

Manual 9

Boating Facilities Program

August 2024

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At a Glance

Boating Facilities Program

Purpose	This program provides money to acquire, develop, and renovate facilities such as launching ramps, guest moorage, and support facilities for motorized boats and other watercraft.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities, towns, and counties • Native American tribes • Special purpose districts • State agencies
Is a plan required?	Yes, an outdoor recreation comprehensive plan is needed to apply.
When are plans due?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are due September 3, 2024. See <i>RCO Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines</i>.
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development or renovation • Land acquisition • Planning
What are the grant limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition: \$1 million • Development or renovation: \$1 million • Combination of acquisition and development or renovation or acquisition and planning: \$1 million • Planning: 20 percent of estimated construction costs or \$200,000 maximum, whichever is less.
What must I contribute?	25 percent for local agency projects, nothing for state agency projects
Where must my project be located?	On freshwater or saltwater
How is my project evaluated?	An advisory committee hears a virtual, in-person presentation and scores the project.
When are applications due?	October 31, 2024
When are grants awarded?	June 2025 (Estimate)
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs were added to this manual.

Section 1: Introduction

This section covers the following:

- ✓ The Boating Facilities Program
- ✓ The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Who makes decisions
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline
- ✓ Time limits and extensions

The Boating Facilities Program

The state's citizens created the Boating Facilities Program (BFP) and its managing agency, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, in 1964 when they voted to approve Initiative 215.¹ The initiative provided money to enhance the state's marine recreation lands. Today, money continues to be collected from marine fuel taxes.²

The program pays for land and facilities that support motorized watercraft recreation. Typical projects include land acquisition and development of boat launches and guest moorage facilities.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board administers BFP grants. The board 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.

¹The Washington Marine Recreation Land Initiative, also known as Initiative 215, was on the November 3, [1964 ballot](#) in Washington and it was approved. The measure assigned taxes on boat fuel to the acquisition and improvement of marine recreation lands.

²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.040

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 and working lands, and help return salmon and orca from near extinction.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recognizes its obligation to ensure its programs and policies are equitable and inclusive and has taken steps to address disparities. The board has resolved to continue to examine its policies and reach out to diverse partners to ensure that Washington's investments are not only for a few but reflect the board's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Read the board's [Resolution 2020-35](#) in full online.

Manual Authority

This manual was created under the authority granted to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in the BFP enabling legislation. It reflects the specific statutory requirements of Revised Codes of Washington 43.17.250 and 79A.25, Title 286 of the Washington Administrative Code, the [2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan](#), and the board's policies.

Who Makes Decisions

Staff Decisions

Staff review grant applications to ensure they are complete, the projects are eligible to compete, the grant applicants are eligible to apply, and the match is certified. Staff also score objective evaluation criteria, such as those relating to Growth Management Act compliance. Finally, staff make routine grant management decisions about billings, reports, minor scope changes, short time extensions, and more.

Advisory Committee Decisions

An advisory committee evaluates grant applications and scores them to create a ranked list of projects for the funding board to consider. The advisory committee also reviews proposed program policies and criteria changes, and in some cases makes recommendations to the funding board or director about how funding should be distributed.

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 sixty 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.

Board 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.

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.

More detailed information about board and director decisions is available in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street

Olympia, WA 98501

[Email](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: Call 711

[Website](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

RCO outdoor 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 website on the [BFP 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 website. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

- Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines
- 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 years, in conjunction with the state budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans nine months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO website for precise dates.

Even-Numbered Years

Webinars. RCO conducts webinars (an online meeting) in the winter and late summer to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

Planning Deadline. September 3 is the planning deadline. This ensures an applicant completes the planning process before applying for grants. Agencies that apply for grants in the same year that their planning eligibility expires must ensure that their planning eligibility extends through the board meeting in which the projects first are considered.

RCO's web site has a list of [eligible applicants](#). To verify or establish eligibility for a specific grant program, contact RCO's planning specialist.

Entering Applications. RCO strongly encourages the applicant to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens in August.

To enter an application, the applicant must sign up for a [SecureAccess Washington](#) account and submit a [PRISM account form](#). When using either of these databases for the first time, the applicant must complete a double sign-in.

1. Using SecureAccess Washington credentials, login to PRISM.

2. When redirected to the SecureAccess login page, enter the SecureAccess credentials.
3. When redirected to a one-time PRISM sign-in page, enter the PRISM login credentials.
4. The applicant will be directed back to the PRSM home page.

This double sign-in will happen only once. After completing the double sign-in, the applicant will use SecureAccess Washington credentials to log into PRISM.

To begin an application, 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 the applicant through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether a proposal is eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. Visit RCO's website to learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

Board Submits Biennial Budget Request. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board submits to the Governor a recommended funding amount for the next biennium for BFP.

Applications Due. An application typically is due in late October of even-numbered years. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. The applicant should *submit* the application before the deadline. The *Check Application for Errors* button on the *Submit Application* screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. An incomplete application and an application 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. The applicant is encouraged to attend a technical review meeting to present the project virtually to the Boating Programs Advisory Committee and RCO staff. Staff review the project to ensure it is eligible and achieves boating program priorities, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. The applicant makes an oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs using PowerPoint.® Grants managers will review the application also and send comments to applicant. The applicant then may make changes to improve the project, if needed. The applicant must complete all changes and resubmit the application by the technical completion deadline.

Odd-Numbered Years

Technical Completion Deadline. RCO establishes a technical completion deadline by which the application must be in its final form. After this date, the applicant will not be

able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

Project Evaluation. The applicant makes a virtual oral presentation, illustrated with maps, graphics, and photographs in PowerPoint® to the advisory committee, which scores each proposal against a set of criteria 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 website. The resulting ranked lists of projects are the basis for the funding recommendation to the board.

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

Legislature Approves Funding. When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature generally approves funding for the BFP.

Proof of Matching Funds. An applicant with match included in the application must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least one calendar month before board approval of funding.³ If a state agency has shown a match of some kind in its application, it must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the certification deadline. For a project with land acquisition, the applicant must provide the preliminary title report by the match certification deadline.

Board Awards Grants. After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the board makes the final grant awards, in a public meeting. An applicant is encouraged, but not required, to attend.

Grant Agreement Issued. After grant awards, the applicant has two calendar months⁴ to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers). RCO staff then prepare and issue the grant agreement. The applicant must return the signed

³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

agreement within three calendar months.⁵ Once the agreement is signed, the applicant, now referred to as a project sponsor, may begin the project, according to the terms of the grant agreement. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations* for more information.

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

Time Limits and Extension

The sponsor must complete the funded project promptly. For this reason, RCO staff, with applicant assistance, establishes a timetable for project completion, including enforceable milestones and a project completion date. To avoid the risk of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board or director withdrawing the grant, the board adopted the following guidance for each project phase.

Application Phase

- An applicant must provide reasonable assurance that the project can be completed on time and meet milestones. Reasonable assurance may include such evidence as the following:
 - Appraisals and review are completed.
 - Designs are completed.
 - Bid documents are prepared.
 - Environmental assessment is completed.
 - Hazardous substances review is completed.
 - Option agreements are signed.
 - Permits are in-hand.
 - Property is in escrow.
 - Waiver of Retroactivity is in-hand and signed.

⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(5).

At least one calendar month before the funding meeting, when requested by RCO, the applicant must provide written certification of matching fund availability.⁶

An applicant only may submit a project that is likely to be completed within four years.

Pre-Agreement Phase

- An applicant must submit the pre-agreement materials requested by RCO within two calendar months of funding approval.⁷
- With RCO staff assistance, the applicant must develop milestones, to be included in the grant agreement and a timeline that does not exceed two to three years.

Implementation Phase

To help ensure reasonable and timely project completion, accountability, and the proper use of funds, an applicant must do the following:

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensure timely completion of the project as follows:
 - Acquisition (single site) projects 1-2 years
 - Acquisition (multisite) projects 2-3½ years
 - Combination projects 2-3½ years
(The acquisition portion must be completed in ninety days. See "Combination Projects" below for more information)
 - Development projects 2-3 years
 - Planning projects 2-2½ years
 - Exceptionally complex projects 3½ years.

RCO staff monitors critical project milestones (for example, ordering appraisals and reviews, starting construction). Unsatisfactory progress may be cause for project termination or other remedies (See the grant agreement section on termination and other remedies). Any RCO director decision may be appealed to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting the milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.⁸
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO grant agreement.

Extensions

The director may approve a project for up to four years. When one Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used to match another, RCO staff will use the earliest grant to determine the four-year window.

Requests for extensions that would exceed four years may be referred to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for action.

Extension requests must be in writing and provided to RCO not less than sixty days before expiration of the project's completion date.⁹ The request must justify the need and commit to a new set of specified milestones.

Project Completion

The grant agreement end date will be written into the grant agreement. It is the date that is the end of the period of performance and all project work must be complete and may be extended only when authorized by the board or director.

When a project is completed, the sponsor must submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project as specified in the agreement.¹⁰ If the bill and documentation are not submitted within six months of the end date in the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the agreement without payment.

⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

⁹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(8)

¹⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(7)

Section 2:

Policies

This section covers the following:

- ✓ Program priorities
- ✓ Categories and eligible applicants, project types, and activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations
- ✓ Restrictions
- ✓ Definitions

Program Priorities

Policies and priorities for the BFP are established in the [2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan](#). The plan's outdoor action compass guides Washington State's investments in outdoor recreation and public lands conservation. The four core values are equity, resiliency, connection, and collaboration, which act as touchpoints for the following four priorities.

- Provide meaningful access to outdoor recreation for all
- Protect natural and cultural resources while managing increasing demand
- Demonstrate the essential nature of parks, natural areas, and recreation infrastructure
- Support healthy, adaptable, and connected communities

RCO encourages a grant applicant to review the priorities in the statewide plan to learn about the goals for each priority.

Intent of Grant Program

RCO's boating grants are intended to facilitate physical access to and from water. Because funding for this program comes from gas taxes, grants are for sites and facilities supporting recreational motorboating.

RCO boating grants support facilities provided for guest, public, and recreational boating uses. Guest facilities include launches, docks, and moorage of all kinds as well as associated upland support facilities. Guest use is short-term, for example moorage up to a maximum of fourteen consecutive days. Long-term, permanent, private, or exclusive use facilities are not eligible for grants.

RCO grant programs are supported by public funds, so facilities supported by RCO grants are expected to be available to the public at reasonable times.

Categories and Eligible Applicants

Grants in this program provide for active motorized recreational boating access. Grants may be used to buy land, develop or renovate land or facilities, or complete the design and permitting for boating. There are two funding categories.

Local Agency Category

Only public agencies legally authorized to develop, operate, and maintain recreational facilities are eligible for grants. By law, the following agencies may apply:

- Cities and towns
- Counties
- Native American tribes
- Park and recreation districts
- Port districts
- Public utility districts

State Agency Category

Eligible applicants include the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Natural Resources, the State Parks and Recreation Commission or other state agencies that provide motorized boating facilities for public outdoor recreation.

Applicant Requirements

Legal Opinion for First-time Applicants

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for grants for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to perform all the activities below. Note that the legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

- Contract with the State of Washington and/or 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 conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and/or provide maintenance and stewardship for land and facilities eligible under board rules or policies.
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

Planning Requirements

To be eligible for a grant, the applicant must submit a comprehensive outdoor recreation plan that has been adopted by the applying organization's governing body.¹¹ This helps ensure the project has been through a public process and was prioritized by the community. The plan must be accepted by RCO by September 3 in even-numbered years. Check the online schedule to confirm the date.

Once RCO accepts the plan, the applicant is eligible to apply for grants for up to six years from the date the applicant organization adopted the plan. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the plan documentation provided to RCO is current. See *Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines* for more information. Co-sponsors also should consult the Joint and Cooperative Projects in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

¹¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-035(1)

Eligible Project Types

Acquisition Projects

An acquisition project is one that purchases or receives a donation of fee or less-than-fee interests in real property. These interests include, but are not limited to, access and trail easements, covenants, water rights, leases, and mineral rights. Acquisition of less-than-fee interests must be for at least fifty years and may not be revocable at will. Properties acquired with grants must be developed within five years from the date the property was acquired, regardless of whether the sponsor receives another RCO grant.

Incidental costs related to acquisitions are eligible for reimbursement. Additional rules for land acquisition are in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Development or Renovation Projects

A development project is construction or work resulting in new elements including, but not limited to, structures, facilities, and materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources. A renovation project is intended to improve an existing site or structure in order to increase its useful service life beyond current expectations or functions. This does not include maintenance activities. An applicant submitting a project for development and/or renovation must select “development” as the project type in PRISM Online. Additional guidelines for development projects are found in *Manual 4: Development Projects*. Development projects may include the following activities:

- Construct new or renovate existing facilities
- Design, engineer, and obtain permits to construct facilities
- Perform periodic dredging (see limits on dredging below)

Examples of Eligible Development Projects

Projects that may be funded include construction and renovation of the following:

- Boat and equipment decontamination facilities¹²
- Invasive species prevention signs
- Moorage floats, fixed docks, and buoys for guest boaters
- Parking and staging areas

¹²These facilities also must be on or adjacent to marine recreation land. See Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.010(4).

- Ramps and fixed hoists for launching, loading floats
- Sewage pump-out stations and porta-potty dump stations¹³
- Upland support facilities such as picnic facilities, restrooms, security systems, and showers
- used exclusively or primarily by recreational guest boaters
- Periodic dredging, which is limited to removing materials deposited in a channel due to unforeseen events; dredging must extend the facility usefulness for at least five years¹⁴

Planning Projects

A planning project is one that results in one or more of the following: a study, a plan, construction plans and specifications, and permits to increase the availability of outdoor recreational resources.

A BFP planning project is limited to the design and permitting of boating facilities. A planning grant proposal is eligible as a stand-alone project because of the often lengthy period needed to obtain permits for development. These projects typically include design, cultural resources review, permitting, and architectural and engineering services.

A planning project must result in both of the following:

- Construction-ready bid documents (plans and specifications)
- Permits “in hand” that will allow a sponsor to proceed with development when funds to construct become available

Reimbursement will be dependent upon the progress made toward completing the scope of work in the grant agreement. This means a sponsor must complete a task and submit the associated documentation with the reimbursement request to RCO for that task. If a sponsor is unable to complete the design or obtain permits, RCO reserves the right to request repayment of the grant.

Combination Projects

A combination project involves both land acquisition and facility planning, development, or renovation. To help ensure timely completion of these projects, at least one month

¹³The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission manages a grant program under the Clean Vessel Act that also pays for marine sanitation facilities.

¹⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.080

before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers approving funding for a combined acquisition and development or renovation project, the applicant 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 ninety days after the funding meeting.
- Obtain an option or purchase and sale agreement on the property that extends past the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board funding meeting. Execution of the option or agreement must occur within ninety days after this meeting.

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

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

Other Considerations

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that an applicant discuss phasing a very expensive or complex project with RCO staff. A phased project is subject to the following parameters:

- 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.

Progress and sponsor performance on previously funded project phases may be considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on a current project proposal.

Multisite Projects

The following conditions apply to the eligibility of a project that includes more than a single location:

- Funding for each worksite may total no more than \$50,000.
- All work types,¹⁵ across all worksites, must be of the same type (for example, all gangways, all pilings, etc.).
- All worksites and work types must be either saltwater- or freshwater-oriented; no combinations of saltwater and freshwater sites in the same project.
- All work types must meet the Office of Financial Management's capital project criteria, defined in the biennial publication *Washington State Capital Plan Instructions*.
- All worksites must be in no more than two adjacent counties.
- Each worksite's location must be described in a way that makes an RCO site inspection possible.

Joint and Cooperative Projects

Some projects may have two or more sponsors. All sponsors must meet the applicant eligibility requirements. For example, a joint project could be where one agency owns the land to be developed or maintained by another, or where two or more agencies team up to pay for a project. Applicants with joint or cooperative projects are jointly responsible for implementing the projects and in addition to the grant agreements, must adhere to the policy for Joint and Cooperative Projects in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Ineligible Projects, Activities, and Costs

Several sources are used to determine project eligibility including Revised Code of Washington 79A.25. Projects, activities, elements, and costs not eligible for grants include the following:

- Any facility for leased exclusive use or moorage for more than fourteen consecutive days. Long-term moorage may be allowed if the sponsor has a Use Certification from RCO. See the Commercial and Other Non-recreational Uses section.

¹⁵Specific work proposed for a project (i.e., boat launch development, dredging, install boarding float, etc.)

- Any facility for commercial use or commercial vessels.
- Maintenance dredging.
- Concession buildings or space.
- Elements that cannot be defined as fixtures or capital items (life preservers, boats, etc.)
- Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (i.e., removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs, etc.).
- Fuel sales equipment including piping, fuel pumps, and storage tanks.
- Mobile vessel transporters.
- Operation and maintenance costs.
- Those on waters prohibiting gasoline-powered motors.
- Those primarily for non-gasoline powered watercraft such as canoes, kayaks, or diesel-powered craft.
- Those serving non-boater related fishing, including offshore platforms or fishing piers

An applicant should review “Ineligible Elements, Activities, and Costs” in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects* for other items that are ineligible.

Ineligible Planning Projects

- Design of facilities that do not meet the BFP eligible project criteria.
- Design of facilities that do not provide access to the general public.
- Development of plans for private facilities.
- Master plans, comprehensive plans, or feasibility studies.
- Planning for sites or facilities that will not result in an eligible BFP project.

Eligible Costs

Pre-agreement Costs

RCO will pay only for work performed after a grant agreement has been signed by both RCO and a project sponsor with two exceptions:

- For an acquisition project, most incidental costs incurred for purchase of real property. Land costs are not allowable as a pre-agreement cost unless RCO has approved and issued a Waiver of Retroactivity. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.
- For a development and renovation project, expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits, all of which are incurred within three years of the start date of the grant agreement. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* or *Manual 5: Restoration Projects* for additional information.

There are no eligible pre-agreement costs for a planning project.

Construction performed before the execution of a grant agreement and compliance with cultural resource laws will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project. Costs associated with the preparation or presentation of the grant application are ineligible.

Environmental Requirements

Before beginning any work, a sponsor must obtain all necessary permits and comply with all applicable environmental regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and other state and local environmental requirements.

State Environmental Policy Act or National Environmental Policy Act

An applicant applying for a development or land acquisition grant must review and comply with the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)¹⁶ and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), when applicable. A project may be classified as categorically excluded from NEPA or SEPA.

¹⁶Revised Code of Washington 43.21C

Cultural Resources Review

Governor's [Executive Order 21-02](#), *Archaeological and Cultural Resources*, requires that state agencies review acquisition and construction projects for potential impacts to cultural resources, which are defined as archeological and historical sites and artifacts, and traditional tribal areas or items of religious, ceremonial, and social uses. The goal is to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harm to those resources.

The federal government, through section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires similar compliance for projects with federal involvement, for example, projects on federal land, with federal funds, or requiring a federal permit.

Review Process

RCO facilitates review under the Governor's executive order. Federal agencies facilitate 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.

RCO evaluates all projects before funding and initiates consultation with the affected tribes and the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. An applicant should not initiate consultation with either of these groups. The review may require a sponsor to conduct cultural resources surveys or may add requirements to the grant agreement.

An applicant should budget for cultural resources work for most projects. The cost of a cultural resources investigation is highly dependent upon the size, scope, and location of the project. RCO encourages the applicant to work with qualified cultural resources professionals to estimate costs. The Association for Washington Archaeology maintains a [list of qualified consultants](#) on its website. Costs for compliance actions (e.g., survey, monitoring, permitting, redesign, and mitigation) are eligible for reimbursement and should be included in the grant application.

Any required cultural resources investigations or documentation must be complete before a sponsor may start any ground-disturbing activities, such as demolition, planting, or installing signs. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval are breaches of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the Notice to Proceed.

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

State Agency Lands

Cultural resources compliance for a project on land owned or managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, or other state agency, is the responsibility of the respective agency regardless of the sponsor. The sponsor must provide RCO with documentation of compliance with the Governor's executive order or section 106 before a Notice to Proceed will be issued or acquisition will be paid in full.

See *RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects* for additional details on the RCO cultural resource review process.

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 the grant sponsor to consider how the project may spread invasive species and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction 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.
- 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 preventing the introduction and spread of 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.

Sustainability¹⁷

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages grant sponsors 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, access routes, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

Property Requirements

Landowner Acknowledgement for Acquisition Projects

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

Control of the Land

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to ensure public access to those investments, a sponsor must have adequate control of project sites to plan, construct, operate, and maintain the areas for the term required by the grant program and grant agreement. This "control and tenure" may be through land ownership, a lease, use agreement, or easement. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for more information.

Projects on State-owned Aquatic Lands

If a project will occur over, in, or alongside a navigable body of water, 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 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](#)

¹⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2011-22 and 2014-06

[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 sixty 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.

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

A local government applicant who needs to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do all 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.

A state agency applicant must follow the same procedure when developing a new facility where one currently does not exist. RCO will coordinate an interagency, in-person review of proposals for all other state agency projects.

Other Requirements and Things to Know

Carbon and Ecosystem Service Credits¹⁸

Land acquired or encumbered with an RCO grant may be enrolled in carbon credit and other payments for ecosystem service programs. These programs issue credits or direct payments to landowners for activities such as protecting land, planting trees, or improving management practices that reduce, sequester, or prevent future carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. Read more information in *RCO Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.

Number of Grant Proposals Allowed

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle. However, each proposal must be for a different scope of work. 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 an applicant contact staff to discuss options for phasing costly, interrelated, or complex project proposals.

Accessibility

Facilities or elements¹⁹ constructed with RCO grants and sponsor match are required by law to be accessible regardless of whether there are specific standards adopted in the State Building Code, Americans with Disabilities Act, or Architectural Barriers Act, as amended. 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.

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 website for detailed information about how to make the facility meet [accessibility requirements](#).

¹⁸Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2021-02

¹⁹A 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).

Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

Inspections

The sponsor shall provide the right of access to the project area to RCO to conduct pre-award inspections. After project funding, this access is expanded to include RCO, or any of its officers, or to any other authorized agent or official of the State of Washington or the federal government, at all reasonable times, in order to monitor and evaluate performance, compliance, and quality assurance. Normally, RCO staff conducts four types of project site visits:

- **Pre-award.** Made during the application phase, normally with the applicant to assess the project area and scope of work for eligibility concerns and compatibility with the grant program.
- **Interim.** This inspection, normally coordinated with the sponsor, is made sometime during the project implementation phase to help resolve any apparent or anticipated problems and to monitor project progress.
- **Final.** Before final acceptance of the contractor's work or accepting a project as complete, the sponsor shall request a final inspection by RCO. This request must be made only after the project is complete, architects and/or engineers have made their inspections, and defects have been corrected. It should be scheduled near project completion but still within the performance period of the contractor. The project must be constructed and functional as described in the grant agreement. The final inspection will review the following:
 - Completion of the project scope of work as described in the agreement.
 - Site appearance and construction quality.
 - Location of the funding or grant program acknowledgement sign. See Grant Program Acknowledgement and Signs, below.

When RCO staff's final inspection verifies that the project is complete, the final payment, including retainage, will be made.

- **Compliance.** Performed about every five years to ensure the site is managed and maintained as specified in the grant agreement.

Grant Program Acknowledgement and Signs²⁰

Acknowledgement

Sponsors must acknowledge Recreation and Conservation Funding Board funding assistance, by program, if possible, in all projects. This includes the following:

- Written acknowledgement in any news release or publication developed or modified for the funded project.
- Verbal acknowledgement during all ground-breaking and dedication ceremonies.

A sponsor should notify RCO at least two weeks before any project dedication ceremony and thirty days in advance if an RCO representative or speaker is requested at the ceremony.

Signs

The sponsor must provide prominent placement of signs at entrances and other locations unless exempted by board policy or waived by the RCO director. The sponsor may build such signs to harmonize with an existing design standard or request a standard acknowledgement sign from RCO.

For sponsor's developing their own signs, below are suggestions for how to incorporate appropriate acknowledgement:

- Funding provided by the Boating Facilities Program.
- Grant funding from the Boating Facilities Program made available by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Funding acknowledgement signs must be posted before the grant agreement end date and final reimbursement. RCO may provide free funding acknowledgement signs for this grant program upon request. A sponsor must provide proof of the funding acknowledgement by attaching photographs or other evidence to PRISM.

Additional Rules and Instructions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may issue additional or modified rules, instructions, interpretations, and guides from time to time as it believes necessary for the effective conduct of the grant program. Such changes may apply to all projects. Whenever possible, sufficient lead time will be given between the announcement and

²⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-120

the effective date to minimize impacts to projects already in process at the time of announcement.

Competitive Bid Requirements²¹

A grant sponsor shall follow current state procurement procedures or write its own. When buying things, a grant sponsor shall provide open and free competition, to the maximum extent practical. Be aware of organizational conflicts of interest. Contractors that develop specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals cannot be hired for the resulting work. A grant sponsor receiving federal money also must follow federal laws and regulations.

Prorating Projects

If a project will benefit a variety of recreational activities, the RCO grant will pay for only the percentage of the project that is used for boating activities eligible in this program. The sponsor must prorate the costs based on that percentage and include documentation to validate the prorated percentage in the application materials. An application will not be considered for funding if costs are not prorated appropriately.

For example, if the grant applicant proposes to build a breakwater that will protect moorages for all boats, the grant applicant should identify the percentage of non-eligible boats that would benefit from the project and deduct that cost from the grant application. If 70 percent of the boats in the marina have permanent moorage (a non-eligible use), the grant applicant may include only the 30 percent of project costs associated with short-term guest moorage. The applicant should include an explanation of prorating in the grant application materials as well as data to validate the methods.

Fees and Income

User or other fees may be charged for areas and facilities acquired or developed with RCO grants. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects*, and Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110 for more information.

Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.²² More information about [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available online.

²¹RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, *Compliance with Applicable Law and Procurement Requirements*.

²²Revised Code of Washington 42.56

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations²³

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area²⁴ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's grant agreement. A [sample grant agreement](#) may be found on RCO's website.

RCO recognizes that changes occur over time and that some facilities may become obsolete, or the land needed for something else. The law discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that the grant sponsor replaces the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as outdoor recreation, habitat protection, farmland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the grant agreement. For development and restoration projects, the period is determined by the type of control and tenure provided for the project.

A conversion occurs when the project area acquired, developed, or restored with RCO grant funding is used for purposes other than what it was funded for originally. 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 for an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

After a project is complete (that is, after RCO's final reimbursement and acceptance of the project), RCO documents that were signed by the sponsor continue to govern the project area described in the boundary map for which funds have been granted.

Changes may be made only with the prior approval of the board. If a compliance issue arises, RCO staff works with the sponsor to resolve the issue. Unresolved, identified issues could result in restrictions on applying for or receiving future grants.

²³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7: Funded Projects*.

²⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19). Project area is the defined geographic area where the project occurs and is described in the project's boundary map.

Restrictions

The restrictions described in this section apply only to portions of a facility funded by BFP grants *and* those support facilities needed for recreational motorboats.

Recreational Motorboats Have Priority

To comply with state law,²⁵ a sponsor must operate the BFP-assisted facility in a manner that assures recreational boaters have continuous and reasonable access. In case of conflict, non-commercial, guest recreational boating activities shall have priority.

A sponsor must manage and enforce requirements consistent with this section. Rules that are more restrictive may be adopted by the sponsor if the intent is to achieve a desired recreational experience, reduce conflicts, and achieve a desired level of environmental quality.

Access Restrictions

The use of card, punch code, or similar privileged locking devices to restrict access to grant-assisted restrooms, showers, or moorage floats is allowed for management purposes. However, the general public²⁶ must have access to such facilities at reasonable times (for example, daylight hours) without restriction. This provision does not apply when access is closed to all, such as during repairs or maintenance, or during a low recreational use season (see below).

Commercial and Other Non-recreational Uses

Use Certification

Approval to use a BFP facility for commercial, non-motorized watercraft, non-guest boating, or non-recreational purposes, explained later in this section, is contingent on the sponsor's written request for a Use Certification. The written request must include specific dates not to exceed a calendar year in duration, exact facilities affected, maps, recreational and non-recreational use data, and monitoring and site plans. RCO must approve the request before the activity begins. This request for certification must guarantee, and any approval will be conditioned upon, the following:

- The use will not interfere with guest, recreational motorboating. Some portion of the facility always must be available to meet off-season or recreational uses.

²⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.25

²⁶The term "public" refers to members of the general public who are recreational motorboaters. Organizations may open BFP-funded facilities to other recreationists if these users do not conflict or compete with recreational motorboaters and their use is of a de minimis nature.

- BFP project elements will be returned completely to guest, recreational use not later than the third Friday in April. Exceptions are listed under the "Other Uses Regardless of Season" and "Launch Facilities" sections below.
- The use or activity will be safe.
- The use will not damage the facility.
- The sponsor will conform to the board's income policies (Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110 and *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* or *Manual 4: Development Projects*).

Peak Season

From at least the third Friday in April through September 30, use of a BFP facility for commercial, non-motorized watercraft; non-guest boating; or other non-recreational boating activities is prohibited. Exceptions to this policy are listed below in the "Other Uses Regardless of Season" and "Launch Facilities" sections.

If provided with written justification, RCO's director may adjust the length of the "High Recreational Use Season" or authorize other exceptions.

Off Season

From October 1 to the third Friday in April, and after a Use Certification has been approved by RCO, BFP facilities may be used for the following:

- Moorage of non-commercial recreational vessels
- Moorage of recreational rental boats for concession operation purposes
- Moorage of commercial vessels
- Support of fishing equipment or boat machinery repair or storage
- Support of salmon net pens or other aquaculture activities

Other Uses Regardless of Season

Use of a BFP facility for the following purposes is contingent on a Use Certification approved by RCO before the activity begins:

- Concession activities that enhance the recreational experience, if performed by an agent of the project sponsor, or through a use agreement with the sponsor.
- Activities such as on-water boat sales, shows, or public events.

- Moorage of watercraft used by a sponsor, or a contractor of the sponsor, while engaged in a construction, renovation, repair, or maintenance activity that lasts more than ten days.
- Short-term moorage for commercial vessels during loading and unloading of passengers when the destination is a recreation site or facility accessible only or primarily by boat. This includes "general tour" vessels (motorized and non-motorized harbor tours, dinner cruises, sightseeing, private ferries, sports game-day transportation, and so on).

Regardless of the use certification, the board or the RCO director may deny or rescind approval for the other uses based on a review. This review may include any of the following:

- Any possible immediate or cumulative impact on recreational boaters' ability to use the facility during such events
- How well the sponsor has met its use certification guarantees

Launch Facilities

Launch facilities must be designed and used primarily for public, non-commercial, recreational, motorboat launching and retrieval. Unless otherwise restricted by the grant sponsor, these facilities occasionally may be used for a commercial purpose, including launching and retrieving commercial vessels. This commercial use or activity must not do the following:

- Restrict or diminish public recreational use
- Cause damage to the launch or related facilities
- Cause an unsafe condition

Definitions

- **Commercial Use:** The use of any marine craft, facility, or marine recreation land in a way that normally is intended to yield a profit or for purposes other than enjoyment, sport, leisure, or pleasure. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Commercial fishing, loading or unloading of freight, marine equipment servicing
 - Use of areas by concessionaire operations

- Use involving research or development of underwater resources
 - On-water vessel sales or demonstration of vessels available for sales
- **Commercial Vessel:** Includes, but is not limited to, any vessel that is the following:
 - Used or retained primarily for commercial purposes
 - Operated by a person who has been engaged or will be using it to engage in a commercial activity during the current course of travel or passage
 - Held for charter
 - Used for the transport of freight or non-recreational fish catches
 - Used primarily for research or development of underwater resources
 - Used for the transport of passengers for profit, charter, or fee
- **Commercial Vessel Used for Personal Recreational Purposes:** A commercial vessel is considered a recreational vessel when it is used solely for personal enjoyment, sport, leisure, or pleasure, and not combined with any commercial use as defined above.
- **Guest Recreational Boating:** Recreational boats using moorage for a maximum of fourteen consecutive days are considered short-term, guest recreational boating.

Section 3:

Money Matters

This section covers the following:

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Matching share
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Cost changes
- ✓ Federal rules
- ✓ Records and reimbursement

Grant Limits

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to expand the sponsor's existing capacity, not replace funding that would have been used for a project without the grant²⁷

The board establishes grant limits for its programs. The grant limits for each category are below. BFP funds may not exceed 75 percent of a project's total cost, except for state agency projects. See the match reduction policy for other exceptions. By statute, half of available boating funds are reserved for local agency projects and half for state agency projects.²⁸

Local Agencies and Native American Tribes

The board allows grants up to the following:

- \$1 million for a development project
- \$1 million for a land acquisition project

²⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(6)

²⁸Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.080

- \$1 million for a project that combines acquisition and planning OR acquisition and development
- \$200,000 for a planning project
 - Planning means architecture and engineering, environmental review, cultural resources, and permitting. See the section on planning projects earlier in this manual for more information.
 - Grant limit will be 20 percent of the estimated construction cost or \$200,000, whichever is less.

State Agencies

The total of all BFP dollars requested by any single state agency may not exceed twice that estimated by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to be available for state agencies in a grant cycle.

Administration, Architecture, Engineering

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

Architecture and engineering costs for development and renovation projects are limited to 20 percent of the total development project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums for these elements is contained in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* (administration costs) and *Manual 4: Development Projects* (architectural and engineering costs).

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 meet statutory requirements, foster and demonstrate a local commitment to the project, and allow state funding to be available to a greater number of projects.²⁹

Local Agencies and Native American Tribes

Local agencies and Native American tribes must contribute at least 25 percent of the project's total cost in matching resources. In addition, local agencies must contribute at

²⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

least 10 percent of the total project cost in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.³⁰

State Agencies

State agencies do not need to provide a match.³¹ However, all applicants are encouraged to find ways to reduce government costs as much as possible. This is reflected in the project evaluation criteria.

Eligible Match³²

Applicant resources used to match board funds must be eligible in BFP, and may include any one or more of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Conservation Futures
- Corrections labor
- Donations—the value of using donated cash, equipment, labor, materials, property rights, or services (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Force account³³—the value of using a sponsor’s labor, equipment, and materials
- Grants—federal, state, local, and private (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see “Types of Match” section below)
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

³⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

³¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(5)

³²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(3)

³³“Force account” means to use the applicant’s resources as opposed to that of contractors, volunteers, or others.

Not Allowed as Match

- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement for another project or action (e.g., permit requirement, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, Habitat Conservation Plan, legal settlement, etc.). See “Mitigation Funds as Match” below.
- Costs for items not included in the grant agreement.
- Costs that are double counted (that is, a cost incurred by a grant sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project).
- Costs that are not eligible for grants.
- Costs that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.

Match Requirements

All matching resources must be all the following:

- An integral and necessary part of the approved project
- Part of the work identified in the application and grant agreement
- For eligible work types or elements
- 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. An applicant should review carefully the evaluation instrument to determine if this applies to the project.

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.³⁴

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, an applicant must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. The applicant must sign and submit a Certification of Match Form to ensure the project is included in the funding recommendation. The applicant is advised to plan for a project with match dependent on a citizen vote or passage of a ballot measure. This certification is due at least one calendar month before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.³⁵ The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO website.

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

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding 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 six months from the time of the first grant award to certify the match requirements of that grant.³⁶ To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest completion date of the two grants.

Types of Match

Donations

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 an applicant to secure written confirmation of all donations planned as match and attach the donation letters to the application.

³⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(7)

³⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

³⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

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

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

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 and state requirements and thus will vary with individual program policies.

An applicant 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 Match³⁷

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

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in *both* grant programs are counted as the match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- Local agencies only must provide at least 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched. This match may not be from federal or state funds and may include in-kind contributions. This policy does not apply to Native American tribes.

³⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.³⁸

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding 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. To prevent a backlog of unspent grants, the sponsor must finish the project by the earliest complete date of the two grants.³⁹

For evaluation scoring, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.⁴⁰

Matching resources also must conform to the deadlines discussed in section 1, "Grant Process and Timeline."

Mitigation Funds

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 Changes

Cost Overruns

Project cost overruns are the responsibility of the sponsor. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's actual expenditures.

If unused funds are available, RCO may consider a cost increase. Additional information about requesting a cost increase is in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* and *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Cost Increases

Cost increases for an approved project 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

³⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045. Matching resources also must conform to the deadlines discussed in *Grant Process and Timeline* in Section 1.

³⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2004-08 and 2006-13b

⁴⁰Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

10 percent of the project's initial approved grant amount. 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 administration is governed by [Part 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#) and RCO may require additional information.

Records and Reimbursement

Sponsors Must Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. A sponsor 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 that documents costs incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

RCO will not pay more than the grant sponsor's out-of-pocket costs.

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. See *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects* for more information on escrow payments.

Billing procedures are explained further in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*

Records

The sponsor 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.

Audits

All records relevant to a project funded by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board must be on file with the grant sponsor and are subject to audit by the State and inspection by RCO. If the auditor's inspection of the records discloses any charges incorrectly claimed and reimbursed, cash restitution of the incorrect amount must be made to the board.

Section 4:

Project Evaluation

This section covers the following:

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

How Project Evaluation Works

The evaluation process begins when the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the evaluation process⁴¹ and evaluation criteria during public meetings.

The RCO director appoints people to serve on an advisory committee to evaluate each grant proposal. In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experiences and knowledge of boating in Washington. The director may appoint *ex officio* members to the advisory committee to provide additional representation and expertise. Visit RCO's website for [membership and other details](#).

An applicant prepares a PowerPoint presentation to address the evaluation criteria and deliver it to the advisory committee during a virtual, oral presentation.⁴² Advisory committee members may ask follow-up questions before they score the grant proposal. The virtual online presentation process is broadcast live on YouTube for the public, but the public is not invited to comment.

The advisory committee then scores the grant application using the responses to the criteria, graphics included in the application or provided during the presentation, and summary application materials.

At the same time, RCO staff score the objective sections of the application, such as the amount of matching share the applicant is providing and conformance to growth

⁴¹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

⁴²Adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in June 2023 with Resolution 2023-24.

management planning. Staff scores are based on information submitted by applicant and obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the state Department of Commerce.

The advisory committee and staff scores are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations that the RCO director submits to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final decision about funding in public meetings.⁴³ The public is given an opportunity to comment on the grant proposal before the board makes its decision.

Do Not Fund Recommendation⁴⁴

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 who 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 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.

Growth Management Act Compliance

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers an organization's compliance with the Growth Management Act when awarding grants for public facilities.⁴⁵ The board gives preference through evaluation scoring to town, city, and county applicants who are required to plan under the Act.⁴⁶ Scoring for compliance with the Act and other staff-

⁴³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

⁴⁴Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

⁴⁵Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

⁴⁶Revised Code of Washington 36.60A

scored evaluation criteria are based on the organization's status as of the category's technical completion deadline. RCO uses information reported by the Washington State Department of Commerce for scoring Growth Management Act compliance. Agencies in compliance receive a zero score on the question, while out of compliance status results in a minus one score.

At the time of application, the applicant should consult its planning department or contact [Washington State Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services](#) to determine the compliance status. If an organization is out of compliance, this advance inquiry may give the organization time to change its status before the technical completion deadline. RCO is not responsible for changing an organization's compliance status with the Growth Management Act.

Evaluating Combination Projects

Projects involving both acquisition and development or planning are evaluated on all the criteria for both types of projects. To ensure equal treatment for combination projects, the scoring multiplier for some evaluation criteria is half of that used for individual acquisition, development, or planning projects.

Evaluation Criteria

Boating Facilities Program Evaluation Criteria Summary		
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
Question	Project Type ⁴⁷	Possible Points
1. Need	All Projects	15 points
2. Site Suitability	Acquisition Projects	20 points
	Combination, Development, Planning Projects	15 points
3. Urgency	Acquisition Projects	10 points
	Combination Projects	5 points
4. Project Design	Development Projects	10 points
	Combination of Acquisition and Development Projects	5 points
5. Planning Success (architecture and engineering only)	Planning Projects	10 points
	Combination of Acquisition and Planning Projects	5 points
6. Sustainability	Combination, Development, Planning Projects	5 points
7. Cost-benefit	All Projects	10 points
8. Boats on Trailers	All Projects	5 points
9. Boating Experience	All Projects	6 points
10. Readiness	All Projects	5 points
Scored by RCO		
11. Matching Shares	All Projects	4 points Local
		1 points State
12. Proximity to People	All Projects	1 points
13. Growth Management Act (local agencies) Preference	All Projects	0 points
Total Possible Points		76 points Local 73 points State

⁴⁷All project types=Acquisition, development or renovation, combination, and planning (architecture, engineering, or permit-related). Combination projects include both acquisition of real property and either development or planning activities.

Detailed Scoring Criteria

1. **Need.** Is the project needed?

Consider whether the project addresses boater needs as described in the *Recreational Boating Plan*. Consider the goal of the project and how it relates to the service area and the following:

- Inventory of existing sites and facilities
- Physical condition of the inventory
- Unserved or underserved populations
- Amount of use of existing sites
- Potential use of proposed sites
- How the project meets the need

Is the project named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan? Examples of such plans include comprehensive, shoreline, port, waterfront access, park, open space, capital improvement, and capital facilities.

For example, a proposal for a new site in a large city with few existing sites likely would seem to fill a substantial need and could receive a high score. A proposal for improving a geographically remote site accessing an important sport fishery in high demand also could receive a high score.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by three.

2. **Site Suitability.** Is the site well-suited for the intended recreational uses?

Consider the following:

- The site's size and location
- Topography and soil conditions
- Existing facilities or development (if any)
- Adjacent land uses
- Natural features or attractions (such as productive fishing locations)
- Alternatives that may have been considered

In general, sites more suitable for the intended uses should get higher scores.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by three for combination, development, and planning projects and by four for acquisition-only projects.

3. Urgency (any project with acquisition as a component). How urgent is the need for funding from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board?

If the grant is not made available, will public access or use be lost? Consider the availability of alternatives. Where none exist, the significance of BFP funding may be higher. BFP funding shall augment, not replace, other sources of funding available to the grant sponsor.

- ▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by two for acquisition-only projects.

0 points	No evidence presented.
Low score	Minimal urgency. Site opportunity appears to be in no immediate danger of a loss in quality or to public use in the next two years.
Medium score	Actions are under consideration that could result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.
High score	Actions will be taken that will result in the opportunity losing quality or becoming unavailable for future public use.

4. Project Design (development or acquisition and development projects only). Is the proposal appropriately designed for the intended use?

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy rewards design standards and construction techniques intended to maximize service life, minimize routine maintenance, and avoid environmental impacts.

For example, if users of a proposed boat ramp can be expected to be power loading, solid concrete ramp construction may be more appropriate than concrete plank construction. In harsh marine conditions, steel piling or concrete could be expected to have a longer service life than timber piling.

Evaluators should consider design and construction elements such as the following:

- Accurate cost estimates

- Aesthetics
- Future maintenance needs*
- Innovative and creative elements*
- Materials and specifications*
- Risk management
- Space relationships*
- User friendly elements

*User-friendly and universally accessible considerations

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by two for development-only projects.

Revised February 9, 2016, by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-10.

5. Planning Success (planning or acquisition and planning projects only). What potential does this project have to successfully complete the required documents needed to start a development project?

Evaluators are asked to judge how likely it is that the project will result in development in the near future. Factors to consider include the following:

- Cost-effective design and construction standards.
- Site conditions that might require extraordinary or unique architectural and engineering efforts.
- The results of public involvement.
- Whether design approaches are untested or have tested successfully.
- The experience or expertise of the organization that will do the work.
- The complexity or feasibility of environmental mitigation that could be required.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by two for planning-only projects.

6. Sustainability (development, combination, and planning projects only).

Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how the project's location or design supports the applicant organization's sustainability plan or how the applicant considered the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. The applicant and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. The applicant is encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of the project, and evaluators should score the project based on the extent to which the applicant has considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of the project whether the applicant discusses 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

- Uses 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: zero to five points

Adopted January 2020, Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2020-06

7. Cost-Benefit. Do the benefits of the project outweigh the costs?

Having reviewed the technical and other merits of the project proposal, evaluators now are asked to determine its overall cost-benefit.

Cost can be more than dollars. It also can be unacceptable harm to the environment or something that causes unnecessary ill will for boaters.

Benefit is the gain realized with the requested level of public investment. It can be gain for boaters, the environment, or the public, or some other gain.

A proposal demonstrating greater net benefits should score higher than a proposal with limited value or with value at too great a cost.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points, which later is multiplied by two.

8. Boats on Trailers. Does the proposed project predominantly serve boats on trailers?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Added February 9, 2016, by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-10.

9. Boating Experience. How will the project affect the boating experience?

Boaters are increasingly concerned about the quality of the boating experience. Although the meaning of a quality experience is highly personal, evaluators should consider the complex relationships among the following:

- The size and location of the water body to be accessed.
- The number and types of boats using that water body.
- The traditional or historic use of the water body.
- The number and types of additional boats that could gain access.
- Current and expected boat speeds.

Evaluators are asked to consider the overall potential impact of a proposal.

▲ Point Range: minus two to three points, which later is multiplied by.

Minus two or minus one point	Proposal will harm or disrupt a quality boating experience.
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Zero points	Proposal will not change the boating experience.
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One to three points	Proposals will enhance or improve quality boating.
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10. Readiness. Is the project ready to proceed?

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy encourages proposals that are ready for immediate implementation. That is, an applicant should be ready to start work as soon as a grant agreement is signed.

An acquisition proposal that has completed negotiations should get a higher score than a proposal for which negotiations still are underway or have not yet started.

A development proposal with permits in hand should score higher than a proposal that is in the process of securing permits.

An architecture and engineering proposal may merit a high score if it is clear that work on the permit or plan can start immediately.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

11. Matching Shares (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). To what extent will the applicant match BFP funds with contributions from its own resources?

To qualify, contributions must be eligible for BFP funding, and may include the following:

- Cash, the value of donated labor, equipment, and materials.
- The value of donated land or lesser interests in land, except when the interest is owned by the applicant or by a public agency.

For evaluation scoring purposes, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.

▲ Point Range: zero to four points.

Local Agencies

Zero points	0-25 percent of project's value will be contributed from applicant resources.
One point	25.01-45 percent of project's value will be contributed from applicant's resources.
Two points	45.01-55 percent of project's value will be contributed from applicant's resources.
Three points	55.01 percent or more of project's value will be contributed from applicant's resources.

Local and State Agencies

One point	Staff adds one point to the score assigned above if an applicant demonstrates that its matching share includes non-government contributions equivalent to 10 percent or more of the total project cost.
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Revised November 19, 2004

12. Proximity to People (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Is the project site in a populated area?

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board policy is to give preference to projects in urban areas. Urban areas are defined in Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.250 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.

Is the project in an area meeting this definition?

▲ Point Range: zero to one point.

Zero points	No
One point	Yes

13. Growth Management Act Preference (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?⁴⁸

⁴⁸Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act preference required.)

State law requires the following:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant ⁴⁹ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040 ("state law").
- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to an applicant that has 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 meets any 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 six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection (B) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

Scores for this question are based on information from the state Department of Commerce, Growth Management Division. If an agency's comprehensive plan, development regulations, or amendments have been appealed to a Growth Management Act Hearings Board, the applicant cannot be penalized during the period of the appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

▲ Point Range: minus one to zero points.

Minus one point	Applicant does not meet the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	Applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.
Zero points	Applicant is a nonprofit organization, or state or federal agency.

⁴⁹All references to applicants in this question refer to counties, cities, and towns only.