



Date: April 8, 2025

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Carmen Lopez, Sustainability Program Analyst I

Title: Updated Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Guidelines

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

Recommended Action: Approve updated guidelines for the Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Program for public agencies and extend the program through FY 25/26, pending Town Council approval of the FY 25/26 budget.

Discussion:

I. Background

On November 14, 2023, the Town Council approved the use of \$13,000 in funds from CIP 2309 to create a Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Program. Council also authorized the use of any unspent FY 23/24 funds from the foodware grant program to supplement the new filling station grant program, resulting in a total first-year program budget of approximately \$40,000. The grant program was created to ensure that Truckee residents and visitors have easy access to free, publicly accessible tap water, and to reduce the need for single-use plastic water bottles which are a significant source of litter in the Truckee-Tahoe area. This program was extended to FY 24/25 with an additional \$40,000 in funding from CIP C2309 with Town Council approval of the FY 24/25 budget. As of March 2025, this program has supported the installation of a total of 14 new filling stations in Truckee.

The grant program reimburses 50% of the purchase price of a new water bottle filling station, up to \$2500 per station. The program is open to businesses, non-profits, and public agencies within the Town of Truckee providing public access to the water filling station during standard business hours. A maximum of 5 units are funded per applicant, subject to funding availability. The program is available on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted.



II. Current Program Status

The grant program has been popular among both public and private organizations, with water filling stations installed in many high-traffic locations throughout Truckee. Truckee Donner Recreation and Park District (TDRPD) used the grant to install the maximum of five filling stations at the skatepark, the Salty Gebhardt Amphitheater, the Community Arts Center, Riverview Sports Park, and West End Beach. While the Town has received only three new applications from private businesses in FY 24/25, public agencies such as TDRPD and Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) have expressed interest in installing more than five stations at their public facilities. This includes up to eight filling stations at Truckee schools and 13 filling stations at TDRPD facilities such as the Truckee River Regional Park, Donner Lake boat ramp, Truckee Bike Park, River View Sports Park, Meadow Park, and the Community Recreation Center.

To support the installation of more publicly accessible water filling stations, Town staff partnered with TDRPD, Nevada County, Tahoe Forest Hospital District, and TTUSD to apply for a competitive CalRecycle Beverage Container Recycling Grant in September of 2024. The proposed project would have covered the full cost of installation for 28 filling stations at publicly-owned buildings throughout the Town of Truckee, one mobile filling station for special events, and outreach and educational materials. Unfortunately, the Town and our partners were not selected for this grant.

Installing stations at additional public facilities would substantially increase access to free tap water for Truckee residents and visitors, especially in high-use areas. The need for the water filling stations will become even greater when the Single-Use Plastic Bottle and Paper Carton Ordinance goes into effect April 22nd, 2025, prohibiting the sale and commercial distribution of unflavored, non-carbonated water in single-use plastic bottles and paper cartons under a gallon in size. The success of the ordinance in reducing overall single-use plastic bottle use will be heavily dependent on the public's access to free tap water.

III. Proposed Updated Guidelines

To help support additional publicly accessible filling stations in Truckee, staff recommend making the following changes to the Water Filling Station Grant program guidelines:

- Remove the 5-station limit per applicant for public agencies
- Clarify that public schools in Truckee are eligible sites if they are accessible to students during regular school hours, even if the filling stations are not accessible to the general public due to school security concerns. Sites at public schools that are not accessible to the general public will not be listed on the public filling station map, but will be promoted to Truckee residents

These changes are expected to help facilitate installation of additional filling stations at public facilities throughout Truckee, particularly at high-use TDRPD facilities. They would also address an unintended effect of the current Town grant program criteria that makes public schools effectively ineligible, since their facilities are not open to the general public, despite being accessible to large numbers of students.

Town staff propose to continue operation of the Water Filling Station Grant Program through the 25/26 fiscal year with the updated program guidelines, pending Town Council approval of the FY 25/26 budget. If the updated guidelines are approved by Council, Keep Truckee Green staff will promote the updated grant program and notify CalRecycle grant partners of the change. Additionally, staff will continue to promote the grant program to other businesses such as local hotels, other local business, and sharing information during outreach events while promoting the upcoming Single-Use Plastic Bottle and Paper Carton Ordinance.

Priority:

<input type="checkbox"/> Enhanced Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Investment	<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Service

Fiscal Impact: For FY 24/25, \$40,000 has been allocated from CIP C2309 for the Water Filling Station Grant Program, with only \$2,429.50 in funding currently reserved by applicants. Updating the grant guidelines will not affect the total allocated budget for the grant program in the current Fiscal Year, though it is anticipated more applications may be received due to the updated guidelines. With the revised guidelines, staff expect estimated actuals of \$20,000 for this program in FY 24/25. Staff have proposed an additional \$40,000 in FY 25/26 funding for this program in CIP C2309, pending Council approval of the budget. Funding for this grant program comes from the Solid Waste Fund reserves.

Public Communication: Agenda Posting.

Attachments: 1. Updated Water Bottle Filling Station Grant Guidelines