

Applicant's To-Do List

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Farmland Preservation Category

This to-do list is designed to help an applicant prepare and submit a grant application for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's Farmland Preservation Category.

Grants may be used for the acquisition of development rights on farmlands in Washington to ensure the lands remain available for agricultural practices. Limited restoration is a secondary goal of the farmland program.

An applicant must submit the information required through [PRISM Online](#), the online project data system used by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). These steps will guide an applicant through RCO's application process.

NOTE: for all documents, forms, and manuals referenced here, go to the [grant web page](#) and [grant manuals web page](#).

Step 1: Establish Eligibility

Eligible Applicants: Cities, counties, nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations, and the Washington State Conservation Commission.

A first-time applicant must submit a legal opinion to establish eligibility.

ALL projects must include acquisition of an agricultural easement or lease. Fee simple acquisition is not allowed.

All applicants must demonstrate the following:

- The preservation of agricultural lands is a priority of the organization.
- A proven ability to draft, acquire, monitor, and enforce conservation easements.

Nonprofit, nature conservancy corporations or associations must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be registered in the State of Washington as a nonprofit as defined by Revised Code of Washington 84.34.250.

- Consistent with Revised Codes of Washington 24.03.220, 24.03.225, and 24.03.230, identify a successor organization fully qualified to ensure management continuity of any Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grants received by the corporation or association.
- Demonstrate at least three years of activity in managing projects relevant to the types of projects eligible for funding in the farmland preservation category. “Activity in managing projects” means the tasks necessary to manage an on-the-ground farmland project, such as negotiating for acquisition of property rights, closing an acquisition, developing and implementing management plans, designing and implementing projects, securing and managing the necessary funds regardless of fund source, and other tasks.
- Provide a copy of its Articles of Incorporation and bylaws. Please email these documents directly to the RCO grants manager.

Step 2: Review Materials

- Review the appropriate Recreation and Conservation Funding Board manuals for this grant category:
 - Manual 10f: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Farmland Preservation Program
 - Manual 3: Acquisition Projects
 - Manual 5: Restoration Projects

Step 3: Submit Application– May 1, 2024

SecureAccess Washington Account

Before beginning an application, an applicant must sign up for a [SecureAccess Washington](#) account and submit a [PRISM New User Account Form](#). When using either of these databases for the first time, an applicant must complete a double sign-in.

PRISM Online Application

PRISM will open in February. To start an application, go to [PRISM Online](#) and select + *New Application*. Follow the prompts to fill out the application. On-screen instructions, tool tips, and links are available throughout the *Application Wizard*.

NOTE: The applicant will respond to the evaluation criteria in writing directly in PRISM Online, on the Evaluation Criteria page.

PRISM Attachments

There is an *Attachments* screen for each PRISM Online application. Attach the documents below before submitting the application. Include the applicant's name, project name, and RCO grant number on each attachment. Maps must include a north arrow, scale, and labels for any major highways, roads, cities, water bodies, etc. If the project includes any combination of acquisition, development, or restoration, attach the documents required for all project types.

- Authorizing Resolution/Application Authorization** (due by the technical completion deadline). Shows the application is supported by the elected council or commission, board, or executives of the applicant's organization. An applicant must adopt RCO's text verbatim even if using a different format.
- Landowner Acknowledgement Form.** An applicant must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the applicant's interest in purchasing the property. There are several options to meet this requirement (see "Section 3: Application Requirements" in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*).
- Local Jurisdiction Review and Conferral.** An applicant must review the proposed project application and confer with the county or city with jurisdiction over the project area. Attach documentation demonstrating that this process has begun (see "Section 3: Application Requirements" in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*). A sample letter is available in the [Acquisition Project Tool Kit](#) on RCO's website. If acquiring property in the applicant's own jurisdiction, the authorizing resolution meets this requirement.
- Map–Parcel Map.** Shows the parcels to be acquired in the scope of work as well as adjacent land ownership and other protected farms. Show the parcels in relation to local roadways, landmarks, etc. Include the county parcel numbers on the map. Also, identify any areas not suitable for farming.
- Map–Regional Location.** One, single-sided page that shows the location of the project in a geographic region of the state. The regional map should identify the county, incorporated areas, major highways, and water bodies, etc., so RCO staff and evaluators can locate the general worksite to within a few miles.
- Map–Site Location.** One, single-sided page showing the specific location of the project. This map must show the project in relation to local roads, park or ranger district boundaries, water bodies, landmarks, etc. If possible, show the boundaries of the site on the map.
- Photograph.** Every application requires at least one general project photograph in .jpg format. A current ground shot or aerial view of the project site is appropriate.
- Property Designation.** Documentation that each parcel in the grant application is classified as farm and agricultural land in the Open Space Tax Act. Acceptable forms of

documentation are a written document from the county assessor, a current property tax notice, or a recent title report that shows the classification as an encumbrance on the property.

If a parcel is not classified as farm and agricultural land, an applicant may seek an informal or preliminary determination from the county assessor that the parcel could be classified as farm and agricultural land in the Open Space Tax Act. Acceptable forms of documentation are a letter from the county assessor or the county assessor's approval of an application for farm and agricultural land classification.

- Site Plan–Restoration Site Plan** (for combination acquisitions and restoration projects only). Shows the restoration activities to take place on the project site. Existing and future restored areas should be distinguished from those in the proposed project scope.
- Stewardship Plan.** When requesting funds to develop a stewardship plan, an applicant must provide an outline of the proposed plan. See "Preparing a Farm Stewardship Plan" in *Manual 10f: WWRP Farmland Preservation* for the elements required.
- Visuals.** Up to four pages of photographs or other graphics such as schematic drawings, renderings, etc. An applicant may submit visuals in a collage style with several images on each page. Visuals must include the building envelope (if applicable), soils map, on-site infrastructure, etc.

Note that letters and other documented expressions of project support or concern submitted with the application will be made available for advisory committee review. **These should be combined into one PDF and attached to the project in PRISM–use the attachment type *Project Support/Concern Documents*.** An applicant also should summarize this when responding to the evaluation questions.

Also note that except for a few protected items, such as cultural resources data or confidential appraisal documents, as soon as the application is started in PRISM, it and most attachments will be available for review by RCO staff, evaluators, and the public.

Step 4: Technical Review (Written)–May 13 to June 5, 2024

RCO sends the application to the advisory committee for review. RCO also reviews the application for eligibility, completeness, and clarity and then returns it with committee feedback, questions, or suggested changes.

Step 5: Resubmit Application by Technical Completion Deadline–July 11, 2024

- Address issues raised during technical review and make modifications, if needed.
- Attach an **Authorizing Resolution/Application Authorization** to show the application is supported by the elected council or commission, board, or executives of the

applicant's organization. An applicant must adopt RCO's text verbatim even if using a different format.

- Local Jurisdiction Review and Conferral.** Attach documentation demonstrating that this process has been completed (see "Section 3: Application Requirements" in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*). A sample form is available in the [Acquisition Project Tool Kit](#) on RCO's website. If acquiring property in the applicant's own jurisdiction, authorizing resolutions meet this requirement.
- Complete all revisions and resubmit the application in PRISM Online by the technical completion deadline or the application will be deemed ineligible.

Step 6: Project Evaluation (Written)–July 22 to August 13, 2024

RCO provides the applications to the advisory committee for review and evaluation. Evaluators are typically given three to four weeks to score the projects.

RCO staff tabulate the results and meet with the advisory committee to validate the results, establish the committee's funding recommendation, and discuss any proposed process or policy changes. RCO then announces the results of the evaluation and posts the preliminary ranked list on its website.

RCO staff present the preliminary ranked list to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for final approval and inclusion with the board's recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature.

Step 7: Submit Pre-Agreement Materials–May 1, 2025

- Attach a **Certification of Applicant Match** to show what amounts and sources of match are in hand for the project. Attach this document to the application in PRISM Online.
- Provide any other requested pre-agreement materials as required by RCO.

Step 8: Sign Grant Agreement–After July 1, 2025

The board approves grant funding after the Legislature adopts a budget. RCO works with each applicant to execute a grant agreement before work begins.

- Applicant reviews other RCO policy manuals:
 - Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations
 - Manual 8: Reimbursements

- Applicant reviews the Successful Applicant Workshop materials, then completes the project.

Updated February 15, 2024.