transfer of ownership documents, storage approvals, inventory control, and etc. must be included in the grant application for consideration.

Upon award, Grantees must participate in a Project Management Conference (PMC), also referred to as a Project Implementation Meeting (PIM) within 30 days of contract execution and scheduled with virtual and in person options before the contract execution. The PMC will be hosted by the Department and will cover contract requirements, deadlines, and provide an opportunity for Grantees to complete the “Statement of Understanding” and the “Grant Contract Budget Acceptance” activities with assistance.

Grantees must be ready to proceed with the project as soon as possible after the grant contract has been fully executed and PMC requirement has been completed. However, **prior** to procuring goods or services, Grantees shall complete the Title VI Training Certification Form and any other training verification requirements. This should be completed and uploaded to the Grants Management System (GMS) portal within 30 days following contract execution.

Progress reports must be submitted in the Grants Management System (GMS) by or on the dates of March 31, September 30, and December 31. Please include all necessary dates of projects related to the approved grant activities and budget. At these times, Grantees shall review the dates in scope A.8. – A.11. of the executed contract and/or any executed amendments for compliance. Additionally, Grantees will review the dates of the last Title VI Training Certificate Form located in the “activities” tab to assure it is updated appropriately. If it needs to be completed, Grantees shall provide an estimated date of completion in the “Quarterly Reporting” activity summary. Any

inactivity for long periods, need to be explained in the summary. Inactivity on awarded projects

greater than six months may result in contract termination at the Department’s sole discretion.

End of Fiscal Year (EOFY) Form for accrued liability reporting must be submitted by June 30. This

is for all reimbursements anticipated will be expended on or before June 30 but will be

submitted after July 1. This should not include expenditures for previously submitted or paid

reimbursement.

Grantees must comply with all national, state, and local laws and regulations during

construction. This includes contracting with an engineering or construction consultant for

architectural documents, if applicable. Certain laws and rules may require a general contractor

to provide oversight of project work. Applicants must research this need and are responsible

for meeting appropriate requirements.

The Department’s intent with this grant offer is to promote environmentally preferable

purchasing in support of the

current

Solid Waste and Materials Management Plan to

encourage the purchase of equipment made with recycled content, when available.

# Deadline to Submit

A complete application shall be submitted in the Grants Management System (GMS) online **on or before** June 30, 2024, by 4:30 p.m. CDT. Applications received after this date and time will be automatically declined. Applications submitted via email or physical mail will be declined without review.

A complete application consists of a digital signature of a person with signatory authority for the applicant and clear and detailed completion of all application prompts in GMS, including but not limited to the Narrative Questions, Budget Worksheet, Title VI Pre-Audit Survey, and submission of the Automatic Clearing House Form FA-0825. All the information required has been implemented in GMS from required TDEC forms, such as Form CN-0915 (Grant Application) and Form CN-1448 (Title VI Pre-Audit Survey) but is made convenient in a purely digital format.

# Tentative Grant Timeline

The anticipated timeline for this grant offering is as follows:

**May 15, 2025:**  Request for Applications Announced

**June 30, 2025:**  Deadline for Application Submittal

**July 30, 2025:**  Announce Awards and Prepare Grant Contracts

**October 1, 2025:**  Executed Contract Start Date

**December 29, 2025:**  Grantee Submit Subcontract Request or Bid Package

**May 30, 2026:** Equipment, Materials, and/or Facility Shall be Installed

**August 30, 2026:**  Final Request for Grant Reimbursements Submitted

**October 1, 2028** Contract End Date for Grants without Vested Interest

**October 1, 2030** Contract End Date for Grants with Vested Interest

***TDEC SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT***

*TDEC acknowledges that the products and services we procure have fundamental human health,*

*environmental, and economic impacts, and that purchasing decisions should exemplify our*

*commitment to sustainability and to protecting the environment and the quality of life of*

*Tennesseans. TDEC endeavors to reduce the environmental impacts of its operations and to*

*promote fiscal responsibility and community and environmental stewardship by integrating*

*sustainability considerations in sourcing processes while continuing to observe general state*

*purchasing laws and procurement policies.*

***TDEC TITLE VI STATEMENT***

All Grantees will be required to affirm the following statement as part of the grant contract:

*The Grantee hereby agrees, warrants, and assures that no person shall be excluded from*

*participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination in the*

*performance of this Grant Contract or in the employment practices of the Grantee on the grounds*

*of disability, age, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or any other classification protected by*

*Federal, Tennessee State constitutional, or statutory law. The Grantee shall, upon request, show*

*proof of such nondiscrimination and shall post in conspicuous places, available to all employees*

*and applicants, notices of nondiscrimination.*

# Contacts

The persons named below shall be the points of contact through the term of the grant contract. The below contacts are the only Department contacts designated to speak on official grant and contract-related matters. All Grantees shall direct their communications (regular mail, express mail, or electronic mail) concerning this

application and award process to:

***Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation***

Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

Division of Solid Waste Management

Davy Crockett Tower, 7th floor

500

James Robertson Parkway

Nashville, TN 37243

***General and Administrative Questions***

:

Robin Chance

Grants Program Manager - DSWM

615-571-6364

Robin.Chance@tn.gov

***Grantee’s Contacts***

***Technical Questions:***

Amber Greene

Environmental Consultant Grants Program 615-651-

9540

Amber.Greene@tn.gov

The contract actions shall be requested, certified, or otherwise authorized by the

executive

director or mayor of the Grantee. A letter of signatory authorization shall be provided by

the Grantee if these actions must be completed by another individual.

In the contract body, Section D.8. shall display the executive director or mayor and an

additional technical contact (if applicable) authorized to speak on the county’s behalf for

common project communications.

# Technical Narrative Questions

1. Describe the conditions that have led the applicant to consider applying for this grant (e.g., eliminating Green Boxes, insufficient centers, aging equipment, accessibility of existing sites, or regulatory problems). As applicable, cite collection assurance needs and necessities of financial assistance.
2. If new location(s) are needed, select new and explain the following: If a new location is not needed, select not applicable. (Please note that you will not be able to add line breaks in your responses. We suggest separate points. Example: batteries, used oil, paint OR Bids April 2018 / Construction June 2018)
3. If existing location(s) are part of the application, select existing and explain the following: If an upgrade to an existing location is not desired, select not applicable.

\*Worksheet Engineering and Construction Plans. \*Worksheet. Indicate the property boundaries of the designated upgraded convenience center site(s). Include an overlay diagram identifying the location of the requested upgrades within the property boundaries. Include a map showing expected service area for the convenience center site(s). \*Upload button

1. Provide price quotes and specification sheets for all equipment requests. Attach supplemental documents or tables, if necessary.

# Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***What method is used for grant project expense funding?***

Payment of project expenses is on a reimbursement basis. The Grantee must complete payment(s) for equipment purchased in full and then submit the required invoice documentation and proof of payment to the Department for reimbursement. This is completed through the Smart Simple GMS portal. All supporting documentation [must be dated after the start of the contract date. By law,](https://tdec.smartsimple.com/s_Login.jsp?lang=1&prole=0) the State has forty-five (45) days to process payments once a purchase order has been created.

1. ***When can the grant project begin?***

Projects must begin after the grant contract has been fully executed. Any equipment ordered or purchased prior to the begin date of the executed contract will not be reimbursed. Also, vendors’ bids or quotes for equipment purchases must dated after the contract execution date and be submitted and approved by the State prior to ordering or purchasing. Any equipment received/purchased prior to the begin date of the executed contract will not be reimbursed. Failure to submit bids or quotes for approval prior to committing funds will result in denial of costs.

1. ***Does the applicant have to follow a bidding process?***

Yes, the grant contract requires all Grantees to follow a competitive bidding process, where practical. While some local governments may use their own established purchasing policies, the bidding process used must reflect State requirements and must be approved by the State prior to the grantee making obligations for purchases.

1. ***Does the State have to approve bids and the bidding process?***

Yes, the Grantee is only authorized to purchase equipment or materials after submitting bids and receiving approval in writing. Any purchases made prior to approval of the grantee’s bids/quotes will result in denial of reimbursement.

1. ***May the applicant enter a subcontract for third party services to complete grant actions?*** Yes, in fact funds approved under the budget line-item Professional Fee, Grant & Award most often result in a subcontract being necessary to complete the grant actions. The Grantee should submit an unsigned drafted subcontract for State review, and upon receiving written State approval, may then enter the subcontract agreement to fulfill grant actions.

1. ***When can I request reimbursement for expenses relative to the grant project?***

After the bids/quotes have been approved, and the equipment is installed and operational, an inspection will be made to verify completion by the Department. After the inspection, approval will be provided to the grantee to proceed with the submission of a Request for Grant Reimbursement Activity in GMS. The Grantee should provide supporting documentation (vendor invoices, copies of cancelled checks issued for payment, etc.) to facilitate prompt payment. Payments will be made electronically through the Automated Clearing House (ACH). Grantees will be required to provide banking account information in order to receive grant reimbursements. The ACH form will be included in all grant offers.

1. ***How long will I have to complete the grant project?***

The Contract contains specific completion dates and requirements. Grantees must be precise in the timelines submitted in the application to assure that sufficient time is allowed for purchases and work activities.

1. ***What are the grantee’s responsibilities for the project after the grant is paid in full?*** Financial documents shall be maintained in accordance with State and Federal tax laws. Grantees must maintain financial documents for audit purposes for three years after the grant is paid in full. Equipment purchased must be properly maintained and operated for a term of five years after grant award or the Grantee must repay a prorated amount to the State. Some grants may have other responsibilities. The Grant Program Manager can provide more specific details on any other responsibilities required.
2. ***Can we submit supplemental documents?***

Yes, an applicant may apply for each grant solicitation, provided all activities from prior grant funding have been completed and the Grantee has been paid in full.

1. ***Can we submit supplemental documents?***

Yes, supplemental documents applicable to this grant may be submitted, but only to the extent that these documents are necessary to support the narrative information provided and are submitted at the time of application.

1. ***Where can I find grant documents?***

The Grants Management System (GMS) online portal may be found at https://tdec.smartsimple.com. A login must be created for each Grantee’s contacts and will need to be affiliated by TDEC Grants Staff to receive access to the Grant.

1. ***When a grant is awarded, what are my Title VI responsibilities?***

When applying for this grant, the applicant must complete a Title VI Pre-Audit Survey and provide various prompted non-discrimination documentation, including but not limited to complaint procedures and LEP (Limited English Proficiency) Policy with the application. Upon contract execution, the Grantee shall complete the required information for the “Title VI Training Certification Form” Activity tab, located in GMS. Proof of training must be provided for a minimum of **two** people within the organization: **one who holds financial responsibility** for the grant contract and one responsible for completed activities for the grant contract. The Grantee must submit this form and training certification(s) within thirty (30) days following contract execution. If the grantee does not have a Title VI Program to facilitate the required training proof and materials, the Department has various resources available by request that may assist the applicant in the administration of this grant.

1. ***If I have a question, who do I contact during the solicitation phase?***

There are three contacts (a technical contact and two administrative contacts) that can provide official information relative to this grant proposal solicitation. These individuals and their contact information may be found in the Contact section of this grant manual. These contacts are the only Department contacts designated to speak on official grant and contract-related matters.

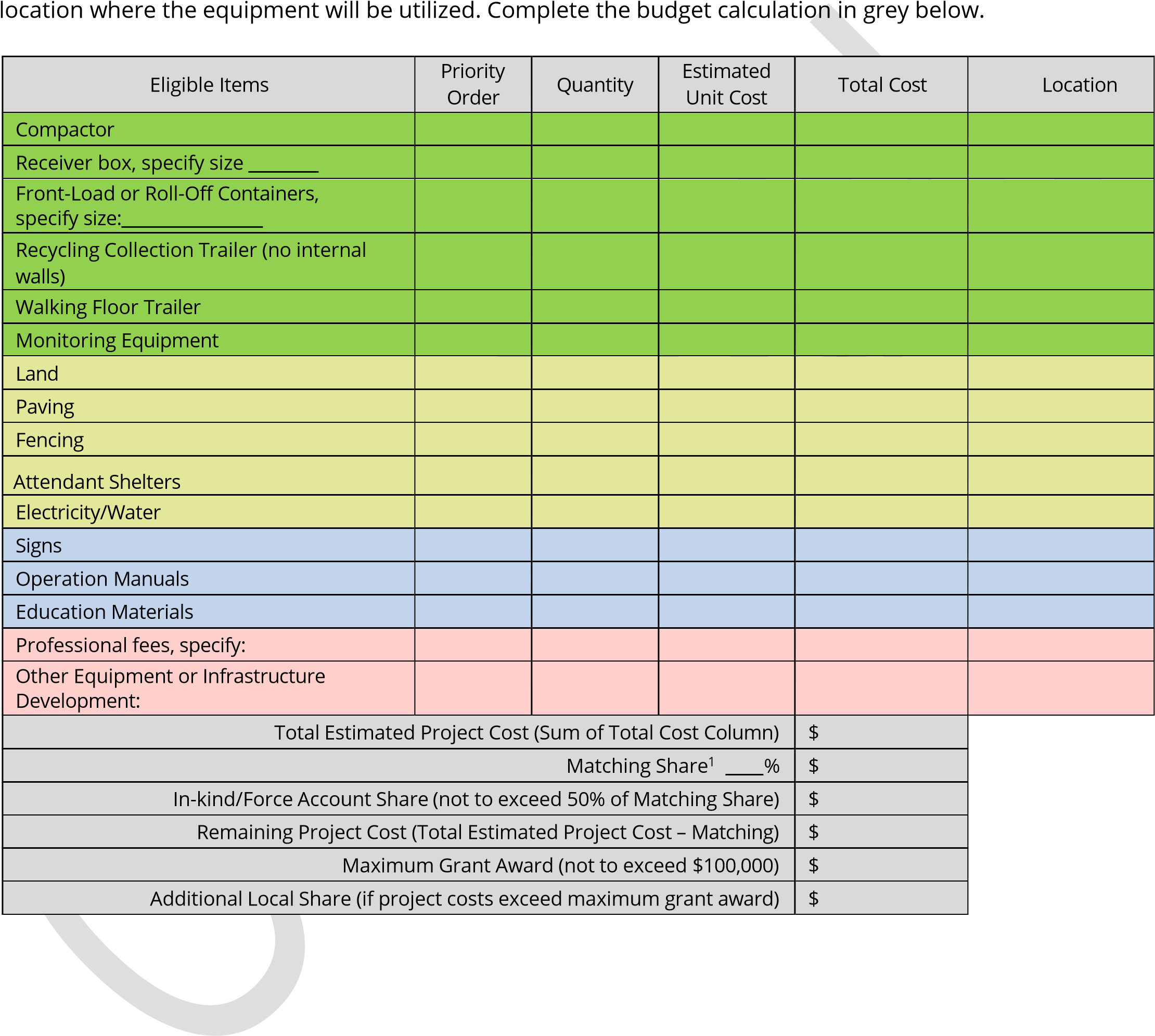
**Attachment 1:**

**Convenience Center Equipment Budget Worksheet**

Project Name

Vendor Number

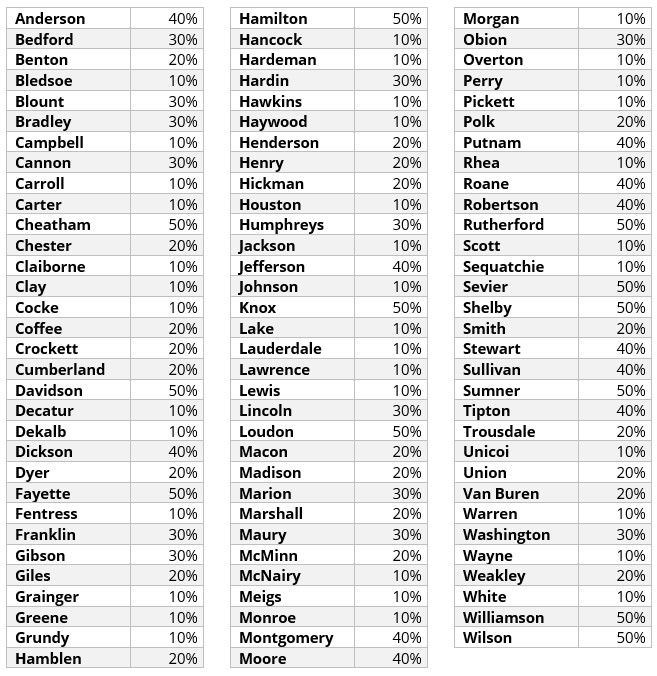
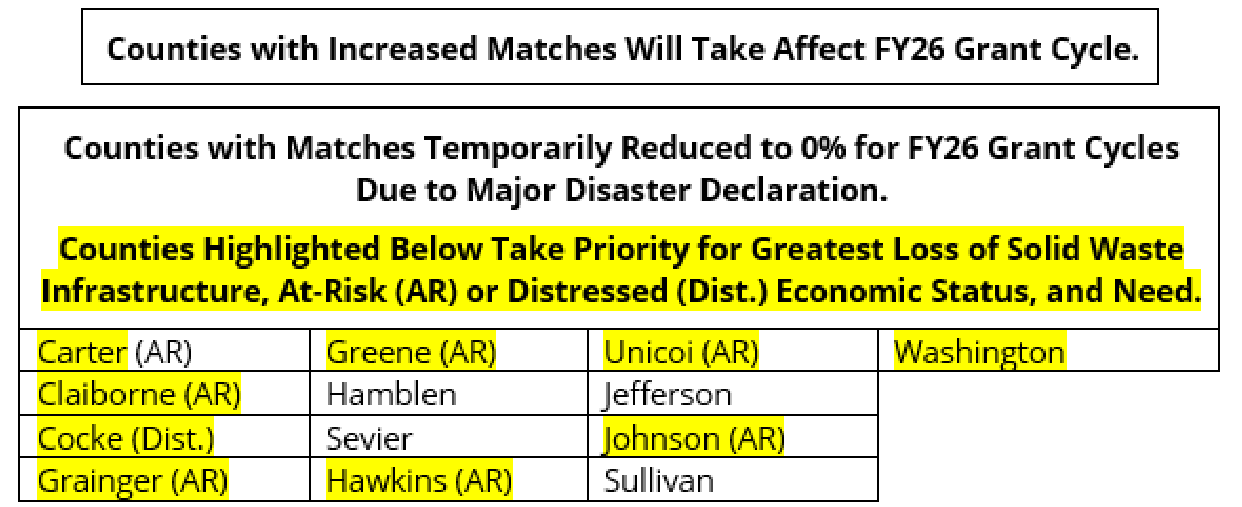
Identify all items requested. Number in priority order, as all requested equipment may not be funded based on funds available. Identify the quantity, estimated unit cost, and total costs for each equipment type. Indicate the



**\*Please note: Attachment 1 is outdated forms and will not be accepted if submitted solely as the Grant Application. The information herein has been built in the Grants Management System (GMS) online portal; the prompts shall appear in a different format but is the same information prompted in these two examples.**

**Attachment 2:**

**FY26 Grant Match Requirements**



1FY26 Grants Matching Table was created using a combination of average individual income, property tax, economic status, available solid waste facilities revenue per county with ECD economic status factored in as to final match placement.

**Attachment 3:**

**Convenience Center Grant Example Scoring Rubric**

**Project History and Background (Value) – 35 Points Maximum**

**35 - 26 Points 25 - 13 Points 12 - 0 Points Score**

* Project clearly identifies • Project identifies collection • Project needs are missing or collection assurance needs assurance needs or enhancement, inaccurately identified, and or enhancement and past but vaguely describes plans to collection assurance plans are collection conditions. utilize new or enhanced site. poorly described.
* Project strategies are • Project strategies are vaguely • Project strategies are poorly clearly articulated and articulated and developed. articulated and developed or developed. • Project vaguely demonstrates missing.
* Project supporting need through supporting • Project supporting documents are documents clearly documents. missing or partially included. demonstrate need.

**Project Plan (Value) – 35 Points Maximum**

**35 - 26 Points 25 - 13 Points 12 - 0 Points Score**

* Project plan and • Project goals and outcomes are • Project goals and outcomes are outcomes have been vaguely considered and explained. poorly considered and explained. clearly and thoroughly • Project supports the 2025 Plan • Project does not support the 2025 considered and Objectives to some limited degree. Plan Objectives.

explained. • Project timeline may meet project • Project timeline vague, incomplete,

* Project clearly supports objectives. or missing.

the 2025 Plan Objectives. • Somewhat describes how the • Vague or missing description of how

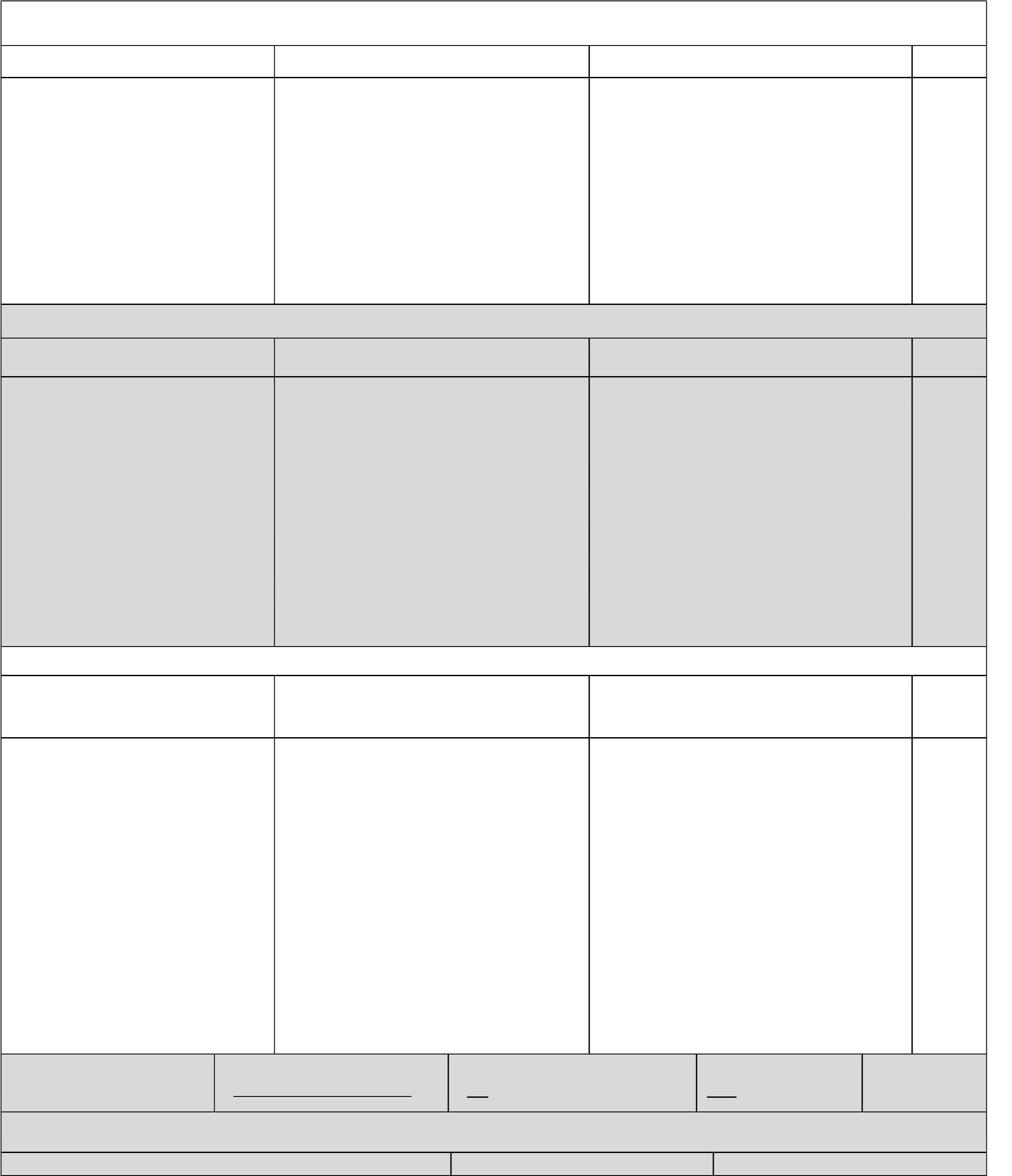
* Project timeline appears project will be promoted. the project will be promoted. reasonable to meet project objectives.
* Clearly describes how the project will be promoted.

**Technical Assessment and Maps (Feasibility) – 30 Points Maximum**

**30 - 21 Points 20 - 10 Points 9 - 0 Points Score**

* Assessment materials • Assessment materials vaguely • Assessment materials are poorly provided clearly show show proposed location and shown on and do not represent the proposed location and service area. location or service area.

service area. • Assessment materials provide • Assessment materials are missing

* Assessment materials limited view on how the proposed elements showing how the clearly indicate how project fits into the applicant’s proposed project fits into the proposed project fits into integrated solid waste system. applicant’s integrated solid waste the applicant’s integrated • Assessment materials system. solid waste system. demonstrate an adequate ability • Assessment materials indicate an
* Assessment materials to meet matching requirements. inability to meet matching clearly demonstrate ability requirements. to meet matching requirements.

**[ ] Fully Funded at [ ] Partially Funded at [ ] Proposal Not Funded Total Modifiers: Total Score:**

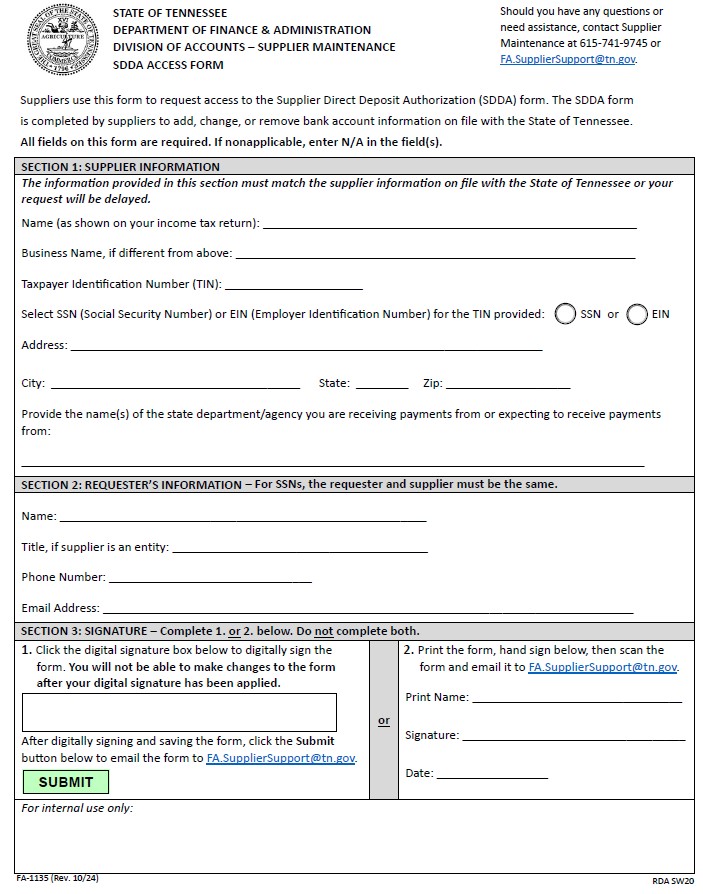
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**Rater Explanation/Comments:**

**Grant Rater: 1 2 3 4 Date: Reviewed By:**

**Attachment 4:**

**Supplier Direct Deposit Authorization (SDDA**



Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation,

**Authorization No. 327411**

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**0**

copies. “This public document

was promulgated at a cost of

**$0**

per copy.“

