

THE NORTHEAST RESOURCE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION RECEIVES GRANT FROM USDA

EPSOM, NH – The Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRRA) has been awarded a \$190,540 grant by the Rural Development Office of the United States Department of Agriculture for the 2017 fiscal year. The support from USDA will allow NRRRA to provide critical technical assistance and training programs that will help communities reduce their overall solid waste stream, and recognize and reduce the amount of the most highly toxic materials in the remaining waste stream that is often found in school storage areas.

The main purpose of NRRRA's USDA funded program, *Town and Gown: Taking Down the Wall*, is to improve the knowledge shared between the municipal transfer station/recycling centers and the schools. In FY15, NRRRA developed twelve training modules. Six of these modules were developed specifically for operators of solid waste facilities. The other six workshop modules were developed for teachers and school staff to continue teaching environmental issues in the classroom. By the end of the FY15 grant year, NRRRA trained 3,229 solid waste professionals and educators at 44 training sites, and recognized two significant characteristics of successful rural community recycling and waste reduction programs: 1) a well-built relationship highlighted by excellent communication between town and school officials and, 2) well-trained solid waste professionals and teachers that access continuing education and professional development opportunities. NRRRA also noted that the absence of cooperation between the Town and Gown led to minimal or non-existent recycling and hazardous waste reduction programs mainly because the funds are not always available for dual infrastructures, one for the town and a separate program for the schools. Those communities with the most successful programs had excellent cooperation between the two entities as a hallmark in all cases. This is the reason for NRRRA's desire to "take down the wall" between Town and Gown.

The USDA funds are primarily targeted to assist 164 towns within the 8 counties of VT and NH with populations under 10,000, but experience has shown NRRRA that a secondary tier of 75 eligible communities in 13 counties of VT and NH will benefit from this grant program by utilizing relationships with regional associations. The USDA funded program, *Town and Gown: Taking Down the Wall* will cross-train solid waste facility operators and teachers in rural communities of NH and VT; encourage increased cooperation in waste reduction and pollution prevention programs that benefit the entire community; and, expand participation in NRRRA's education programs through online learning.

"We are pleased to have this opportunity to apply for the funding under the USDA RD Solid Waste Technical Assistance and Training (SWTAT) Grant Program for the period of 2017/2018. The USDA SWTAT program has been a great asset to the low-income rural communities of VT and NH. The targeted communities continue to express their thanks for the technical support and training they receive from the Northeast Resource Recovery Association under this program." Mike Durfor, NRRRA Executive Director.

About Northeast Resource Recovery Association (NRRRA)

Founded in 1981, NRRRA provides a clearinghouse for current, up-to-date information and a source of technical and marketing assistance in the general areas of waste reduction and recycling. The NRRRA is a member driven organization made up of over 400 municipalities, individuals, and businesses in New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Southern Maine. NRRRA is a non-profit 501(c) organization. NRRRA's School Club assists schools in implementing, maintaining and improving recycling programs. To learn more visit www.nrra.net.

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