



# 2022 Annual Report

Dakota County Business Recycling & Waste Reduction

# Executive Summary



**58**  
business participants  
received assistance



**96**  
site visits



**257,783**  
pounds of  
waste diverted



**182**  
instances of technical  
assistance provided



**21**  
grant applications  
submitted



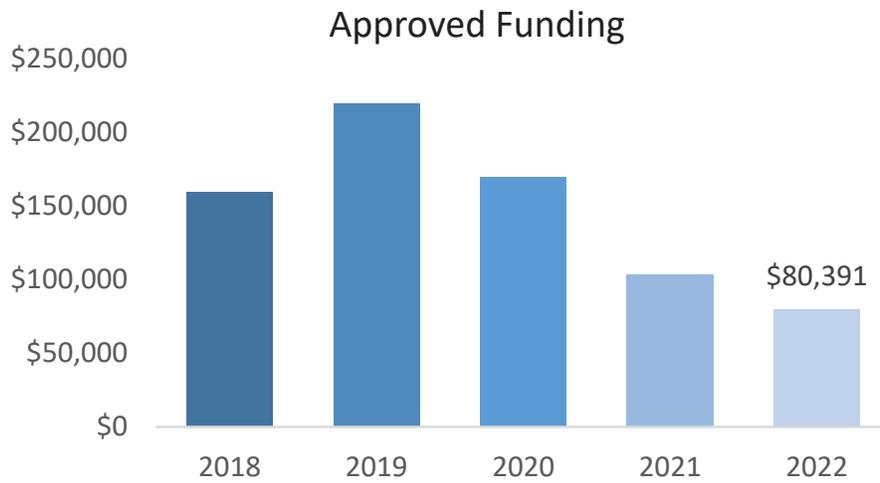
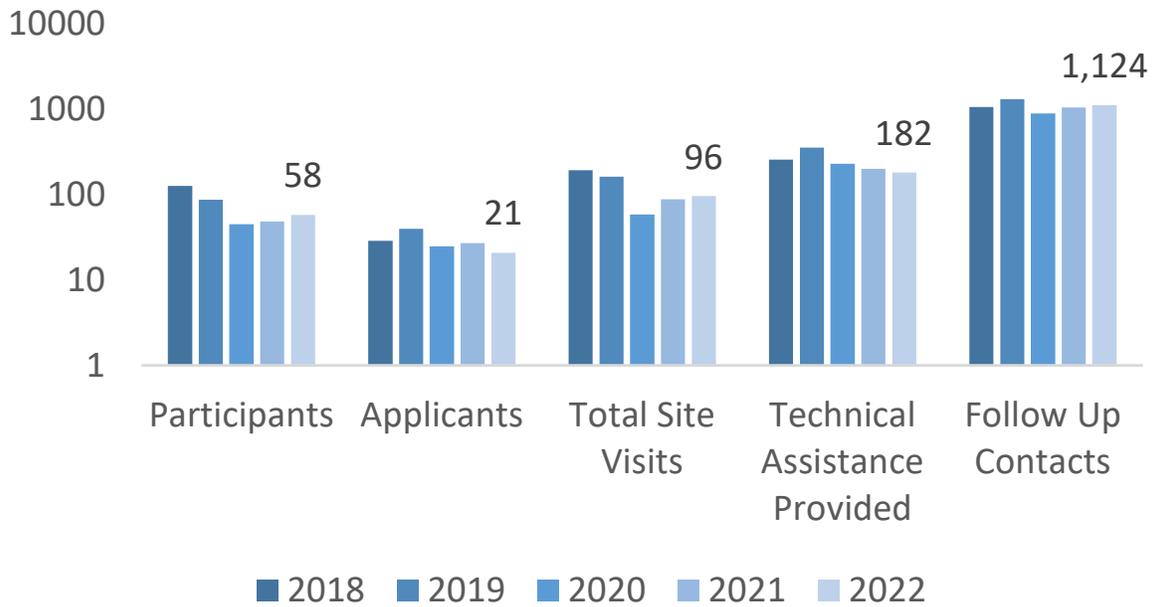
**\$80,391**  
in approved grant  
funding

The 2022 Annual Report summarizes the results of Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation's continued work supporting Dakota County's business community through waste reduction and recycling improvements.

2022 was a near 'return to normal' for Waste Wise with businesses better positioned to start, expand, and sustain recycling programs than they were over the last two years. This year brought some new challenges, but despite these developments, Waste Wise finished with a strong showing of businesses served and diversion achieved (over 257,000 pounds).

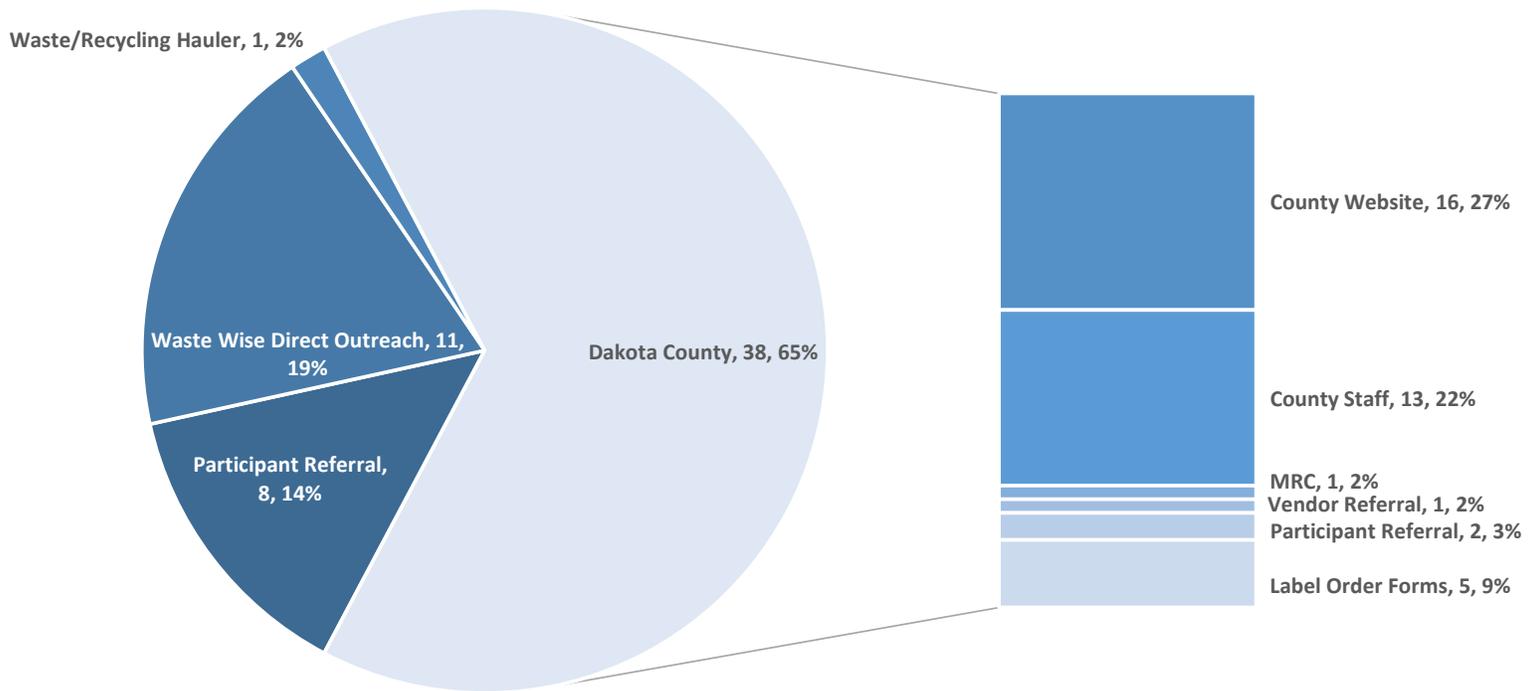
Overall in 2022, Waste Wise conducted 96 site visits, served 58 businesses across a wide spectrum of industries, and assisted 21 of those businesses in obtaining over \$80,000 in funding to support waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

# Key Metrics: Year Over Year



	Participants	Initial Site Visits	Other Site Visits	Technical Assistance	Follow Up Contacts	Approved Applicants	Approved Funding	Diversion
2021	49	37	52	200	1,053	27	\$103,995	271,856
2022	58	34	62	182	1,124	21	\$80,391	257,783

# Outreach Methods

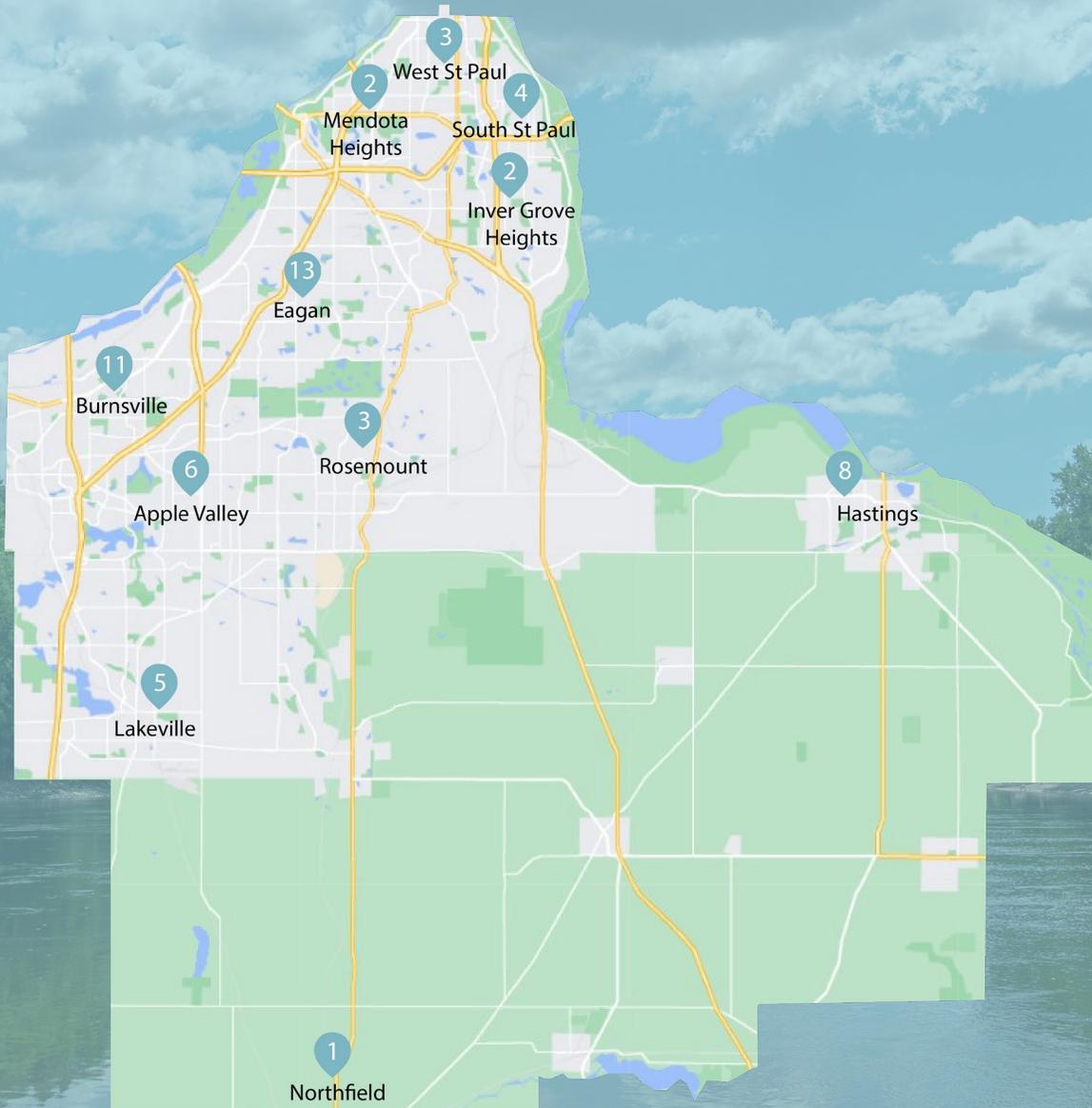


*Newly paired and labeled bins make recycling accessible and help prevent contamination on Northfield Hospital's patio. Northfield Hospital+Clinics started a single stream recycling program at its flagship campus and is on track to recycle an additional 21,840 pounds of material annually.*

Waste Wise engaged business participants through multiple strategies and received referrals from multiple sources throughout 2022. The most common referral source was Dakota County which accounted for 65% of all referrals. Waste Wise outreach accounted for the second most referrals at 19% (up from 10% in 2021), and participant referrals (business to business) made up 14%.

When a participant is recorded as having come from a Dakota County referral source, it means that the business first contacted the County before being referred to Waste Wise. While it can be difficult to extrapolate where businesses first hear about the program, Waste Wise tracked how the business came to the County when possible and found that most were a result of the business contacting the County directly or through the website (49% combined). A least 6 referrals came from a business contacting the County following an inspection visit and/or ordering labels from the County website. It's likely that additional business interest may correlate to a recent inspection, but not all businesses specified.

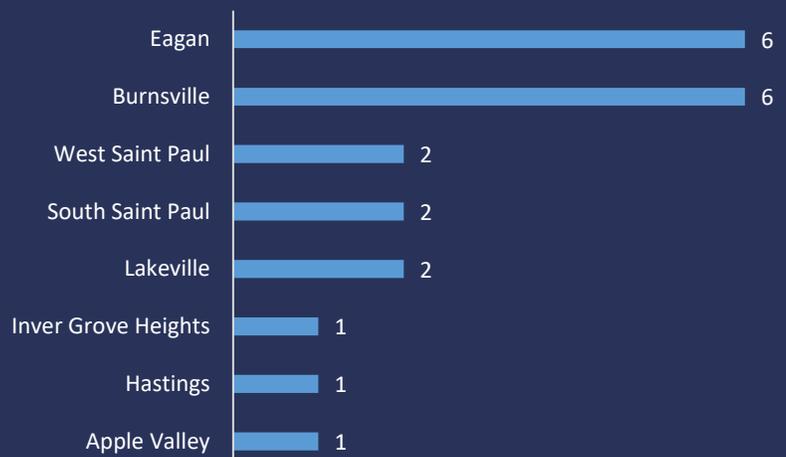
# Business Participants by City



Waste Wise worked with businesses across 11 cities in Dakota County. Eagan had the most participants represented in 2022 with 13, a notable increase from only two in 2021. Burnsville had the second most participants represented with 11, and Hastings was third most with eight.

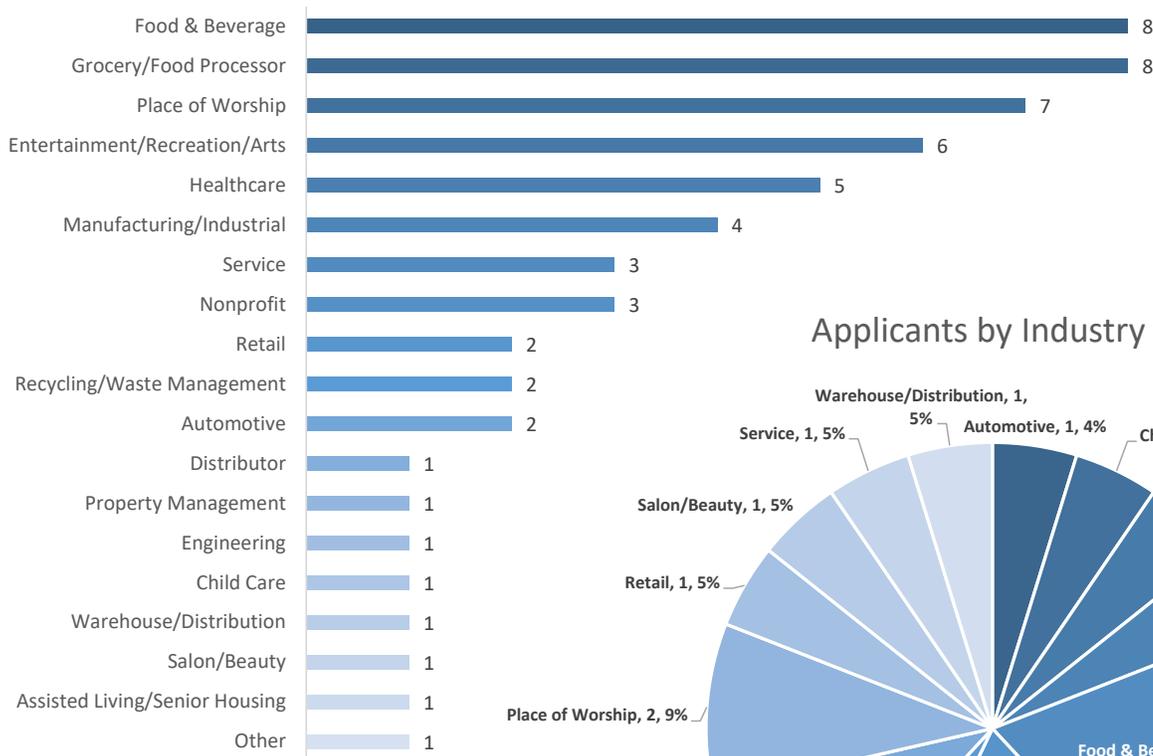
Eagan and Burnsville tied for the most approved funding applications, each at six.

## Applicants by City

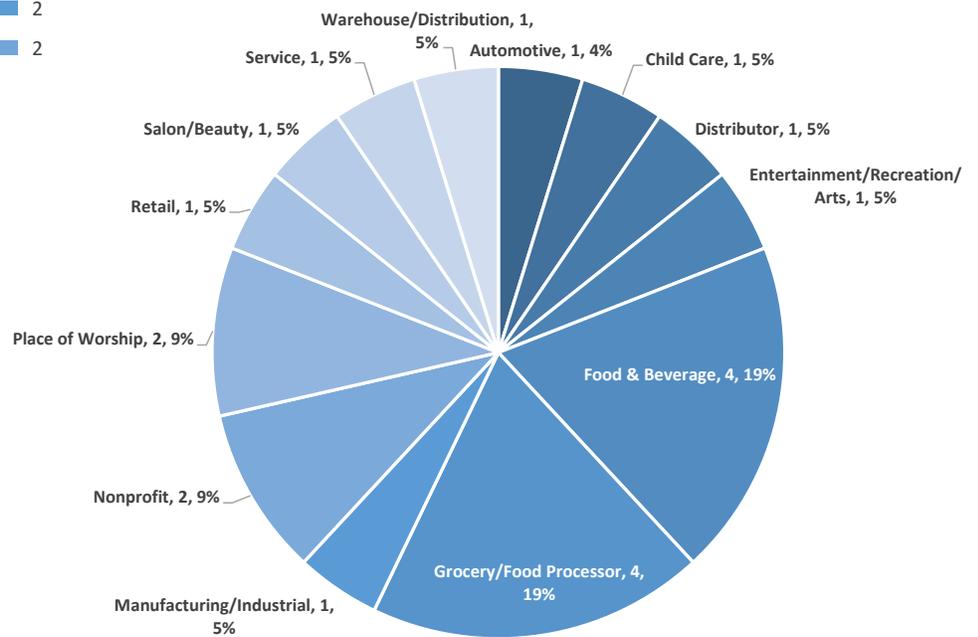


# Business Participants by Industry

Participants by Industry



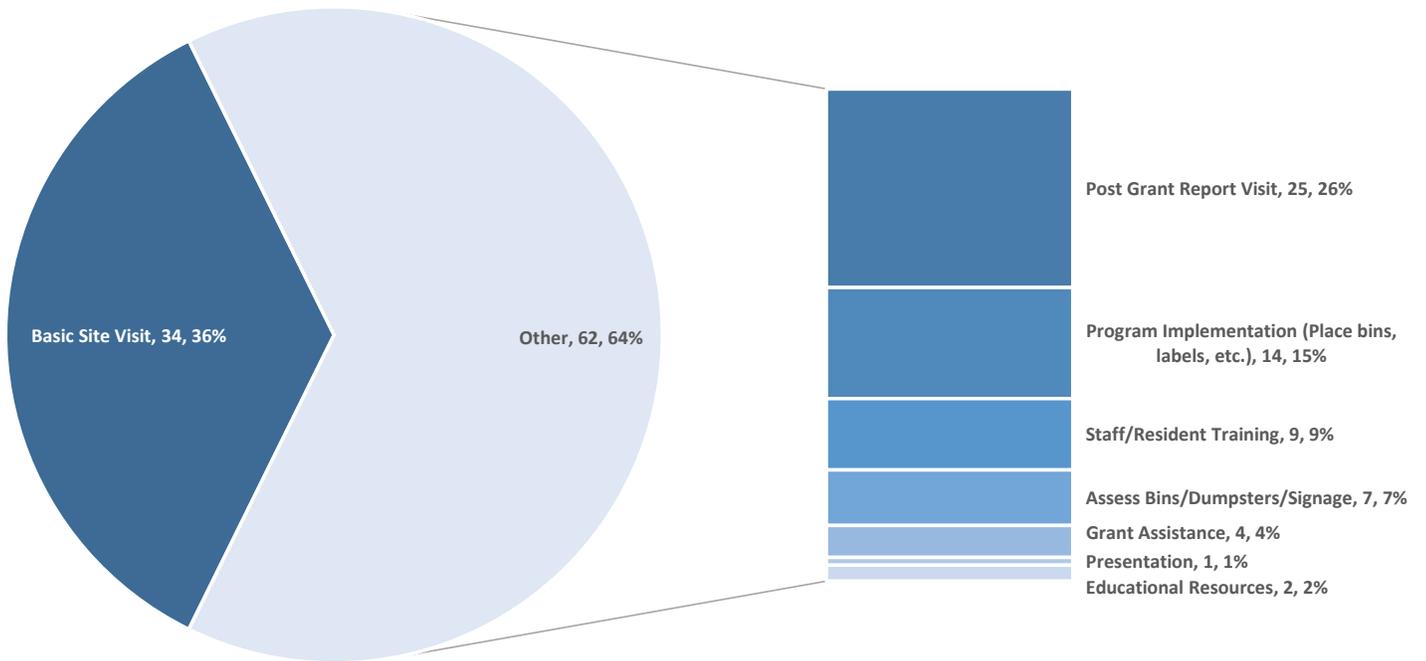
Applicants by Industry



Waste Wise assisted businesses across 19 industry sectors in 2022. Food and Beverage and Grocery/Food Processor sectors tied for the highest number of participants with eight each, followed by Places of Worship (the top 'industry' type from previous years) with seven.

Reversing a trend from the past few years, food and beverage doubled its participation number from 2021. In addition, grocery/food processors were given their own category in Waste Wise reporting this year having previously been classified under the food and beverage industry type. Given this change, it's likely that the number of participating food and beverage businesses was more than double that of 2021.

# Site Visits



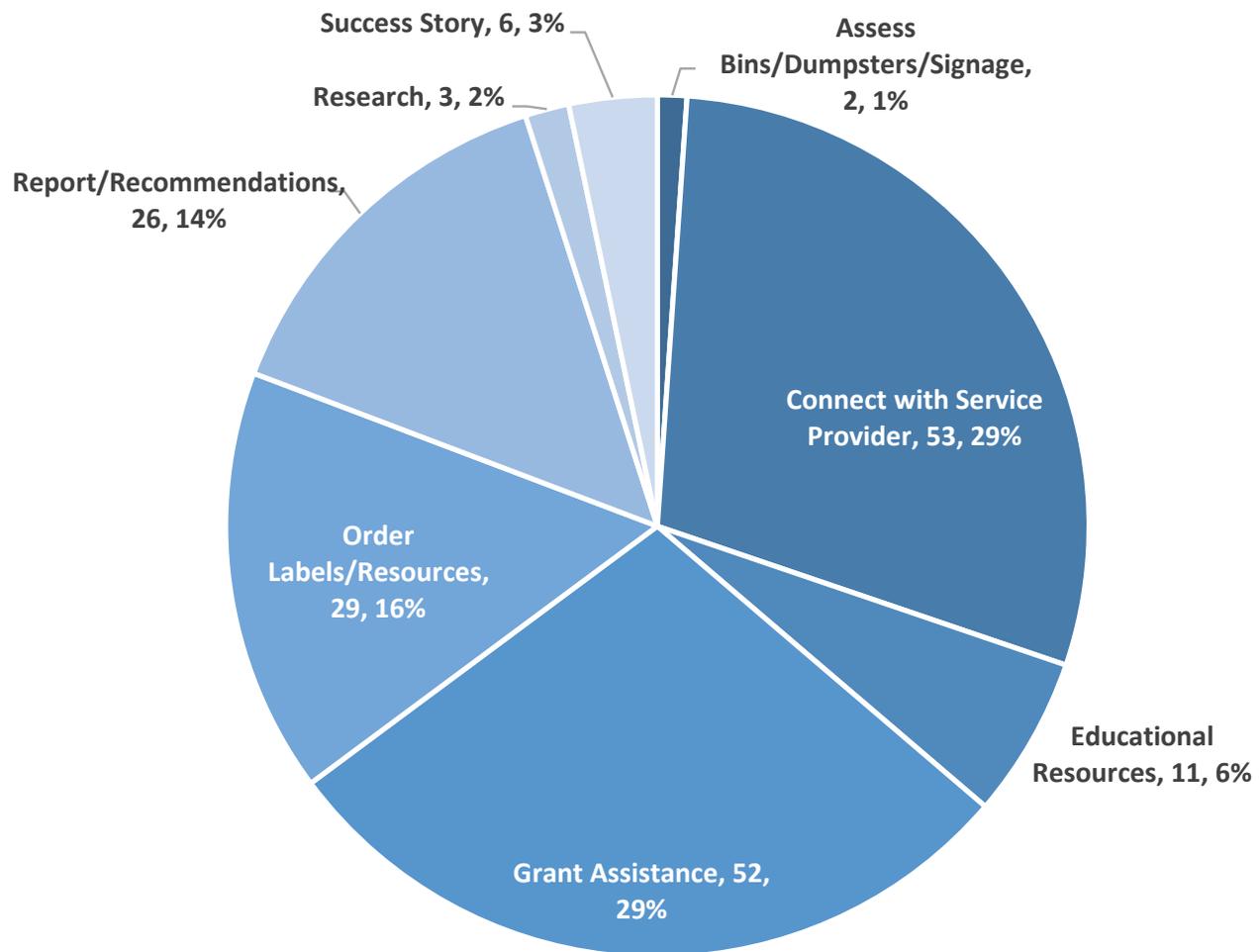
In 2022, Waste Wise conducted 96 site visits with businesses to address waste and recycling efforts, up slightly from 89 visits in 2021. Of the 96 total site visits performed, 34 were basic site visits (Waste Wise’s first assessment of the business’ waste management practices) and 62 were other site visits which are conducted to support the business with a variety of pre- and post-application needs. In 2022, the three most common types of other site visits were Post Grant Report Visits, Program Implementation Visits, and Staff Training Visits. These were also the three most common types of other visits in 2021.

Waste Wise provided direct, in-person recycling and/or organics training to 148 employees, volunteers, and other community members across 13 Staff Training Visits.



*Life Time Fitness in Eagan was awarded funding to start organics in its café kitchen and to collect restroom paper towels for composting. The fitness club has diverted 15,600 pounds of food scraps and paper towels from the landfill in its first year.*

# Technical Assistance

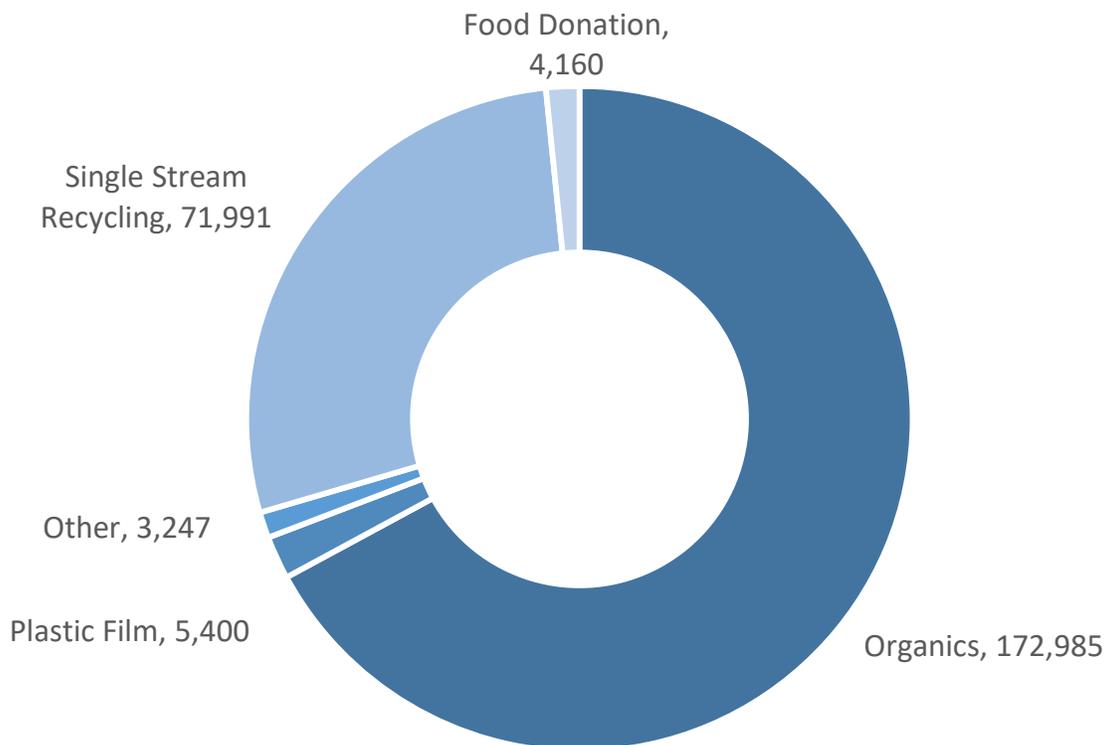


Waste Wise conducted 182 instances of technical assistance in 2022, down slightly from 200 the previous year. The decrease in technical assistance correlates to a slight decrease in total applications (21 in 2022 versus 27 in 2021) since the process of helping businesses prepare applications, quote items, and order labels results in more instances of technical assistance.

Waste Wise has also observed that projects are often taking longer to develop than in past years. This might be due to ongoing worker shortages across sectors that may impact our contacts' capacity to focus on non-urgent projects such as applying for grant funding. Supply chain disruptions also continue to persist which can often delay project planning.

Connect with a Service Provider became the top category of technical assistance provided by Waste Wise at 53 instances or 29% of all assistance types, overtaking Grant Assistance with 52 instances. Waste Wise connected with service providers more in 2022 due in large part to the new Grainger quoting process which started mid-to-late 2021.

# Diversion



In 2022, Waste Wise recorded 16 instances of waste diversion for 16 different businesses, combining for 257,783 total pounds of diversion. This number is steady with the year prior. Organics comprised the majority of total waste diversion by tonnage (5 total instances), though a single large organics generator (Costco Wholesale Burnsville) was responsible for the majority of organics diversion recorded.

Single stream recycling diversion was up versus 2021, accounting for 71,991 pounds diverted from the landfill. Compared to organics, this tonnage was distributed more equally among 9 different businesses. 5,400 pounds of plastic film recycling was also recorded.

Notable diversion was also achieved by Shepherd of the Valley Food Shelf which installed an additional freezer and consequently utilized and extended the life of 4,160 more pounds of food donations in its first year. And lastly, 3,247 pounds is estimated to have been prevented as a result of a Allina Health utilizing a new online resource management and exchanged platform and finding reuse and donation opportunities for equipment and supplies. It is also estimated to have recaptured \$31,150 worth of assets.



*First Impression Group in Eagan streamlined its recycling operations through pairing, color-coding and labeling, and achieved an estimated annual recycling diversion of 14,560 pounds.*

# 2022 Trends



## LABELS

Waste Wise has heard from several businesses that food and beverage-based label imagery isn't reflective of their recycling generation mix and isn't compatible with the businesses' good manufacturing practices (GMPs). As such, Waste Wise recommends development of recycling labels that use alternative images to food and beverage containers – a strategy which would maximize recycling diversion without disrupting environmental health and safety procedures as established by the company or other governing bodies.

## END OF LIFE versus WASTE REDUCTION

Diversion was achieved primarily through organics and single stream recycling programs. Notable projects - including a food recovery project at a local food shelf and an inventory exchange pilot at a healthcare network - bolstered waste prevention, but Waste Wise anticipates there is more potential for source reduction projects through promotion of success stories and/or case studies and messaging to the business community.

## REPEAT CUSTOMERS

Waste Wise saw more requests for technical assistance from former participants looking for additional support for new and expanded projects. Of the 58 businesses served in 2022, 7 had received Dakota County funding in a previous year and were pursuing additional initiatives or enhancements.

## STAFFING, SUPPLY CHAIN, & OTHER BARRIERS

2022 was impacted by a persistently tight labor market. This affected many key personnel involved in projects and is likely to have impacted how much capacity they had to make progress on projects. Combined with volatile supply chains, ebbs and flows of COVID-19 in the workplace, and even waste hauler driver shortages, the year was not without its barriers to implementation.

# Pre- & Post- Project Photos

**Asian Mart**  
Burnsville, MN

Before



After



**Evolve Workplace**  
West Saint Paul, MN

Before



After



**Sciencix**  
Burnsville, MN

Before



After



**Hercules OEM**  
Burnsville, MN

Before



After



**Northfield Hospital**  
Northfield, MN

Before

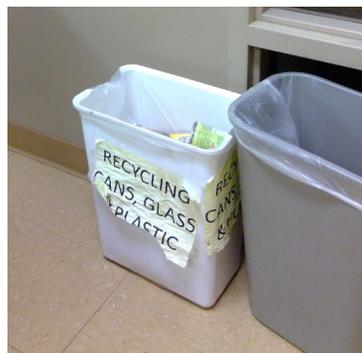


After



**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
Farmington, MN

Before



After



# Conclusion



At Minnesota Waste Wise, we are honored to leverage our expertise and experience to help the state's business community thrive by improving the environmental health and economic vitality of our communities. By facilitating sustainability principles at Minnesota-based businesses and organizations, we help foster practices that are good for business and good for the environment.

As we look back at 2022, we can certainly note challenges; COVID-19 persists, many businesses find themselves understaffed and the costs of goods and services increased or remained volatile due to ongoing supply chain disruptions. However, no year is without adversity. Our outlook is steadfastly positive, and the free assistance we provide may be even more valuable to businesses amidst the multitude of internal and external impacts. The future is bright for Minnesota Waste Wise. Our team continues to grow – we added a dedicated Outreach Coordinator and saw immediate impact and success with our business engagement efforts. Our waste reduction services made possible through proud partnerships (both public and private) continue to provide us a foundation of work and success, and the numbers in this report demonstrate the impact we've had helping businesses waste less, recycle more materials, recover more food, and invest in reuse. Building on that foundation, though, are new and innovative programs including MNimize, a recognition-based program in partnership with Hennepin County to reduce single-use plastics across the food service industry. We are excited to see where the coming years take MNimize and Waste Wise as our organization discovers more inroads to serve the business community.

It has been a pleasure working together with a diverse group of Dakota County businesses and organizations this past year, and we look forward to continuing this work again in 2023.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Rob Friend".

**Rob Friend**  
Executive Director



Minnesota Chamber of Commerce  
**WASTE WISE**

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The Minnesota Waste Wise Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce that provides environmental sustainability consulting for Minnesota businesses and organizations.

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