

# Manual 17

# Youth Athletic Facilities

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May 2020

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# At a Glance

## Youth Athletic Facilities

	Large Grants	Small Grants
<b>Purpose</b>	The program provides grants to buy land and develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth.	This program provides grants to develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth in small communities.
<b>Who may apply?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities</li> <li>• Counties</li> <li>• Park districts</li> <li>• Native American tribes</li> <li>• Qualified nonprofit organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cities (10,000 residents or fewer)</li> <li>• Counties (60,000 residents or fewer)</li> <li>• Park districts (10,000 residents or fewer)</li> <li>• Native American tribes</li> <li>• Qualified nonprofit organizations (The population of the jurisdiction where the project lies must meet the cities/counties criterion.)</li> </ul>
<b>Is a plan required?</b>	No	No
<b>What types of projects are eligible?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and renovation</li> <li>• Combined land acquisition and development or renovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and renovation</li> </ul>
<b>What kinds of athletic facilities are eligible?</b>	Athletic fields (baseball, football, lacrosse, rugby, softball, soccer), skating rinks, sports courts (basketball, handball, tennis, volleyball), sports facilities (BMX track, golf course, track and field), and swimming pools	
<b>What are the grant limits?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$25,000 to \$350,000</li> <li>• No limits on the total project cost.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$75,000</li> <li>• Total project cost may not exceed \$150,000.</li> </ul>
<b>What must I contribute?</b>	25 percent  Exceptions: Match may be reduced for communities in need, underserved populations, counties in need, or communities providing facilities in federal disaster areas.	25 percent  Exceptions: Match may be reduced for communities in need, underserved populations, counties in need, or communities providing facilities in federal disaster areas.

	Large Grants	Small Grants
<b>How is my project evaluated?</b>	RCO reviews the application for eligibility, completeness, and clarity. An advisory committee reviews written responses to evaluation questions then scores and ranks the projects.	
<b>When are applications due?</b>	June 1, 2020	June 1, 2020
<b>When are grants awarded?</b>	July 2021	July 2021
<b>What's new this year?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed PRISM Online to make applications easier</li> <li>• Changed the Sustainability evaluation criterion</li> <li>• Reduced the required match</li> <li>• Removed the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement</li> <li>• Revised the match reduction policy for federal disaster areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changed PRISM Online to make applications easier</li> <li>• Changed the Sustainability evaluation criterion</li> <li>• Reduced the required match</li> <li>• Removed the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement</li> <li>• Revised the match reduction policy for federal disaster areas</li> </ul>

# Section 1: Introduction

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## In this section, you'll learn about the following:

- ✓ The Youth Athletic Facilities program
- ✓ Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Where to Get Information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline

## The Youth Athletic Facilities Program

### Program Purpose<sup>1</sup>

The Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) grant program provides money to purchase land and develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities serving youth.

An athletic facility is an outdoor facility used for playing sports or participating in competitive athletics and excludes playgrounds, tot lots, vacant lots, open or undeveloped fields, and open areas used for non-athletic play.

The program priority is to enhance facilities that serve people through the age of 18 who participate in sports and athletics. Compatible, multi-generation use, including amateur adult use, of facilities funded through this program is strongly encouraged. To achieve multi-generation use, applicants may submit proposals for facilities sized for adults, but which primarily serve youth.

### Facilities must be Open to the Public<sup>2</sup>

A facility funded with a YAF grant must be open to the public for youth or community athletic purposes.

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<sup>1</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2003-24 and 2015-02

<sup>2</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2003-24 and 2015-02

Open to the public means that the facility is available for enjoyment by the general public for the facility's intended purpose when it is not scheduled for games or practices. For example, a family may drop in and play softball on a field if it is not scheduled for use. If the facility is on property owned by a school district or nonprofit organization, the facility may be closed to the public during school hours, during school-sponsored activities, or the nonprofit organization's business hours, but it must be available for use for competitive play and practice or for the general public's use at all other times.

Adequate signs must be posted to identify when the facilities are available for use by the general public. Temporarily closing athletic facilities for maintenance or during the off-season is allowed. Use of YAF-funded facilities by sports leagues and other competitive organizations is allowed as long as the organization is open to the general public for registration and the organization does not discriminate as described below in the section on eligible applicants. Competitive sports organizations may charge a fee to participate in their activities and select participants based on skill level.

## **Recreation and Conservation Funding Board**

YAF is administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies—Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a small state agency that manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat, conserve working farms and forests, and help return salmon from near extinction.

## **Manual Authority**

Authority for the policies in this publication is found in Revised Code of Washington 42.56.040 of the Public Records Act. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted these policies in a public meeting and the RCO director approved the manual under the authority granted in Washington Administrative Code 286-04-060. This manual contains the procedures and guidelines RCO uses to implement the YAF program. The footnote references are to statutes, Washington Administrative Codes, and board policy resolutions. Contact RCO to learn how to get copies of board resolutions.

## **Who Makes Decisions**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board makes the final decisions for funding, policies and project changes, although some decisions it has delegated to the agency director.

## Board Decisions

The following list summarizes many project decisions made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in public meetings or by subcommittees of the board. Each is in accord with statutes, rules, and board policies.

- Initial grant approval.
- A project cost increase of more than 10 percent of the project total in the grant agreement for board-funded projects. Cost increases are allowed only in certain grant programs. Review the cost increase information in this manual for more details.
- A "conversion" that changes the project site or how the site is used from that described in the grant agreement and Deed of Right or Assignment of Rights. See RCO's *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.
- A significant reduction in the project's scope after receiving a grant. Typically, the board will make decisions about scope reductions if the RCO director thinks the project's evaluation score would have been different with the reduced scope. Not included are changes that do not modify significantly the way the public uses a facility, the intended opportunity, or restoration objective funded.
- Changes in policy; for example, establishing new grant limits or eligible expenditures.
- Time extensions beyond 4 years of the initial board or director approval date.

## Director Decisions

The RCO director, or designee, makes many project decisions based on rules and board policies. The decisions range from authorizing payments, to approving cost increases, to approving payment of charges in excess of lower bids, to terminating projects.

A project sponsor may request that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board reconsider a decision made by the director. To request reconsideration, the project sponsor must send a letter to the board chair at least 60 calendar days before a board meeting. The request is added to the board's meeting agenda and the project sponsor then may address the board at the meeting. The board's decision is final.

## Not a Public Hearings Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is not a public hearings board and does not decide land use issues. To the extent possible, all project proposals should

demonstrate adequate public notification and review and have the support of the public body applying for the grant.

## Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office  
Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street Southeast  
Olympia, WA 98501

[E-mail](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: (800) 833-6388

[Web site](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO grants managers are available to answer questions about this manual and grant program. Please feel free to call. In addition, manuals, forms, and most other materials referenced in this manual are available on RCO's Web site on the [YAF grant page](#).

## Other Grant Manuals Needed

The manuals below provide additional information for grants and are available on the [grant manual page](#) of the RCO Web site. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*
- *Manual 4: Development Projects*
- *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*
- *Manual 8: Reimbursements*

## Grant Process and Timeline

RCO offers grants in even-numbered years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 18 months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO Web site for precise dates.

## Even-numbered Years

**Webinars.** RCO conducts workshop Webinars in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.



**Entering Applications.** RCO strongly encourages applicants to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March 1. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the “+New Application” button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. Learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

**Applications Due.** Applications typically are due in early May of even-numbered years.<sup>3</sup> This year the deadline has been extended to June 1, 2020. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants must “submit” the application before the deadline. The “Check Application for Errors” button on the Submit Application screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will be rejected unless RCO’s director has approved a late submission in advance. Follow the requirements in the Applicant’s To-Do List online.

**Technical Reviews.** Grants managers review the applications to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. Applicants then may make changes to improve the projects, if needed. Applicants must complete all changes and resubmit their applications by the technical completion deadline.

**Technical Completion Deadline.** RCO establishes a technical completion deadline by which applications must be in their final form. After this date, applicants will not be able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation questions as of this date.

**Board Submits Biennial Budget Request.** The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board sends the Governor a recommended funding amount for YAF for the next biennium.

**Project Evaluation.** An advisory committee reviews each grant application and the applicant’s written responses to the evaluation questions and scores each proposal against a set of questions approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

**Post-Evaluation Conference.** After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked lists and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff post the preliminary ranked lists on RCO’s Web site. The resulting ranked lists of projects is the

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<sup>3</sup>Applications are due at least 4 months before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding (Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040).

basis for the funding recommendation to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

**Board Approves Project List.** In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committee, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the lists of projects. Applicants are cautioned that the board's approval of the project lists is not the same as funding approval.

**Governor's Budget.** The Governor's capital budget request to the Legislature may include funding for YAF. The Governor may choose to approve the lists of projects for Legislative consideration.

## Odd-numbered Years

**Legislature Approves the Budget.** When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature generally approves funding for the YAF program and may approve the lists of projects eligible for funding.

**Proof of Matching Funds.** Applicants with match included in their applications must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least 1 calendar month before board approval of funding.<sup>4</sup> For projects with land acquisition, applicants must provide the preliminary title report by the match certification deadline.

**Board Awards Grants.** After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board makes the final grant awards in a public meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

**Grant Agreement Materials.** After grant awards, applicants have 2 calendar months to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers).<sup>5</sup> RCO staff then prepare and issue grant agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 3 calendar months.<sup>6</sup> Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as sponsors, may begin their projects, according to the terms of the grant agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff.

**Successful Applicants' Workshop.** After the board approves funding, RCO publishes online a recorded workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers sponsors' responsibilities to comply with the grant agreement, issues that might come up when implementing the project, billing procedures, amendments for changes and time extensions, closing project procedures, and long-term compliance.

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<sup>4</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

<sup>5</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

<sup>6</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

## Ongoing

**Project Implementation.** Sponsors must complete projects promptly. To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, sponsors must do the following:

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensure timely completion as follows:
  - Combination projects            2-3½ years
  - Development projects            2-3 years

RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones included in the grant agreements.

- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting the milestones.
- Submit reimbursement requests at least once each year.<sup>7</sup>

**Project Completion.** When projects are completed, sponsors must submit the final bills, final reports, and supporting documents needed to close the projects by the deadlines specified in the agreements.<sup>8</sup> If bills and documentations are not submitted within 6 months of the end date in the agreements, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the agreements without payment.

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<sup>7</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

<sup>8</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

# Section 2: Policies

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**In this section, you'll learn about the following:**

- ✓ Categories
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types and project activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and other things to know
- ✓ Long-term obligations

## Categories<sup>9</sup>

### Categories

#### Large Grants Category

Grants in this category may be used to acquire land and develop or renovate athletic facilities used for playing competitive sports. Grants are limited to \$350,000.

#### Small Grants Category

Grants in this category may be used to develop or renovate athletic facilities used for playing competitive sports. This category funds lower cost projects in small communities. Grants are limited to \$75,000.

- A small grant project must be a stand-alone project and not part of a larger athletic facility project occurring at the same time or in the near-term.

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<sup>9</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-34

- Applicants may submit only one Small Grants Category project in a single location each biennium.
- Accessibility projects that improve access to or within an athletic facility shall be eligible as stand-alone projects in this category. The project does not need to include any “in-bounds” elements. The complete routes of travel to and within the facility must be included. Applicants may improve amenities such as drinking fountains and restrooms if the improvements will meet or exceed federal, state, or local laws for accessibility. If the laws conflict, the applicant must meet or exceed whichever law provides the most and highest standard of accessibility.

Eligible applicants in this category will compete head-to-head for 10 percent of the total YAF appropriation. If the category is undersubscribed, the remaining funds would be allocated to the Large Grants Category.

## Eligible Applicants<sup>10, 11, 12</sup>

### Large Grants Category

- Cities, counties, park districts
- Native American tribes
- Qualified nonprofit organizations

### Small Grants Category

- Cities, towns, and park districts with 10,000 residents or fewer.
- Counties with fewer than 60,000 residents are eligible, but the project must be in an unincorporated area.
- Native American tribes
- For nonprofit organizations, the population of the jurisdiction where the project lies will apply.

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<sup>10</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02 and 2017-34

<sup>11</sup>Cities, counties, and park districts established by Revised Code of Washington 35.61, 36.68, or 36.69

<sup>12</sup>Native American tribes as recognized by the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs

## Applicant Requirements

### Nonprofit Organizations

A “qualified nonprofit organization” is one that meets each of the following criteria:

- Is registered with the Washington Secretary of State as a nonprofit corporation.
- Has been active in youth or community athletic activities for at least 3 years.
- Does not allow exclusive use of the facilities paid for through this program. The organization must allow public access to the facility funded. See Program Purpose in Section 1 for a definition of public access.
- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or income. For example, “boys only” or “girls only” organizations would not be eligible for a grant.
- Provides a copy of articles of incorporation and by-laws including any amendments.

### Legal Opinion for First-time Applicants<sup>13</sup>

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to do all of the following:

- Contract with the State of Washington and the United States of America.
- Meet any statutory definitions required for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant programs.
- Receive and spend public funds, including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for public outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under Recreation and Conservation Funding Board rules or policies.
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.

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<sup>13</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Note that the legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility in the YAF program.

## Eligible Project Types

### Development and Renovation Projects

A development project is construction or work resulting in new elements, including but not limited, to structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources. A renovation project improves an existing site or structure to increase its useful service life beyond original expectations or functions. This does not include maintenance activities.

A renovation project improves an existing facility by doing any of the following:

- **Changing use.** Changing the athletic facility from one type to another to meet community priorities. Example: Changing an unused or underused outdoor tennis court to a high-demand outdoor basketball court.
- **Extending use.** Extending time of use or season of use. Example: Adding new lights to an existing field to allow scheduling of evening games. Example: Changing field surface types to allow more games per season or extending the number of seasons.
- **Expanding size.** Expanding the physical size of an existing athletic facility to accommodate new or extended types, seasons, or hours of athletic use resulting in more games or events and use by more players. Example: Lengthening the outfield and base path dimensions of a youth-size softball field to accommodate broader community uses. Example: Reorienting a softball field so it can accommodate another athletic activity such as soccer.
- **Retaining Size.** Continuing or retaining the original design and capacity of a facility to bring it to, or keep it at, an accepted standard of safe use without changing or extending use or expanding the size of the facility. In other words, the project will result in a better facility with no additional capacity. Grants may not be used for day-to-day operations or routine maintenance such as cleaning restrooms, mowing lawns, or preparing fields before games.

Applicants submitting projects for development or renovation must select Development as the project type in PRISM Online. Guidelines for development and renovation projects are in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

## Combination Projects (Large Grant Category Only)<sup>14</sup>

Combination projects involve acquisition and facility development or renovation. Acquiring land is eligible if it is necessary to increase the capacity of an existing facility and if combined with an eligible, in-bounds, renovation element. Acquisition includes buying real property rights such as land, easements, and leases. Acquisition of less-than-fee interests such as an easement or lease must be for at least 20 years and may not be revocable at will. Properties acquired must be developed within 5 years. Incidental and administrative costs related to acquisitions are eligible for reimbursement.

Additional policies for land acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

To help ensure timely completion of these projects, at least 1 month before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funding, applicants must secure the property by one of the following methods:

- Acquisition under the Waiver of Retroactivity policies and procedures (*Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*).
- Have property in escrow pending grant approval. Closing must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.
- Obtain an option on the property that extends past the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board funding meeting. Execution of the option must occur within 90 days after this meeting.

If the acquisition is for less-than-fee interest, and if not acquired already by a Waiver of Retroactivity, applicants must provide draft copies of all leases or easements to RCO for review. Execution of the leases or easements must occur within 90 days after the funding meeting.

For acquisitions to remain eligible, applicants and sponsors must follow all of the requirements and procedures outlined in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

## Other Considerations

### Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants consider the potential problems expensive and large projects usually create and discuss phasing them with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following rules:

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<sup>14</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolutions 2017-34 and 2015-02



- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No approval or endorsement is given or implied toward future phases.
- Each phase must stand on its merits as a viable or complete recreation experience and is not dependent on the completion of future phases or work.
- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may consider progress and sponsor performance on previously funded project phases when making decisions on current project proposals.

## **Eligible Project Activities**

### **Acquiring Land**

Acquisition is eligible only in the Large Grants Category. Elements may include the following:

- Purchasing or receiving a donation of fee or less-than-fee interest in real property.
- Incidental costs related to acquiring land.

Additional rules for land acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

### **Developing or Renovating Facilities**

Eligible elements may include the following:

- Addition of accessible facilities and elements
- Architectural, engineering, and administrative costs
- Athletic fields (soccer, baseball, softball, football, lacrosse, etc.)
- Drainage and grading
- Field and court re-surfacing
- Firearm or archery ranges<sup>15</sup>
- Hard court areas (basketball, tennis, pickle ball, covered courts, etc.)

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<sup>15</sup>See *Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation* for RCO policy on range and course certification.

- Lighting
- In-bounds amenities (goals, nets, bases, fences, etc.)
- New or renovated out-of-bounds amenities that support the athletic facility (restrooms, roads, parking lots, paths, scoreboards, bleachers, landscaping, signs, etc.)
- Underground irrigation systems

Additional guidelines for development projects are found in *Manual 4: Development Projects*. If applicants propose developing archery or firearm ranges, they must meet RCO's safety policy found in *Manual 11: Firearms and Archery Range Recreation*.<sup>16</sup>

### In-bounds Items Required<sup>17</sup>

Each application must include items that are found within the field of play or on the court or track and that are essential for the competitive sport to occur. Such items are referred to as being "in bounds," and include courts, fields, tracks, pools, and their parts such as goals, nets, bases, pitching mounds, hurdles, jumps, fences, backstops, irrigation, drainage, and field lighting.

Items that are outside the field of play or off the court or track are eligible for funding if there is one or more item in bounds in the grant application. Such items are referred to as being "out of bounds," and include scoreboards, bleachers, restrooms, parking lots, accessible routes of travel, fire lanes, and landscaping (including shade trees or wind breaks).

This requirement does not apply to stand-alone accessibility improvement projects in the Small Grants Category.<sup>18</sup>

### Incurring Pre-agreement Costs<sup>19</sup>

RCO will reimburse sponsors for certain allowable expenses incurred before the start date of a grant agreement.<sup>20</sup> However, any costs associated with the preparation or presentation of the application are ineligible.

For land acquisitions in combination projects, most incidental costs incurred before an RCO grant agreement may be reimbursed. Land costs are not allowable as a pre-agreement cost unless a Waiver of Retroactivity has been approved. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

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<sup>16</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-21

<sup>17</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

<sup>18</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-34

<sup>19</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-29

<sup>20</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085

For development projects, costs necessary to get a project to the pre-construction phase (i.e. architecture, engineering, permits) may be reimbursed. No construction costs may be incurred before the agreement start date, except those defined by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for further information.

### **Ineligible Project Activities<sup>21</sup>**

Several sources are used to determine project eligibility. The following list has examples of ineligible project elements and costs:

- A Small Grants Category project that is part of a larger athletic facility development or renovation project
- Acquisition or combination projects in the Small Grants Category
- Any facility intended primarily for professional sport
- Any project intended to only benefit a school district's or nonprofit organization's facility needs
- Concession buildings or concessionaire space
- Consumable supplies (paint, chalk, light bulbs, fertilizer, toilet paper, etc.)
- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See Mitigation Funds as Match below.
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as indirect and overhead charges.
- Elements that cannot be defined as fixtures or capital items (balls, cones, bats, horseshoe sets, tennis rackets, expendable shooting supplies, etc.)
- Indoor facilities (gyms, courts, pools, ice rinks, etc.)
- Mobile surface irrigation systems or supplies
- Multiple Small Grants Category applications at the same facility or location in the same biennium
- Multi-site projects
- Offices, shops, residences, and meeting rooms

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<sup>21</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02 and 2017-34

- Operation and maintenance costs
- Projects that include only out-of-bounds elements
- Properties acquired via a condemnation action of any kind
- Purchase of maintenance or construction equipment, tools, or supplies. Equipment includes items such as mowers, tractors, excavators, vehicles, etc. Equipment for construction may be leased or rented. See the Equipment Use Section in RCO's *Manual 8, Reimbursements* for information about valuation.
- Stand-alone acquisitions
- Unrelated mitigation

## **Environmental Requirements**

### **Cultural Resources Review**

[Governor's Executive Order 05-05](#), Archaeological and Cultural Resources, directs state agencies to review all acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources<sup>22</sup> to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to these resources. The federal government, through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires the same compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal lands, with federal funds, or those that require a federal permit.

#### **Review Process**

RCO facilitates review under the Governor's executive order. The appropriate lead federal agency facilitates review under the National Historic Preservation Act. If the federal review covers the entire RCO project area, there is no additional review needed to meet state requirements. Both processes require review, analysis, and consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and affected Native American tribes.

After the initial consultation, a funded project may be required to complete further cultural resources review and continue the consultation process to determine next steps. Costs for cultural resources review (survey, monitoring, etc.) are eligible for reimbursement and should be included in the grant application.

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<sup>22</sup>Cultural resources are archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses.

Sponsors must complete the consultation process and all requirements before any ground-disturbing activities (including demolition) may occur. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval will be considered a breach of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the notice to proceed.

For acquisition projects, cultural resources requirements must be completed before final reimbursement will be made.

For more details on the review process, read *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

## **Invasive Species**

The Washington Invasive Species Council developed [protocols](#) for preventing the spread of invasive species while working in the field. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant recipients to consider how their projects may spread invasive species and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here is how it could happen:

- Driving a car or truck to a field site and moving soil embedded with seeds or fragments of invasive plants in the vehicle's tires to another site. New infestations can begin miles away as the seeds and fragments drop off the tires and the undercarriage of the vehicle.
- Working in streams and moving water or sediment infested with invasive plants, animals, or pathogens via boots, nets, sampling equipment, or boats, from one stream to another.
- Moving weed-infested hay, gravel, or dirt to a new site, carrying the weed seeds along with it, during restoration and construction activities. Before long, the seeds germinate, and infest the new site.

The key to minimizing the spread of new invasive species is twofold: Use materials that are known to be free of invasive plants or animals in the project and clean equipment both before and after the job. Equipment to clean should include, but not be limited to, footwear, gloves, angling equipment, sampling equipment, boats and their trailers, and vehicles and tires.

## Sustainability<sup>23</sup>

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant recipients to design and build sustainable projects to maximize the useful life of what they build and do the least amount of damage to the environment.

The board encourages sponsors to use sustainable design, practices, and elements in their projects. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for circulation paths and access routes, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

## Property Requirements

### Landowner Acknowledgement of Application (Acquisition Projects)<sup>24</sup>

As part of any grant application for acquisition of real property, the applicant must demonstrate that the selling landowner is aware of the applicant's interest in purchasing the property rights. Applicants may meet this requirement by completing one of four options as detailed in *RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

### Control of the Land<sup>25</sup>

An applicant must have adequate control of the land where the YAF facility is located to assure that its proposal will be implemented as proposed and meet the long-term obligations for project compliance. This "control and tenure" may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. Details on how to meet this requirement are in *RCO Manual 4: Development Projects*.

### Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands<sup>26</sup>

If a project will occur over, in, or alongside a navigable body of water, an authorization to use state-owned aquatic lands may be needed.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. The Department of Natural Resources' aquatic land managers will help the

<sup>23</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2011-22 and 2014-06

<sup>24</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2010-34

<sup>25</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2003-24 and 2015-02

<sup>26</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2018-03

grant applicant determine if the project will fall on state-owned aquatic lands and provide more information on its authorization process. See the [land manager coverage map](#) online for contact information for the Department of Natural Resources aquatic land managers.

If the project is on state-owned aquatic lands, the grant applicant will need to secure a lease or easement (use authorization) to use those lands from the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Securing a lease or easement may take up to a year. RCO requires the executed lease or easement within 60 days after board funding approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO's director approves an extension in advance. Review the control and tenure requirements in *Manual 4: Development Projects* or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*.

The following online resources may be helpful to review:

- [Grant Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Leasing State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Boundaries of State-owned Aquatic Lands](#)
- [Caring for Washington's Nearshore Environments](#)

## Department of Natural Resources Review of Project Scope

Applicants who need to secure a use authorization must do all of the following:

- Meet with the Department of Natural Resources to review the proposed scope of work.
- Complete a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA) and give a copy to the Department of Natural Resources.
- Attach to the grant application a Scope of Work Acknowledgement Form (signed by the Department of Natural Resources) by the technical completion deadline.

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## Other Requirements and Things to Know

### Number of Grant Proposal Allowed<sup>27</sup>

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle.<sup>28</sup> However, each application must be for only one park location or site. Each application may contain one or more eligible activities.

Each application must stand alone on its own merits with a viable, recreation experience and not be dependent on other projects or future phases of work.

A grant proposal for the same project or scope of work may be submitted to another RCO grant program only if it is being used as match. Each proposal must identify the other RCO matching grant proposal. RCO recommends applicants contact staff to discuss options for phasing costly, interrelated, or complex project proposals.

### Accessibility

Facilities or elements<sup>29</sup> constructed with RCO grants and sponsor match are required to meet or exceed the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Designs or other accessibility standard minimums as applicable to the project. Other federal laws, guidelines, and best practices also may apply to achieve accessibility. In case of conflict between minimums, the one providing the most access shall prevail. RCO shall have final determination.<sup>30</sup>

RCO encourages sponsors to exceed the minimum accessibility standards and use a design principle that maximizes universal accessibility for all. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* and the RCO Web site for detailed information about how to make the facility meet [accessibility requirements](#). Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

### Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.<sup>31</sup> More information about the [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available on the RCO Web site.

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<sup>27</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

<sup>28</sup>Applicants may submit one Small Grants Category project per single location per biennium.

<sup>29</sup>A facility is all or any portion of buildings, structures, site improvements, elements, and pedestrian routes or vehicular ways located on site. An element is an architectural or mechanical component of a building, facility, space, or site (2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Department of Justice, September 15, 2010).

<sup>30</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-34

<sup>31</sup>Revised Code of Washington 42.56



## Long-term Obligations<sup>32</sup>

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area<sup>33</sup> after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's project agreement. A [sample project agreement](#) may be found on RCO's Web site.

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete or the land needed for something else. The compliance policy discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that grant sponsors replace the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place. See *RCO Manual 7: Long-term Obligations* for a discussion of conversions and the process required for replacement of the public investment. Non-compliance with the long-term obligations of an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

## Conversions

Interests in real property, structures, and facilities acquired, developed, enhanced, or restored with YAF grants are not to be changed, either in part or in whole, and not be converted to uses other than those for which the funds were originally approved.<sup>34</sup> Lands converted to other uses or not developed to provide a youth athletic facility within 5 years of acquiring the property<sup>35</sup> will be subject to compliance policies in *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.

## Project Area

The project area<sup>36</sup> subject to the long-term obligations is defined as the area consistent with the geographic limits of the scope of work of the YAF project. It includes the physical limits of the project's final site plans or final design plans and any property acquired with YAF grants. The project area also may include the surrounding area within the project sponsor's control in order to meet the public outdoor recreation benefits described in the grant agreement. RCO and the sponsor will agree on a boundary map for the project area when the project is complete and include reference to the map in the grant agreement.

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<sup>32</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

<sup>33</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19). Project area is the geographic area that delineates a grant-assisted site that is subject to application and RCO grant agreement requirements.

<sup>34</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2007-14

<sup>35</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2010-34 and 2015-02

<sup>36</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19). Project area is the geographic area that delineates a grant-assisted site which is subject to application and RCO grant agreement requirements.

## Useful life

The sponsor must maintain the useful life of a YAF-funded facility for a specific period of time. RCO and the sponsor will agree on a period of useful life when the project is complete and include reference to the useful life period in the grant agreement. The useful life period may be shorter than the compliance period. If RCO and the sponsor agree on a useful life period less than 20 years, the sponsor must continue to make the project area available for outdoor recreation for the remainder of the compliance period.

## Compliance Period

The compliance period for a YAF project is as follows:

- **Development projects.** Facilities developed or renovated with YAF funds must remain for public outdoor recreation for 20 years from the date of final reimbursement from RCO or the date RCO accepts the project as complete per the grant agreement, whichever is later (the same as the period for control and tenure). After the 20-year period is complete, the compliance period ends and the long-term obligations cease.<sup>37</sup>
- **Combination projects.**
  - **Perpetual acquisitions.** Land acquired in perpetuity must be available for outdoor recreation purposes in perpetuity.<sup>38</sup>
  - **Less than perpetual acquisitions.** Land acquired with less than a perpetual interest must be available for outdoor recreation purposes for a minimum of 20 years from the date of final reimbursement or the date RCO accepts the project as complete per the grant agreement, whichever is later. When the term of the acquisition ends, the compliance period ends and the long-term obligations cease.

More details on the long-term obligations for RCO grants are in the grant agreement and *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*. A [sample RCO grant agreement](#) may be found on RCO's Web site.

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<sup>37</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2003-24 and 2015-02

<sup>38</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2003-24, 2007-14, and 2015-02

# Section 3: Money Matters

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**In this section, you'll learn about the following:**

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Match requirements
- ✓ Match reduction
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Cost increases
- ✓ Federal rules
- ✓ Records and reimbursement

## Grant Limits

Grants from state funds are intended to supplement the capacity of a sponsor. They are not intended to supplant existing programs or fund projects that would have been undertaken without grant funding.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, applicants should not seek grants from the board to replenish their cash accounts. Grants should be used to expand an applicant's existing capacity to provide outdoor recreation facilities to its users.

- **Large Grants Category:** The minimum grant request is \$25,000. The maximum grant request is \$350,000.<sup>40</sup>
- **Small Grants Category:** No minimum grant request. The maximum grant request is \$75,000 but the total project cost may not exceed \$150,000.<sup>52</sup>

## All Projects: Administration, Architecture, Engineering

Direct administrative costs for acquisition of real property are limited to no more than 5 percent of the total acquisition cost.

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<sup>39</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

<sup>40</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-34

Administrative (including architecture and engineering) costs for development and renovation projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development and renovation project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in the administrative costs sections of *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

## Match Requirements

### Matching Share

Match is the project sponsor's contribution to a project. By requiring a match for grants, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board intends to foster and demonstrate local commitment to the projects and to spread the money from the grant program to a greater number of projects.<sup>41</sup>

Applicants must contribute matching resources at least equal to 25 percent of the project's total cost.<sup>42</sup>

### Eligible Match<sup>43</sup>

Applicant resources used to match board funds must be eligible in the YAF grant program. Sources of matching resources include, but are not limited to, any one or more of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Corrections labor
- Value of the applicant's expenses for labor, materials, and equipment
- Value of donated real property, labor, services, materials, and equipment use
- Grant funds, except those from the same grant program administered by the board
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

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<sup>41</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

<sup>42</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

<sup>43</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

## **Not Allowed as Match**

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that already has been reimbursed or used as match in another RCO project shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Costs that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Costs that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See Mitigation Funds as Match below.

## **Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Match Requirements**

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor, not to replace existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.<sup>44</sup>

All matching resources must meet the following criteria:

- Be an integral and necessary part of the approved project.
- Be part of the work identified in the application and grant agreement.
- Be for eligible work types or elements.
- Be committed to the project.

RCO rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example, if a grant applicant uses donated land as a match, RCO rules requiring the land to remain in recreation use forever apply to the donated land as well.

In many grant programs, particularly those where match is not required, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted evaluation criteria to encourage applicants to contribute matching shares. This typically is reflected in the criteria when points are given for non-governmental contributions or for exceeding the minimum match requirements. Applicants should carefully review the evaluation instrument to determine if this applies to their projects.

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<sup>44</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(6)

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grants committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board-funded project.<sup>45</sup>

## Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation when approved, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit Certification of Match forms to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendations. Applicants are advised to plan for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measures. This certification is due at least 1 calendar month before board action.<sup>46</sup> The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

RCO may declare projects ineligible if there is no guarantee that matching funds are available. Those projects may be passed over in favor of projects with the match in place. Such decisions are based on the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's confidence in the applicants' ability to have the match in place when required.

When another board grant is used as match, the certification of match will be tentative, conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match from other resources. The applicant will have 6 months from the time of the first grant award to certify the match of that grant. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.<sup>47</sup>

## Match Reduction<sup>48</sup>

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted the following four policies to reduce match for local governments:

1. Communities in need
2. Underserved populations
3. Counties in need
4. Federal disaster

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<sup>45</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(7)

<sup>46</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

<sup>47</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-08 and 2006-13b

<sup>48</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2017-33, 2017-34, 2018-01

## Communities in Need

If the grant applicant is a city, town, tribe, or eligible special purpose district with 20,000 residents or fewer, and the median household income is less than the state median household income (\$66,174 as of 2017), the applicant's match is identified in Table 1.

**Table 1. Minimum Match for Communities in Need**

Jurisdiction's Median Household Income as a Percent of State Median Household Income	Minimum Match Required
0-50%	10%
50.01-60%	20%
60.01-80%	30%
80.01-99.99%	40%

Additional requirements are as follows:

- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- If the jurisdiction is home to a college or university and 20 percent or more of the jurisdiction's population is college-enrolled (as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau), the jurisdiction's median family income and state's median family income shall apply in place of its median household income and the state median household income. Removing the college-enrolled population may make an otherwise ineligible jurisdiction eligible for a reduced match in this policy (based on the remaining population amount).
- Nonprofits. If the project is located in an incorporated area or on Native American tribal land, the minimum match for those jurisdictions apply. If the project is in an unincorporated area, the applicable county or park district's minimum match for that jurisdiction applies.

## Underserved Populations

If the grant applicant is a city, town, tribe, or special purpose district with a median household income less than the state median household income, and the project is located in a census block group where the median household income is less than 70 percent of the state median household income (\$66,174 as of 2017), the following minimum match in Table 2 applies.

**Table 2. Minimum Match for Underserved Populations**

Census Block Group’s Median Household Income as a Percent of State Median Household Income	Minimum Match Required
0-55%	10%
55.01-60%	20%
60.01-65%	30%
65.01-69.99%	40%

Additional requirements are as follows:

- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization (co-sponsors), all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- If the jurisdiction is home to college or university and 20 percent or more of its population is college enrolled (as identified by the U.S. Census Bureau), the jurisdiction’s median family income and state’s median family income shall apply in place of its median household income and state median household income. Removing the enrolled population also may qualify the jurisdiction for the Community in Need policy.
- Nonprofits. If the project is located in an incorporated area or on Native American tribal land, the minimum match for those jurisdictions apply. If the project is in an unincorporated area, the applicable county or park district’s minimum match for that jurisdiction applies.

### Counties in Need

A county shall have match reduced if its median income is less than 70 percent of the state median income, it is distressed (as defined by Washington Employment Security Department), and 60 percent or more of its land base is in a non-taxable status.

The below table shows the match reductions (from 50 percent) for counties. The reductions are cumulative if the county meets more than one condition.

**Table 3: County Match Reductions**

Variables (Any or all may apply)	50% Match Shall be Reduced by the Following: (Cumulative)
County median household income less than 70% of state median household income	10%
County median household income less than 65% of state median household income	10%



Variables (Any or all may apply)	50% Match Shall be Reduced by the Following: (Cumulative)
County is “ <a href="#">distressed</a> ” as defined by Washington Employment Security Department	10%
60% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%
75% or more of land is non-taxable*	5%

\*Includes land where the county receives payments in lieu of taxes from a government entity.

**Example:**

**County A:** Starting minimum match is 50 percent. The county has a median household income of 68 percent of the state median income, which is a 10 percent reduction in required match. The county meets no other variables. Minimum match requirement in this case is 50 percent minus 10 percent. County A’s minimum required match is 40 percent.

**County B:** Starting minimum match is 50 percent. The county has a median household income of 64 percent of the state median income, is a “distressed” county, and 80 percent of its land is non-taxable. County B has met all five criteria and has a cumulative match reduction of 40 percent (50 percent minus 40 percent is 10 percent). County B’s minimum required match is 10 percent.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- At least 10 percent of total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.
- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization (co-sponsors), all must qualify for some match reduction. Minimum match shall be assigned based on the primary sponsor of the application.

**Federal Disaster<sup>49</sup>**

If the grant applicant is a city, town, county, tribe, or special purpose district in Washington State, the minimum match is 25 percent for applications submitted by June 1, 2020.

Additional requirements are as follows:

- The maximum reduced match for a single project is \$350,000.
- All match may be provided in the form of a state or federal contribution.

<sup>49</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

- If a project is sponsored by more than one organization, the minimum match shall be based on the primary sponsor of the application.
- Grant requests using this federal disaster match policy shall be limited to two per jurisdiction, per program for each biennium.

### Policy Intent

- Reduce the match required for smaller jurisdictions and counties whose ability to raise match is constrained.
- For a low-income jurisdiction (city, town, tribal area, eligible special purpose district) of any population size, reduce the match required for projects in a census block where the income is less than the jurisdiction as a whole.
- Provide relief to agencies and organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic so they can continue their parks and recreation investments in support of public health, community development, and economic development goals.<sup>50</sup>

### Data Sources for Determining Match Reduction

For all four policy statements, the data source for income and population shall be the best and most currently available from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Washington State Office of Financial Management, or other sources as may be appropriate.

For jurisdictions' boundaries that do not align with U.S. Census or other data geographies, RCO shall estimate population and income based on U.S. Census block groups or other reliable data sources.

If the applicant's determination of its income, population, or taxable land base does not align with RCO estimates, it may provide alternate data, which may be approved by the RCO director.

## Types of Match

### Donations and Force Account

Donations are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable. This means RCO will not pay more than the sponsor's out-of-pocket expenses. Valuing donations of equipment, labor (including inmates, community service labor, and volunteers), and material is discussed in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages applicants

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<sup>50</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-09

to secure written confirmations of all donations planned as match and to attach the donation letters to the PRISM Online applications.

Donated land must expand existing recreation lands or stand on its own as a viable recreation area. Review *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* before taking title to property that will be donated and used as match. Manual 3 outlines the requirements for valuing the property and for securing a donation statement from the seller.

Force account refers to use of a sponsor's staff (labor), equipment, or materials. These contributions are treated as expenditures for billing purposes.

## Other Grants

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from a separate grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible as long as the purposes are similar and grant sources do not restrict or diminish the use, availability, or value of the project area. These grants are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable.

The eligibility of federal funds to be used as a match may be governed by federal requirements and thus will vary with individual program policies.

Applicants must clearly identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. RCO will help determine if the source is compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match<sup>51</sup>

Another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant may be used to help meet the match requirements if all the following conditions apply:

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in both grant programs may count as match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- The applicant provides a minimum of 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched. This sponsor match may not be from federal or state funds and may include in-kind contributions. This policy does not apply to Native American tribes or projects that qualify for reduction in match under the federal disaster policy.

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<sup>51</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.<sup>52</sup>

For evaluation scoring, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.<sup>53</sup>

Matching resources also must conform to the deadlines discussed in Section 1 “Grant Process and Timeline.”

## **Mitigation Funds as Match**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board allows use of impact fees and mitigation cash payments, such as money from a fund established as a mitigation requirement, as match if the money has been passed from the mitigating entity to an eligible applicant, and the board’s grant does not replace mitigation money, repay the mitigation fund, or in any way supplant the obligation of the mitigating entity.

### **Cost Increases<sup>54</sup>**

Cost increases for approved projects may be granted by the board or director if financial resources are available. Each cost increase request will be considered on its merits. The director may approve a cost increase request as long as it does not exceed 10 percent of the project’s initial approved grant amount. A cost increase for the Small Grants Category may not exceed the \$75,000 grant maximum. The director’s approval of an acquisition project cost increase is limited to a parcel-by-parcel appraised and reviewed value. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects* for more details on cost increases.

### **Federal Rules**

For all projects funded with federal funds or other grants that are used by RCO as match to a federal source, grant recipients must comply with [Part 200—Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#) and RCO may require additional information.

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<sup>52</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

<sup>53</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02

<sup>54</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085

## Records and Reimbursement<sup>55</sup>

### Sponsors Must Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. Grant sponsors may request reimbursement only after paying employees and vendors. RCO does not provide money before vendors are paid. Except as otherwise provided below, RCO will pay only at the percentage identified in the grant agreement after the sponsor has presented an invoice documenting costs incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

The amount of reimbursement may never exceed the cash spent on the project.

Reimbursement shall not be approved for any donations, including donated land. RCO may pay an escrow account directly for RCO's share of the approved cost of land and related costs if the sponsor indicates a temporary lack of money to buy the land on a reimbursement basis. Before release of RCO grants into escrow, the sponsor must provide RCO with a copy of a binding agreement between the sponsor and the seller, all required documentation, and evidence of deposit of the sponsor's share, identified in the grant agreement, into an escrow account.

Complete reimbursement procedures are found in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*.

### Records

Sponsors must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8: Reimbursements* for details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

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<sup>55</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-070

# Section 4: Project Evaluation

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**In this section, you'll learn about the following:**

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Advisory committee
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

## How Project Evaluation Works

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the evaluation process, including the identification of an advisory committee to evaluate applications.<sup>56</sup> The RCO director submits recommendations for project funding to the board, which makes the final decision about funding at one of its public meetings.<sup>57</sup>

Applications are evaluated based on a set of questions adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in a public meeting. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. The evaluation questions are on the following pages.

There are two sections to the evaluation questions: Advisory committee questions and RCO staff-scored questions. In the first section, the advisory committee uses subjective evaluation questions to score each application. Scores are based on each applicant's response to the evaluation questions, graphics included in the application, and summary application material.

Letters and other documented expressions of project support provided to RCO by the technical completion deadline will be provided to the advisory committee as part of the evaluation materials packet. Applicants also should summarize this support when responding to evaluation Question 7.

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<sup>56</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

<sup>57</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

In the second section, RCO staff scores the applications using objective measures, such as matching share, population, and conformance to growth management planning. Scores are based on material submitted by applicants and information obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the Department of Commerce.

Scores from sections one and two are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

### **Advisory Committee**

RCO manages the YAF program with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. The advisory committee's role is to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grants and to review, evaluate, and score grant applications.

In recruiting members for the advisory committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge of outdoor recreation in Washington.

RCO's director may appoint *ex officio* members to the advisory committee to provide additional representation and expertise.

Check RCO's Web site for [membership and other details](#).

### **Do Not Fund Recommendation<sup>58</sup>**

Occasionally during evaluations, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a "Do Not Fund" recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss its concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated.

If a "Do Not Fund" recommendation is scheduled to be considered, RCO will notify the applicant in writing, identify the significant concerns expressed by the evaluators, and invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. The applicant also may submit a written response to the evaluators' concerns. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a "Do Not Fund" recommendation by a simple majority vote of the committee members that participated in application evaluations.

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "Do Not Fund" recommendation and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory

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<sup>58</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

committee’s recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the “Do Not Fund” recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

### Evaluation Criteria

All grant requests must be completed and submitted in the format prescribed by the director.<sup>59</sup> Responses should be tailored to the facility proposed in the application and should not include other unrelated facilities (fields, courts, etc.) that might be at the same park or complex. Applicants must address Evaluation Criteria 1-7 in PRISM Online.

These responses along with an application fact sheet, maps, site plan, visuals, and letters of support comprise the materials that are viewed electronically by the advisory committee.

Summary of Questions and Score					
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	5	1	5
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	Proximity to People	1	1	1
RCO Staff	9	Growth Management Act Preference	0	1	0
<b>Total Possible Points=52</b>					

### Detailed Scoring Criteria<sup>60</sup>

#### Scored by the Advisory Committee

- 1. Need and Need Satisfaction.** What is the community’s need for the proposed youth athletic facility? 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

<sup>59</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

<sup>60</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2015-02



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.
- 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 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 *Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan*.
- Demonstrate how the proposed project will satisfy youth athletic facility needs and provide for a priority youth athletic facility.

▲ Point Range: 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, including any acquisition of land, 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 the following:

- 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: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2.

- 3. Sustainability.** Please discuss how your project's location or design supports your organization's sustainability plan or how you considered the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts in the project plan.

Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

#### **Ecological Factors**

- Minimizes impacts to, or improves ecological function of, surrounding lands
- Includes low-impact design or other green building techniques that reduce water, energy, resource consumption, or greenhouse gas footprint
- Provides a buffer to future natural disasters or anticipated climate impacts
- Includes landscaping that supports native species and/or pollinator habitat

#### **Social Factors**

- Addresses an identified disparity in social or environmental services

- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

#### Economic Factors

- Use materials that support local producers, are recycled or recyclable, increase the project's anticipated lifespan, or reduce future maintenance costs
- Creates efficiency in the provision of public services (i.e. stormwater infiltration, increased tree canopy, carbon sequestration, etc.)
- Maximizes lifespan or reduces future operational costs
- Supports a local economic development initiative

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

Revised January 2020. Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-06.

**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: 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?

▲ Point Range: 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: 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 the following: Letters of support; voter-approved initiatives, bond issues, referenda; ordinance or resolution adoption; media coverage; public involvement in a comprehensive planning process that includes the project; a capital improvement program that includes the project; and 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 the application in PRISM.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which are multiplied later by 2

### Scored by RCO Staff

- 8. 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.<sup>61</sup> Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ Point Range: 0-1 point

0 points      No

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<sup>61</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250

1 point      Yes

**9. Growth Management Act Preference.** Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?<sup>62</sup>

State law requires that whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant<sup>63</sup> 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 has done one of the following:

- 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.
- 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: 0 to -1 point

Minus 1 point The applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.

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<sup>62</sup>Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act preference required.)

<sup>63</sup>County, city, or town applicants only. This segment of the question does not apply to Native American tribes, park districts, or nonprofit organizations.

- 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.