

Green Star of Interior Alaska - Supplemental Sheet for Answers to Application Questions

1. Please provide your mission statement and a brief summary of your organization's work.

Organized as a 501(c)(3) in 1998, Green Star of Interior Alaska's mission is to increase recycling in the Fairbanks North Star Borough and garner a culture of sustainability by means of materials reuse. Our focus is environmental stewardship and community-building through the structuring of our local societal systems around 'waste.' We put this into practice by collecting and processing electronics recycling materials from the Fairbanks North Star Borough and surrounding rural Alaskan communities, providing event recycling services, and engaging in advocacy and education about recycling. As of fall 2022, we also manage the operations of the FNSB Central Recycling Facility.

2. How does your work align with Co-op Market's mission and values?

The health, sustainability, and justice of our community at the local, regional, and global scales are at the root of Green Star's work.

Our work of recycling electronics prevents toxins from entering our environment, saves materials for reuse, and provides resources for people in need.

By diverting over 100 tons per year of waste electronics from Alaskan landfills and sending their components back into the supply chain, we are reducing the input of hazardous materials into the environment and human bodies. Many landfills in rural Alaska are unlined, and 73% practice landfill burning to reduce landfill volume. Even modern, lined landfills must be maintained and routinely monitored in case of a breach of contaminants. By reducing the input of toxic materials into landfills, we are helping to protect the air and drinking water quality of these communities.

Green Star strives to prioritize reuse over recycling of still-functional electronics that we receive by providing affordable or free technological tools to people, saving

them from needing to buy new expensive gadgets. Since 2020, we have been offering refurbished laptops to those in need, and we maintain relationships with fellow nonprofit organizations to supply them with laptops and other electronics.

In addition to our longstanding work of electronics recycling, we are excited to have expanded our responsibilities to managing the FNSB Central Recycling Facility – uniting and streamlining recycling services in our community coordinated by a single entity and allowing us to have a more direct role in recycling for the borough.

We also revel in being a key part of major Fairbanks summer events such as the Tanana Valley State Fair by providing recycling management and engaging event-goers on recycling face-to-face.

Adjacent to our primary work of recycling and reusing materials, we center care for our community members. Internally, we cultivate an inclusive and democratic work environment, seeking to empower and solicit valuable input from all employees. The horizontal structure of our organization strengthens the ownership the staff feel over Green Star’s mission and work, as well as our own individual work.

Externally, we have assembled a community of volunteers, supporters, and donation recipients, brightening our small corner of the borough and generating enthusiasm and hope for increasing the sustainability of our far-north community.

In these small but big ways, our work perpetuates the ideals of healthy communities and environments, sustainable handling of materials, and democratic, people-focused organization.

3. How will the Lend a Hand funds be used?

Funds from the Lend a Hand program support our overall mission and work, but this source of funding is especially helpful for maintaining our programs such as recycling education and outreach projects and collaborations, donations of electronics to low-income Fairbanksans, our residential fluorescent bulb recycling program, and Village Backhaul program.

4. If your organization has received funding from Co-op Market in the past, please describe how this funding supported your organization and mission.

Green Star has been grateful to be included in The Co-op Market's Lend a Hand program over the last several years. Lend a Hand connects us to a large audience that values community-oriented sustainability initiatives, and thus it is a crucial opportunity for us both financially and in terms of raising awareness about the existence of the viable recycling stream in Fairbanks and a vehicle of direct communication about how and where to take materials to be recycled.

In 2022, Green Star had a few big changes, supported in part by funds from the Lend a Hand program. Out of necessity, we relocated and settled into a new warehouse at 2134 Texaco Ave (a big move!). Our efforts to create systems to rehome used electronics through donations and low-cost sales bloomed, and we have hired a new Reuse Specialist to continue and grow this work. Most recently, we have assumed the responsibility of operating the FNSB Central Recycling Facility, for which we hired 11 new employees. We envision this new role giving us a direct vantage from which we can engage our community on recycling efforts.

We also resumed our work with events recycling for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing recycling services for the Tanana Valley State Fair, the Midnight Sun Festival, and Golden Days. Refurbishing and donating used laptops for people in need has become an ongoing, regular effort to make technology more accessible for everyone.

5. What is your elevator pitch? Cashiers usually have about 10 seconds to describe our monthly recipient to a shopper. Please describe your organization and how the funds will be used in 100 words or less.

Green Star of Interior Alaska is the main driver behind recycling in Fairbanks. For 25 years, Green Star has advocated for recycling, collected recyclables at Fairbanks events, and provided electronics recycling for our community. As of Fall 2022,

Green Star now also operates the FNSB Central Recycling Facility at 1855 Marika Road.

Fairbanks residents can take paper, cardboard, #1 and 2 plastic bottles and jugs, aluminum beverage containers, electronics, and household batteries to be recycled to the FNSB Central Recycling Facility at 1855 Marika Road.

Hours are Tuesday through Friday noon to 5:30 pm, and Saturday 9 am to 5 pm.

Donations to Green Star assist in sustaining our organization's capacity to provide recycling services, recycling education and outreach programs, donations of refurbished laptops and other used electronics to individuals and organizations in need, and fill in gaps of funding for Alaskan villages who are backhauling electronics recycling to Green Star.