



Free Federal Technical Assistance for AD Projects

May 4, 2026



State, county, municipal, and tribal governments now have access to free expert guidance on converting waste into energy and valuable materials. The U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels and Feedstocks Office and the National Laboratory of the Rockies (formerly the National Renewable Energy Laboratory) launched the 2026 Waste to Energy and Materials Technical Assistance Program to help communities address the economic and logistical challenges of managing waste streams.

The National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR) will provide up to 40 hours of free technical assistance covering a menu of services. These include waste resource characterization and analysis, evaluation of energy and resource recovery options, techno-economic analysis that weighs costs against benefits, peer case studies from similar communities, and strategic guidance on implementation pathways.

The program has proven valuable for communities exploring organic waste solutions. Past participants have received assistance with food waste management strategies, anaerobic digestion feasibility studies, composting system design, and biosolids processing options. The technical assistance draws on the expertise of the National Laboratory system, ensuring applicants receive guidance grounded in peer-reviewed research and real-world project experience.

Who Can Apply and How

State governments, counties, municipalities, and federally recognized tribal governments are eligible to apply. The program targets decision-makers and planners who need reliable data and expert analysis to evaluate waste management and recovery options. Organizations should have a specific waste stream or challenge in mind – whether that's managing food waste, addressing plastic waste, or exploring anaerobic digestion and composting systems.

Online applications are open from April 15 through May 30, 2026. Interested organizations should visit the Technical Assistance web page to submit their request. The application asks for basic information about the community, the waste stream being evaluated, specific questions or challenges, and the intended use of the technical assistance.

Organizations should be prepared to articulate what they hope to learn and how the findings will inform decision-making. Communities with concrete timelines for infrastructure investment or policy decisions often find the assistance most valuable. The program is designed to accelerate planning and reduce uncertainty when evaluating waste-to-energy and waste-to-materials opportunities.