

Proposed Changes to the Youth Athletic Facilities Grant Program (YAF)

Recreation and Conservation Office staff recommend changes to the YAF grant program to benefit eligible organizations and maintain and expand the inventory and utility of competitive athletic facilities in the state. These policy changes expand the types of eligible projects, raise the grant amount, create a Small Grants Category, and update match waivers and reductions.

See [Appendix A](#) for background.

The [YAF Web page](#) gives a general program overview.

Current YAF program policies can be found in [Manual 17, Youth Athletic Facilities \(March 2016\)](#).

For examples of past YAF projects, see the [October 2016 Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meeting \(See Item 14\)](#).

To aid in policy review, you may want to get population estimates of cities, towns, and counties. If so, go to Washington State Office of Financial Management [Population Estimates Web site](#).

Policy Statements (and Questions)

The public is asked to comment on whether the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board should approve, or amend and approve, or reject, the policy statement below. If adopted, these shall be in effect for applications submitted in 2018.

In addition to any comments and recommendations you have about these YAF policy recommendations, RCO would like you to also consider the following questions:

- Do you support a separate Small Grants Category for smaller communities with smaller projects so these do not have to compete against larger agencies and projects that may serve many more people?
- Is the [10,000 population limit](#) for the Small Grants Category too high or low? Should there be no limit so all communities are eligible?
 - Rather than population, should a threshold of eligibility be based on an applicants [assessed valuation](#) (see "Senior Taxing District Levies Due")?
- For the Small Grants Category, is the maximum grant and total project cost too low? The limit is intended to target needed renovation/upgrade projects rather than (larger) new facilities that should compete with other like projects.
- Should the Small Grants Category have a different evaluation criteria?
- Should Small Grants Category be for renovation and new construction but not acquisition of land?
- Should Small Grants Category allow for projects that do not include "in-bound" elements?

Table 1: Recommended Policy Changes in the Youth Athletic Facilities Program

Existing Policy	Policy Options and Staff Recommendation	Rational
<p>1) Eligible Projects</p> <p>Renovation projects only.</p> <p>Project must be for an existing athletic facility, but project could include expansion of the site through construction, acquisition of property, or both.</p>	<p>Expand eligible project types?</p> <p><u>Option 1</u> No change, only renovation projects are eligible.</p> <p><u>Option 2 (Staff Recommendation)</u> Allow renovation and “New” project types.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation: Project must be for an existing athletic facility, but project could include expansion of the site through construction, acquisition of property, or both. • New: Project that develops an athletic facility where one does not exist, and can include acquisition of land (a “Combination project”). 	<p>Stakeholders have expressed the need to expand the types of eligible projects. In addition to renovating existing sites, a need exists to develop new facilities to serve an expanding recreation base.</p>
<p>2) One Category of Grants</p> <p>All Projects Compete Head-To-Head</p>	<p>Add a separate new grant category termed “Small Grant,” that compete head-to-head within their own category.</p> <p><u>Option 1</u> No Change, do not add a “Small Grant” category.</p> <p><u>Option 2: “20,000”</u> Create a separate Small Grants Category for smaller size projects from smaller agencies. Agency jurisdiction must have a population of <i>20,000 or less</i>.</p> <p><u>Option 3: “10,000” (Staff Recommendation)</u> Create a separate Small Grants Category for smaller size projects from smaller agencies. Agency jurisdiction must have a population of <i>10,000 or less</i>.</p> <p><u>Option 3: “5,000”</u> Create a separate Small Grants Category for smaller size projects from smaller agencies. Agency jurisdiction must have a population of <i>5,000 or less</i>.</p>	<p>Feedback from advisory committee members, applicants, and other stakeholders suggests that there is utility in a separate evaluation process for ‘small’ and less expensive projects. Some applicants perceive an inherent competitive disadvantage for smaller projects when competing head-to-head with larger, more expensive projects, particularly those proposed by larger agencies serving a larger population. Providing opportunities for small projects to compete evenly with one another, and not against larger projects, promotes equity in a competitive environment.</p>

Related Policies for Options 2-4 (Staff Recommendation)

- a. "Small Grant" projects compete against one another and not against larger projects and those submitted by larger communities.
- b. The population threshold does not apply to nonprofits or counties.
- c. Projects proposed by counties must be in an unincorporated area or incorporated area with a population of 10,000 or less.
- d. Allocate a portion of any YAF appropriation to the Small Grants Category. The amount shall be a proportional percent of the total amount requested in the Small Grants Category as compared to the total amount of YAF requests.
- e. Projects implementing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements, and those that go beyond ADA and other accessibility requirements, shall be an eligible stand-a-lone project. No 'in bounds' elements are required for these accessibility projects.

3) Grant Limits

YAF projects (not including Small Grants Category)

Minimum grant request is \$25,000.

Option 1 (Staff Recommendation)

Raise maximum grant request to \$350,000.

Maximum grant request is \$250,000.

Option 2

Increase maximum grant request to \$500,000

Grant limits for "Small Grants" (Staff Recommendations)

- No minimum grant request.
- Maximum Grant Request = \$75,000.

Stakeholders suggest that the maximum grant limit should be raised because the need of sponsors to provide high use, modern, sustainable facilities (such as artificial turf sports fields with lights) are becoming a larger portion of an agencies capital expenditure.

A modest grant maximum increase up to \$350,000 responds to the need of sponsors while maintaining the distributive nature of finite funds.

For "Small Grants," having no minimum grant amount allows for very small projects that could

Existing Policy	Policy Options and Staff Recommendation	Rational
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total project cost must be no greater than \$150,000. Once a grant agreement has been signed, only the RCO Director or board may allow total project costs to exceed 20% of the original amount. Only one Small Grant project per single park/location per grant round. 	<p>be very valuable to a smaller community. The \$150,000 grant maximum aims to provide funds to update and renovate facilities as well as providing support for some new small facility construction or acquisition as may be needed.</p> <p>Limiting changes to total project costs preserves the integrity of project evaluation.</p> <p>Limitation of one project per park prevents applicants from submitting separate components of a larger project.</p>
<p>4) Matching Share Waivers and Reductions</p> <p>Match (50 percent) requirement waived for existing athletic facility damaged by a federally recognized disaster.</p> <p>Match reduced to 25 percent minimum match for renovation projects in an elementary school boundary with 80 percent or more of its students receiving free or reduced school lunch.</p>	<p>Proposals</p> <p><u>Option 1</u> Maintain the existing policy and amend to extend waivers and reductions to New project types.</p> <p><u>Option 2 (Staff Recommendation)</u> Strike the existing policies and replace with the policies proposed for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Local Parks, Trails, and Water Access Categories.</p>	<p>Maintains high thresholds for sponsors to obtain a waiver.</p> <p>The match reduction policies being adopted in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation program have gone through a long-term development, outreach, and vetting process with a stakeholder work group, other agencies, and professional consultants. Contains a match reduction pathway for communities indirectly and adversely effected by a natural disaster. This policy is being considered and potentially adopted at the same time as these YAF policy changes.</p>
<p>5) Evaluation Criteria (See Appendix B)</p> <p>Published in the Manual 17, Youth Athletic Facilities</p>	<p>Proposed Changes (Staff Recommendation)</p> <p>Retain substance of existing criteria, which is suitable for a potentially new Small Grants Category, but strike the term “renovation” and “renovated” from the criteria as needed to align the language with any and all policy changes herein, improve readability, consistency, and technical considerations as may be needed.</p>	<p>Currently no need for substantive criteria changes in criteria.</p>

Appendix A.

Background and Summary

Following the most recent Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) application and evaluation cycle, held in 2016, staff gathered feedback from applicants, stakeholders, RCO grants managers, and the YAF Advisory Committee. Based on those comments, staff briefed the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board on potential policy changes at its October 2016 meeting ([see Item 7B](#)), and again at its July 2017 meeting ([see Item 9](#)). The policy recommendations contained in this public comment solicitation are a product of the feedback staff heard at those meeting. If the policies in this public comment packet are adopted at a future board meeting (October 2018), these changes would apply to the 2018 YAF grant cycle.

Appendix B

YAF Evaluation Criteria

The following is the evaluation criteria for ranking YAF grant proposals. **Red text** are the types of proposed changes.

Summary of Questions and Scores					
Scored by	#	Title	Maximum Points	Multiplier	Total
Advisory Committee	1	Need and Need Satisfaction	5	3	15
Advisory Committee	2	Design and Budget	5	2	10
Advisory Committee	3	Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	4	Facility management	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	5	Availability	5	1	5
Advisory Committee	6	Readiness to proceed	3	1	3
Advisory Committee	7	Support and Partnerships	5	2	10
RCO Staff	8	Matching shares	2	1	2
RCO Staff	9	Proximity to people	1	1	1
RCO Staff	10	Growth Management Act Preference	0	1	0
Total possible points = 52					

Detailed Scoring Criteria¹

Questions 1-7 are scored by the advisory committee.

- 1. Need and Need Satisfaction.** What is the community's need for the proposed **renovated youth athletic facility project**? To what extent will the project satisfy the needs in the service area?

Consider the number and condition of existing youth athletic facilities; the number of leagues, teams, or players in the community; whether the community has gone through a public process to reveal deficient numbers or quality of available facilities; and whether significant unserved or under-served user groups are identified. Your discussion of need must include measurable (quantifiable) evidence. At a minimum, please include the following information in your answer:

- Type of facility to be funded.

¹ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

- Service area, either in square miles or in a radius by miles.
- The population of the service area, youth and adult (estimated or actual) and how the numbers were determined.
- Number and type of similar facilities inside the service area.
- Number of leagues, teams, and players served in the service area.
- Number of leagues, teams, and players that are expected to use the ~~renovated~~ facility.
- The estimated hours of competitive play at the current facility and how this project improves or maintains this use.
- Whether the project will address facility needs for underserved or disadvantaged populations as identified in the *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*.
- Demonstrate how the proposed project will satisfy youth athletic facility needs and provide for a priority youth athletic facility.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 3.

- 2. Design and Cost Estimate.** How well is the project designed? How reasonable are the cost estimates, do they accurately reflect the scope of work, and are there enough funds to implement the proposed projects?

Describe the project's design and the cost estimate. Describe how the project makes the best use of the site. Consider the size, topography, soil conditions, natural amenities, and location of the site to determine if it is well suited for the intended uses. Some design elements that may be considered include:

- Accuracy of cost estimates
- Aesthetics
- Maintenance
- Materials
- Phasing
- Recreation experience
- Risk management
- Site suitability
- Space relationships
- User-friendly, accessible design above the minimum requirements
- Value of the out-of-bounds amenities as support to the athletic facility

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2.

- 3. Sustainability and Environmental Stewardship.** What techniques or resources are proposed to ensure the project will result in a quality, sustainable, recreational opportunity while protecting the integrity of the environment? Describe how the project will integrate sustainable elements such as low impact development techniques, green infrastructure, or environmentally preferred building products.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

- 4. Facility Management.** Does the applicant have the ability to operate and maintain the facility?
- Describe your organization's structure and indicate how long your organization has been involved in youth or community athletics.
 - Describe how the athletic facilities are addressed in your organization's maintenance plan.
 - If the applicant does not own the property, describe the management agreement with the property owner.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

5. **Availability.** When the project is complete, how often will it be available for competitive youth sports in a calendar year?

Provide details on when the facility will be open for competitive play for youth and adults or use by the general public for drop-in play. Hours when the facility is not available for competitive play or use by the general public are not considered in the evaluation.

Consider seasons of use, types of use, hours of use, and restrictions on access. Identify when the facility will be closed for competitive play, for example when the facility will be closed for use by a school or nonprofit organization. Describe the use policy for scheduling the facility: Who can schedule the facility, what sports can use it, and how do they get on the schedule?

Also, complete the application tables that describe the use by month and by type of sport or team to illustrate the current and future availability of the facility.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points.

6. **Readiness to Proceed.** What is the timeline for completing the project? Will the sponsor be able to complete the project within 3 years?

Explain how you can move quickly to complete the project by documenting completed appraisal and review, completed architectural and engineering work, permits secured, or availability of needed labor or volunteers. In addition to your answer, please estimate your project timeline by providing a specific timeline for completing your project.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-3 points.

7. **Project Support and Partnerships.** To what extent do users and the public support the project? Support can be demonstrated in both financial and non-financial ways and varies depending upon the project type. In scoring this question, evaluators consider the type of support that is most relevant. Evidence includes but is not limited to: Letters of support; voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, referenda; ordinance or resolution adoption; media coverage; public involvement in a comprehensive planning process that includes this project; a capital improvement program that includes the project; a local park or comprehensive plan that includes the project by name or by type. If you submit letters of support or other documents, remember to attach them to your application in PRISM.

Point Range: Evaluators award 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2.

Questions 8-10 are scored by RCO staff.

8. **Matching Shares.** Is the applicant providing a matching share more than an amount equal to the grant amount requested?

Point Range

0 points	Less than 55 percent of the total project cost
1 point	55-64.99 percent of the total project cost
2 points	More than 65 percent of the total project cost

9. Proximity to People. State law requires the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to give funding preference to projects in populated areas. Populated areas are defined as a town or city with a population of 5,000 or more, or a county with a population density of 250 or more people per square mile.² Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

Point Range

- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 0 points | No |
| 1 point | Yes |

10. Growth Management Act Preference. Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?³

State law requires that whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant⁴ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040.

When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it:

- Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law;
- Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan; or
- Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.

A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

This question is scored by RCO staff based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulation, or amendment has been appealed to the Growth Management Hearings Board, the agency cannot be penalized during the period of appeal.

Point Range: RCO staff subtracts a maximum of 1 point. There is no multiplier.

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| Minus 1 point | The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250. |
| 0 points | The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250. |
| 0 points | The applicant is a Native American tribe, park district, or nonprofit organization. |

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

³Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act preference required.)

⁴County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to Native American tribes, park districts, or non-profit organizations.