



KEEP AMERICA
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Guidelines: 2026–2027 Keep America Beautiful *Love Our Community Recognition Award*

Communities do not need to have a Keep America Beautiful affiliate to participate.

Award recipients will be publicly announced and recognized at the **Keep America Beautiful Summit in Savannah, Georgia, in February 2027.**

Recipients will be expected to attend the award presentation, send a representative, or provide a video acceptance if unable to attend in person. Registration fees for the Summit will be waived for the award recipients, and travel stipend may be considered.

Recipients may also be invited to participate in Summit programming and other opportunities to share their community's approach, accomplishments, and impact.

Overview

The Keep America Beautiful *Love Our Community Recognition Award* will provide grants to recognize and support elected officials, including mayors, county commissioners, and other local government leaders, who are developing creative, innovative, and effective approaches to addressing litter in their communities. Funded by Dollar Tree, the award will provide **\$50,000 in total grant funding** to help communities implement or expand innovative, data-informed litter solutions. In addition to supporting local action, the awards will highlight promising approaches that can be shared with and potentially replicated by communities across the country.

A total of **\$50,000 in funding** is available through three awards based on community population:

- **Large City/County/Community** (*population above 250,000*): \$25,000
- **Medium City/County/Community** (*population 101,000–250,000*): \$15,000
- **Small City/County/Community** (*population 100,000 or less*): \$10,000

Timeline

- **Application Period Opens:** September 22, 2026
- **Application Deadline:** November 6, 2026
- **Judging Completed:** December 9, 2026
- **Winners Notified:** December 22, 2026
- **Award Recognition:** February 14–17, 2027, at the Keep America Beautiful Summit in Savannah
- **Project Completion Deadline:** December 31, 2027
- **Final Report Due:** January 31, 2028

Eligibility

- Eligible projects include community litter solutions completed within the last 12 months, currently underway, expanding an existing effort, or adding a new phase to a previous project. Award funds must be used to implement or expand the proposed community litter solution and may not be used as personal compensation or financial benefit for the nominated official.
- The award is open to **elected local government officials**, including mayors, county commissioners, city council members, county supervisors, and other elected local government leaders.
- One nomination per community will be accepted.



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- Nominations may be submitted by the elected official, local government, community organization, Keep America Beautiful affiliate, partner organization, or other individual familiar with the nominee's work.
 - This opportunity is **NOT** exclusive to KAB affiliates.
- Award funding must support implementation or expansion of the proposed community litter solution and may not be used as personal compensation for the nominated official.
- Communities of all geographic areas and population sizes are encouraged to apply.

Project Focus

Award funding must be used to implement or expand **targeted, innovative litter solutions** informed by local data, community needs, or other evidence.

Projects may address one or more of the following priority litter issues identified through the **2026 Keep America Beautiful National Litter Study**:

- Tire dumping and vehicle-related debris
- Micro-trash and other small litter
- Cardboard litter
- Plastic and other single-use items
- Coastal litter and cleanups in difficult-to-access areas

Other innovative approaches to significant local litter challenges may also be considered when applicants can demonstrate a clear community need and measurable potential impact.

Projects may focus on litter prevention, infrastructure, education, technology, enforcement, partnerships, remediation, or community engagement.

Preference will be given to projects that introduce innovative approaches and demonstrate the potential for lasting impact rather than supporting one-time cleanup events alone.

Selection Priorities

Strong nominations will:

- Use data or other evidence to identify and address a specific local litter challenge.
- Demonstrate an innovative approach to litter prevention, reduction, or remediation.
- Produce measurable environmental and community impact.
- Include clear goals, outcomes, and evaluation of metrics.
- Demonstrate how grant funding will contribute to implementation or expansion of the proposed solution.
- Have the potential to be sustained, expanded, or replicated in other communities.
- Contribute to cleaner, healthier, and more resilient communities.

Budget Recommendations

- No more than 10% of the budget should be allocated to overhead, staff, or administration fees.



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Funds may be used for expenses directly related to project implementation, including:

- Litter prevention infrastructure
- Cleanup supplies and equipment
- Educational and outreach materials
- Recycling or disposal services
- Technology or data collection tools
- Contractor or professional services directly related to implementation
- Volunteer support materials
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Other project expenses approved by Keep America Beautiful

Award funds may not be used for personal compensation for the nominated elected official.

Final Reporting

Award recipients will agree to submit a brief final report, **not to exceed five pages**, by **January 31, 2028**.

Final reports should document:

- A summary of activities completed
- Key results and impact metrics
- How grant funds were used
- Lessons learned
- Photos documenting the project and its impact