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THE ROAD TO 100% TIRE CIRCULARITY: ELTS GOING FULL CIRCLE

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Webinar Recap

Funding the Future: Grant Opportunities to Scale End-of-Life Tire Markets

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Key Takeaways

- Tire recycling is a pillar of sustainability and economic growth, but end-of-life tire generation continues to outpace current markets, making funding for market development essential to close the gap.
- Grants act as a bridge: they lower risk for early adopters, support investment in equipment and infrastructure, and cover the costs of educating the marketplace and introducing new tire-derived products and applications.
- Grants do not follow a one-size-fits-all approach; states use different structures (state-run programs, enterprise boards and public-private R&D partnerships) to fund cleanup, infrastructure, market development and research for tire-derived products.
- Successful projects typically involve multi-stakeholder collaborations, linking state agencies, local governments, recyclers, industry and universities, to deliver both environmental outcomes and durable, high-volume end-use markets.

Grant Models and Program Structures

Grantors often distinguish between “push” grants that fund cleanup and create an available supply of material, and “pull” grants that build sustained demand through market development. Cleanup funding remains essential for legacy piles and illegal dumping, but states increasingly encourage

communities to take responsibility, collaborate regionally, and gradually reduce reliance on recurring cleanup dollars.

Market development grants focus on adding capacity across the supply chain and building demand so tire-derived products are chosen on performance, cost and lifecycle benefits, not just subsidies.

Some state examples include:

California / CalRecycle

- [Tire Incentive Program \(TIP\)](#): A competitive market development grant that reimburses eligible California businesses using crumb rubber or substituting crumb rubber for materials; \$3 million is available each fiscal year, with awards ranging from \$25,000 to \$650,000 and applications typically open June to August.
- [Rubberized Pavement Grant Program](#): Competitive grants for public works projects using rubberized asphalt concrete or rubberized chip seal made from California-generated end-of-life tires; eligible applicants include cities, counties, special districts, park districts, joint powers authorities and tribal entities, with approximately \$6.3 - \$6.7 million allocated annually and maximum awards of \$375,000 (individual), \$525,000 (joint) and \$750,000 (qualifying tribal entities).
- [Tire-Derived Aggregate \(TDA\) Grant Program](#): Provides up to \$750,000 per fiscal year to support civil engineering projects; applicants can include cities, counties, special districts, agencies and private for-profit entities, with a maximum of \$375,000 per applicant and an application window typically from April to July

Additional grants support local CA government tire cleanup, amnesty events and enforcement:

- [Local Government Waste Tire Cleanup Grant \(TCU\)](#): Offers \$1.5 million every even year to fund collection, disposal and recycling of end-of-life tires from piles and illegal dumping, with maximum awards of \$100,000 for individual applicants and \$250,000 for regional applications.
- [Local Government Waste Tire Amnesty Grant](#): Provides \$1.5 million every odd year to support convenient public collection events, with maximum awards of \$60,000 for individual applicants and \$90,000 for regional applicants.
- [Local Government Waste Tire Enforcement \(TEA\) Grant](#): Provides \$6.25 million each fiscal year to support inspection and enforcement of end-of-life tire generators and haulers.

Colorado

- [Colorado's Waste Tire Management Enterprise Board](#) was created by [Senate Bill 24-123](#) and consists of nine members representing a broad range of end-of-life tire expertise.

- The board operates outside the state department, with the department providing staffing, collecting funds, offering advice and managing grant contracts. Its mission is to transform end-of-life tires into useful products and support a resilient circular economy through strong partnerships and transparent stewardship.
- The board established an enterprise fee of \$1.50 on every replacement tire sold in the state (beginning in January), which funds grant programs for market development, equipment, research and development, innovative uses, marketing of end-of-life tire products, community engagement, cleanups of illegal sites, rebates to end users and more.
- This structure is unique nationally, and it may serve as a model for other states seeking to build expert-led, long-term end-of-life tire grant programs.

Michigan

- Michigan's [EGLE](#)-run end-of-life tire program is a mature, multi-stakeholder system that can flexibly direct about \$3.5 million annually toward either cleanup projects or market development, based on current policy priorities.
- Communities, private-sector processors, research institutions, universities and communications projects can apply annually, typically on a 50% reimbursement basis for efforts such as communication, capacity building and equipment investments.
- The state seeks to “wean” communities off reliance on cleanup funding by prioritizing projects that create demand pull, installing capacity along the supply chain and increasing demand among road owners and other end users to build a self-sustaining market that does not depend on ongoing incentives.
- Michigan's process generally includes: an application window (often in summer/early fall), evaluation and selection by early winter and grant agreement execution so recipients can move forward with projects and reimbursement.

New York

- New York State provided funding for market development grants for recycled tire materials and partnered with the [REMADE Institute](#), an R&D-focused organization that works with industry, academia, trade associations and national labs.
- REMADE issued an RFP and structured the program around two main tracks: demonstration projects and research projects, supporting both emerging and more mature tire recycling technologies.
- Proposals were due in the fall, and awards are being evaluated and decided through an advisory board process, illustrating an alternative model where state funds are funneled through an innovation-focused intermediary rather than directly from the state.

Additional State Grant Opportunities Highlighted:

Several states levy tire fees, a portion of which supports market development grants; for standard passenger and light truck tires, these fees generally range between about \$0.25 and \$2.50 per tire,

with the percentage dedicated to market development varying by state. Current or expected opportunities include:

- **Missouri:** [Scrap Tire Surface Materials Grant](#) (due March 31), focuses on playgrounds, running tracks, walking trails and other community improvement projects, with separate playground and non-playground categories.
- **Kentucky:** Programs now open, with Kentucky's grant focusing on community projects using recycled Kentucky end-of-life tires (e.g., landscape mulch, walking trails, pour-in-place playgrounds, sidewalks and other surfaces, picnic tables, benches, etc.). Applications due April 1.
- **Tennessee:** [Tire Environmental Act Program \(TEAP\)](#), supporting larger-scale, commercial applications including tire-derived products and research and development; open to government entities, tribal entities, schools, nonprofits and for-profit companies, with a 50/50 match required for for-profits and up to 80% reimbursement for government and nonprofit applicants. Applications due April 15.
- Other states identified as having or expected to have programs in 2026 include: Alabama, Ohio, California, South Carolina, Georgia and Nebraska.

How to Build a Strong Grant Application and Partnership

What Reviewers Look For

- Each grant program provides specific guidelines and instructions; a common reason for denial is that applicants misunderstand which grant they are applying for or fail to follow instructions and correctly upload all required supporting documentation.
- Because many programs are highly competitive, errors or significant flaws in applications can result in outright denial, underscoring the importance of diligence and completeness on the first submission.

Collaboration and Shared Goals

- Build partnerships with clear roles, expectations and shared project goals across agencies, private partners, contractors and end users.
- Align early on compliance, reporting and project narrative so all parties understand requirements and can deliver environmental benefits, new end markets and long-term infrastructure capacity.

Strategies that Help Applicants Win Grants

- Engage year-round with program administrators through advisory committees and stakeholder meetings to understand priorities, provide feedback on program design, and become a "best customer" who can tailor proposals to evolving goals.

- Quantify impact, including how many tires will be used and “grant dollars per tire,” and strengthen proposals by aggregating projects across communities and partners for greater scale.
- Support public awareness and strong project reporting so states can document results, build understanding of tire-derived products and justify ongoing investment.

Advice for 2026–2027 Applicants

- Be meticulous in meeting eligibility, documentation and data requirements, and responsive to any clarifying questions.
- Be innovative by proposing higher-volume or improved applications rather than repeating well-tested approaches.
- Demonstrate a long-term commitment to a circular tire economy that can become cash-flow positive and less dependent on incentives.

Where to Find Grant Opportunities

- The best starting point is your state’s environmental agency website; search for “scrap tire” or “grant” to identify active and historical programs.
- State economic development agency websites can also be useful, particularly for projects with positive economic and infrastructure impacts that may qualify for additional funding.
- If no programs are currently open, review past grant cycles to see when they typically open each year, set calendar reminders ahead of those dates, and sign up for agency newsletters or funding alerts so new opportunities are delivered directly to your inbox.

Resources on Grant Funding and Proposals

Visit the [ELT Knowledge Hub](#), presented by the Tire Recycling Foundation, for the webinar recording and more resources on this topic, including:

- Case studies for California Tire Derived Products in [California TDP Catalog](#)
- [Webinar recording: XX](#)

Tire Recycling Foundation Conference:

- Date: May 12-14, 2026
- Location: Denver, Colorado
- Registration: [Now Open](#)

Additional Resources

- **ELTs Knowledge Hub:** <https://tirerecyclingfoundation.org/marketsresources>
- <https://tirerecyclingfoundation.org/webinars>
- <https://www.ustires.org/webinars>

Questions or Feedback:

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