



Request for Proposal: 2024 TrashBlitz Community Fund

TRASHBLITZ OVERVIEW

Organizational Background: Since its inception in 2009, 5 Gyres Institute has been a science-based pioneer in ocean plastic pollution research and exploration. Our founders originally set out to answer key scientific questions, including how much plastic is in the oceans and what are the effects. After our early expeditions, we published the first global estimate of marine plastic pollution, documenting 170 trillion plastic particles weighing over 250,000 metric tons across the world's oceans. We have since completed 19 expeditions, and released a comprehensive global estimate integrating the largest data set to date on ocean plastics, finding more than a tenfold increase in ocean plastics globally. Now, through a science lens, we are taking our learnings upstream to inform effective solutions to reduce plastics pollution closer to the sources of plastic pollution.

Program Summary: The 5 Gyres Institute has a global mission to stop the threat of plastic pollution. Community scientists, grassroots coalitions, and community leaders are our greatest champions toward driving greater local impact. TrashBlitz initiatives can function as a catalyst for increasing environmental stewardship, coalition building, and policy change with the ultimate goal of reducing disposable plastics and implementing a reuse and refill culture within a community.

5 Gyres' TrashBlitz research platform is a global, community science-based tool that engages stakeholders in identifying specific plastic types and brands of waste found to formulate reduction strategies in a region. Our most recent activations were [TrashBlitz Austin](#), which led to the creation of the Austin Reuse Coalition, and [Plastic-Free Parks](#), which is being used as evidentiary support for the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act. TrashBlitz has become a model for amplifying local plastic reduction efforts through data and policy support.

3-Year Goal: In 2023-26, we plan to expand our TrashBlitz program across the country in many diverse regions, where impacts of local waste characterization datasets could reduce single-use plastic pollution for upwards of 9 million people.

Proven Examples

Los Angeles, CA

The results from the pilot TrashBlitz inspired the Reusable LA coalition to pivot their focus on a comprehensive single-use plastic phase-out in Los Angeles. With 5 Gyres' leadership, three



plastics reduction ordinances were passed in Los Angeles City & County in just four years, and we continue to support LA City on its multi-year phaseout process. The coalition that organized and rebranded as a direct result of TrashBlitz LA successfully

- guided LA County to adopt a plastics ordinance for unincorporated areas, reaching 1.1 million people
- Supported LA City in adopting 14 plastics-related ordinances, impacting 4 million people and 32,000 restaurants

Austin, TX

We partnered with local groups in Austin, TX to produce a TrashBlitz report identifying that single-use plastic foodware was a major contributor to Austin's waste footprint. As a direct result, 5 Gyres committed to the pursuit of waste reduction locally with community leaders, businesses, municipal staff, and NGO partners. This resulted in the formalization of the Austin Reuse Coalition, which supports restaurants in reducing their plastic footprint and transitioning to reusables.

Plastic-Free National Parks

Plastic-Free Parks is an annual TrashBlitz project to track plastic pollution trends in U.S. National Parks and on federal lands. The goal is to understand which materials, items, and brands of waste are most common to work toward solutions that protect our parks.

Break Free From Plastic Global Brand Audits

Over the past 6 years, we partnered with Break Free From Plastic on their Global Brand Audits, using our TrashBlitz research platform to help identify the top corporate polluters globally. This community science data puts pressure on big corporations, and brands like Coca-Cola that have expressed a commitment to reducing their plastic footprint and replacing virgin plastic with post-consumer (recycled) material.

TRASHBLITZ COMMUNITY FUND

Plastic pollution is understood and felt globally, and continues to remain a growing concern that can't be solved individually and uniformly due to its complexity. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it is through collaboration and networking that we can learn from one another and have a bigger impact. Plastic pollution activists are growing in numbers all over the world, and supporting local groups in building plastic pollution landscape analyses as well as brand audits relevant to their communities can drive solutions.

Through the RFP process, we will award one group with \$10,000 to execute a TrashBlitz study in their region to collect, track, and analyze a minimum of 15,000 data points. In addition to the funding, 5 Gyres will support the groups with a toolkit of templated outreach materials,



volunteer training, logistical support, including mapping and data analysis, and report production support. Our goal is to build a comprehensive dataset on plastic waste trends around the US and to support campaign partners through capacity building and training. These grants can have a big impact when put into the right hands, and local organizations are better suited to making real change in their communities.

Application Requirements

- Be a 501c3 organization, coalition, or individual with a focus on plastics (i.e. pollution reduction, circular economy, reuse/refill implementation, toxics reduction/monitoring, etc.)
- Proven track record of organizing citizen science or community-based clean up events.
- Able to complete project in a 6 month timeline
- Able to collect and analyze a minimum of 15k pieces of waste using the TrashBlitz app
- Must be located within the United States or US Territories and Freely Associated States
- Recommended to already have an established volunteer base
- Recommended to already be actively involved in proposed survey location

Application Process

Applicants will be asked to submit information via the [TrashBlitz Community Fund](#) online application form, and they will be reviewed 5 Gyres. Preference will be given to Environmental Justice or BIPOC-led groups, those operating in states with preemption laws, and/or work being conducted within frontline/fenceline communities or national parks/federal lands.

The deadline for submission is April 1, 2024, and applicants will be notified on April 5, 2024 of their status. The awardee will complete an MOU with 5 Gyres and receive the \$10,000 award in two payments, upon receipt of signed MOU and upon completion of TrashBlitz report.

For all questions, please contact Alison Waliszewski at alison@5gyres.org.