

**Manual 12**

# Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

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February 2026

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# At a Glance

## Boating Infrastructure Grant (Tier 1 and 2)

### Purpose

This federal program provides grants to develop, renovate, maintain, and plan for public boating facilities for transient recreational boats twenty-six feet long and larger. Grants also may be used to provide information and boater education. Transient means travel to a single facility for day use or stay for up to fifteen days.

### Who may apply?

- Cities and towns
- Counties
- Native American Tribes
- Private marina operators
- Qualified nonprofits
- Special purpose districts
- State agencies

### Is a plan required?

No

### What types of projects are eligible?

- Development and renovation
- Education
- Planning
- Maintenance (only in Tier One)
- Development or renovation with some maintenance (only in Tier Two)

### What are the grant limits?

- Tier One: \$5,000 to 288,046
- Tier Two: \$300,001 to \$1,440,230

**How much match must the project sponsor contribute?**

25 percent. A projects with a match of 26 percent or more will receive additional points during evaluation.

**How is the project evaluated?**

- Tier One: A state advisory committee reviews written applications and scores the projects.
- Tier Two: A national review panel reviews written applications and scores the projects.

**When are pre-applications due?**

April 30, 2026

**When are final applications due?**

July 15, 2026, estimate. The due date may change to ensure applicants meet the federal application deadline.

**When are grants awarded?**

July 2027, pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval

**What's new this year?**

- Added the Buy America Build America requirement
- Made planning or preconstruction projects eligible.
- Announced that the federal Notice of Funding Opportunity is expected by June 2026. The Recreation and Conservation Office will notify applicants of any federal changes or additional requirements.

# Section 1: Introduction

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## **This section covers the following:**

- ✓ The Boating Infrastructure Grant program
- ✓ Program administration
- ✓ Who makes decisions
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ The grant process and timeline
- ✓ Time limits and extensions

## **The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program**

Congress authorized the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program under the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998.<sup>1</sup> The program provides funds to states for development, renovation, and maintenance of boating facilities for transient recreational vessels twenty-six feet and longer. Funds also may be used to provide information and enhance boater education.

Obtaining and managing a grant requires the highest level of preparation from the applicant and the highest level of due diligence from a successful grant sponsor. No matter the amount of money or relative share of BIG in a project, program rules apply to the entire funded project throughout the compliance period identified in the grant agreement.

Funds for the BIG program come from a portion of the federal Aquatic Resources Trust Fund as allowed by law.

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<sup>1</sup>Public Law 105-178 of the Sport Fish Restoration Act, commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act.

## Program Administration

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the U.S. Department of the Interior manages this federal grant program. The Service ultimately receives and approves all project applications, agreements, and amendments.

## Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board administers this program for Washington State. 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.

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a 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 provides basic information on procedures and guidelines used in the BIG program. The program has two integrated sets of policies. The first are the policies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as described in the federal circular. The second are the policies of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The board adopted these policies, which focus on project selection, grant agreement, management, and enforcement of federal requirements, in public meetings. If the policies conflict or are unclear, federal policy generally supersedes board policy.

Authority for the administrative policies and guidance for the evaluation questions are established in the following statutes, rules, and plans:

- [50 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Final Rule](#)
- [Washington Administrative Code 286](#)
- [2023 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#)

## Who Makes Decisions

### Staff Decisions

Staff review the grant application to ensure it is complete, the project is eligible to compete, the grant applicant is 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 policies, criteria changes, and procedures and sometimes makes recommendations to the director about whether a specific project should not be funded.

### 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 greater than lower bids, to terminating the agreement.

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 days before a board meeting.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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<sup>2</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-04-060(4 and 5)

## Federal and Board Decisions

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board make the final decisions for funding, policies, and project changes, although some decisions the board 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, each project proposal should demonstrate adequate public notification and review and have the support of the public body applying for the grant.

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

## Where to Get Information

### Recreation and Conservation Office

Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street SE  
PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

[Email](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000  
FAX: (360) 902-3026  
Washington Telecommunications  
Relay Service: Call 711

[Website](#)

### Mailing Address

PO Box 40917  
Olympia, WA 98504-0917

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Region Headquarters  
911 NE 11th Avenue  
Portland, OR 97232

Telephone: (503) 231-6120  
FAX: (206) 220-4161

[Website](#)

RCO staff 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 [BIG 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.

- *Manual 4: Development Projects*
- *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations*
- *Manual 8: Reimbursements*

## Alternative Format

To get this manual and other publications in an alternative format, please contact the RCO communications office at the mailing address above, by calling 711 for the Washington Telecommunications Relay Service for the hearing and speech impaired, or emailing [RCO Communications](#).

## Grant Process and Timeline

RCO offers grants every year, in conjunction with the federal budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans fifteen months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO website for precise dates.

## Application Year

**Webinar.** RCO holds a webinar (an online meeting) in the winter or early spring of even-numbered years to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

**Entering an Application.** RCO strongly encourages the applicant to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March.

To enter an application, 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. Learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

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 the proposal is eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details.

**Application Due.** While RCO typically accepts Tier One applications during even-numbered years only, Tier Two applications are accepted annually. Pre-applications for both tiers typically are due in late April or early May. Final applications are due in early July. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. The applicant must *submit* the application before the July 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.** First, RCO staff review the application also to ensure it is eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. Second, as part of a written evaluation process, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review the project to assess the technical merits of project and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. After hearing feedback from the advisory committee and RCO staff, the applicant may make changes to improve the project, if needed. The applicant must complete all changes and resubmit the application by the technical completion deadline. During technical review, the advisory committee makes a recommendation to RCO's director on submittal of the Tier Two projects to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding consideration.

**Technical Completion Deadline.** RCO establishes a technical completion deadline by which the application must be complete. After this date, the

applicant cannot make changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

**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 testimony at the meeting. The applicant may but is not required to attend. This review may happen at the same time as the technical review. The board then approves the list of projects for submittal to the Governor.

**Board Submits Biennial Budget Request.** The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board sends the Governor a request for authority to spend any federal funding for BIG approved for the next biennium.

**Certification of Matching Funds.** An applicant with match included in the application must submit the [Certification of Applicant Match](#) by the technical completion match certification deadline.<sup>3</sup>

**Project Evaluations—A Written Process.** For Tier One projects, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee uses the application materials, which include the responses to the evaluation questions, cost estimates, maps, graphics, and photographs. The committee members score each proposal against criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

For Tier Two projects, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assembles a panel of staff to review, rank, and recommend applications for funding. The panel uses the application materials, which include responses to the evaluation criteria that are published annually in the Federal Notice of Funding Opportunity. The panel submits its recommendation to the director of the Service, who makes the final funding decision.

**Post-Evaluation Conference.** After project evaluations for Tier One projects, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with the advisory committee. If committee members have questions or want to discuss the process, criteria, or results, they submit a written request or comments to RCO staff. When needed, staff will schedule time for committee members to meet and discuss the preliminary ranked list and the application and evaluation processes. Staff post

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

the preliminary ranked list on RCO's website. The resulting ranked list of projects is the basis for the funding recommendation to the RCO director.

**Preliminary Approval.** Near the beginning of the federal fiscal year, RCO's director approves the Tier One projects and sends them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding. The director also submits Tier Two projects for the national funding competition. Section 4 provides additional information about the evaluation process for Tier Two projects.

## Funding Year

**Legislature Approves Project.** When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature generally approves spending authority for federal BIG funds.

**Funding Approval.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director announces funding, typically in March or April.

**Pre-agreement Materials.** After the funding announcement, the applicant has two months to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by RCO staff).<sup>4</sup> This typically includes milestones or a timeline for project implementation and documentation necessary for environmental and cultural resources clearance.

RCO staff prepare the federal application, which includes the pre-agreement materials, for submittal to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for its review.

**Federal Grant Agreement.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service then issues a federal grant agreement to RCO that often includes special conditions that the grant applicant must satisfy before RCO can issue a Notice to Proceed with construction or maintenance activities.

**State Grant Agreement.** Following receipt of the federal agreement, RCO staff then prepare and issue the grant agreement. The applicant must return the signed agreement within three months.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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

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

**Successful Applicant Webinar.** After RCO and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approve funding, RCO publishes online a recorded webinar for successful grant applicants. This webinar covers the sponsor's responsibilities to comply with the grant agreement, issues that might come up when implementing projects, billing procedures, grant agreement amendments for changes and time extensions, closing project procedures, and long-term compliance.

### **Time Limits and Extensions**

The sponsor must complete the funded project promptly. For this reason, RCO staff, with sponsor assistance, establish a timetable for project completion, including 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:

- Designs are completed.
- Bid documents are prepared.
- Environmental assessment is completed.
- Hazardous substances review is completed.
- Matching resources are secured.
- Permits are in-hand.

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

## Pre-Agreement Phase<sup>6</sup>

With RCO staff assistance, the applicant must develop milestones and a timeline, to be included in the grant agreement. The milestones for project implementation should ensure timely completion as follows:

- Development project Two to three years
- Education project Two years
- Exceptionally complex project Three years
- Maintenance project Two years
- Planning project Two years

## Implementation Phase

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

- Adhere to project implementation milestones and communicate with RCO staff about any issues and possible delays.
- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting the milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.<sup>7</sup>
- Submit progress reports at intervals designated by the RCO grant agreement.

RCO staff monitors critical project milestones (for example, obtaining permits, starting construction). RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones established in the grant agreement.<sup>8</sup> (See the grant agreement section on "Termination and Suspension.") The sponsor may appeal any RCO director decision to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

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<sup>6</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2000-13

<sup>7</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(6)

<sup>8</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2006-13b.

## Extensions

The director may approve a project completion timeline up to four years. When one Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used to match another or a new grant is merged with a previous grant award, RCO staff will use the earliest grant award 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 submitted to RCO at least sixty days before the project's completion date.<sup>9</sup> The request must justify the need and commit to a new set of specified milestones.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has established a three-year period of performance. RCO only may grant an extension beyond the three-year period if the Service extends the period of performance.

## 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, or in some instances, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.

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<sup>9</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(8)

<sup>10</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286.13.040(7)

# Section 2: Policies

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## This section covers the following:

- ✓ Categories and grants offered
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible facility management requirements
- ✓ Eligible project types, activities, and costs
- ✓ Ineligible projects and costs
- ✓ Proration of eligible activities
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Additional federal requirements
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Protection of federal investments and ongoing stewardship

## Categories and Grants Offered

BIG offers two tiers of grants, which are almost identical. The key differences are the grant limits (see section 3), how projects are selected for funding, and the items below.

### Tier One: State Grants

- An applicant may submit a stand-alone maintenance project.
- Applications are reviewed, evaluated, and ranked by the Washington State Boating Programs Advisory Committee.
- RCO typically accepts applications in even-numbered years but may accept applications in odd-numbered years if funds are available.

## Tier Two: National Grants

- An applicant may submit maintenance activities as part of a development or renovation project only. See “Maintenance Projects” for more information.
- Applications are reviewed by RCO staff and the Boating Programs Advisory Committee for eligibility and then forwarded, without state evaluation, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the national competition.
- RCO accepts applications annually and the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awards grants the following year.

## Choosing a Grant Category

A grant applicant submits a proposal to a specific category. RCO staff reviews the applicant’s choice and recommends any changes.

A BIG project will be evaluated in only one category. At the applicant’s discretion, a project appropriate to more than one category may be divided into stand-alone, distinct projects and submitted separately. One project cannot depend on the anticipated completion of another.<sup>11</sup> An applicant must determine the best category for the project by the technical completion deadline, unless otherwise authorized by the director.

## Eligible Applicants

Grants may be made to the following organizations:

- Cities and towns
- Counties
- Native American Tribes
- Port districts
- Nonprofit organizations (see below for qualifications)
- Private operators (see below for qualifications)

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<sup>11</sup>Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86-Boating Infrastructure Grants §86:44(a)(2)

- State agencies
- Some special purpose districts, such as park and recreation districts or public utility districts, are eligible if legally authorized to acquire and develop public outdoor recreation facilities.

## Not Eligible

Any grantee, sub-grantee, or contractor of any grantee or sub-grantee that has been debarred or suspended under [Executive Order 12549](#).

## Applicant Requirements

### Nonprofit Organizations and Private Operators

A private operator or nonprofit organization must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Be registered with the State of Washington's Secretary of State.
- Have an equivalent successor identified in its articles of organization.
- Have been active in recreational boating for a minimum of three years.
- Does not require exclusive use of the facilities funded through this program.
- Does not discriminate on the basis of any protected class.
- Provides evidence that its primary purpose or business is recreational boating.
- Meets federal eligibility requirements.
- Provides a copy of articles of incorporation and bylaws including any amendments.

### Legal Opinion for First-Time Applicants

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion from an attorney licensed in Washington State that the applicant is eligible to do all the activities below. 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 stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies.
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto.
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.
- Enter into a grant agreement that requires federal- and state-approved mitigation if there is a conversion or if the outstanding rights or reversionary interests are exercised in such a manner that results in a conversion.

### **Eligible Facility Management Requirements**

Upon project completion, a BIG facility must comply with the following:

- Allow public access as described at 50 Code of Federal Regulations 86.92.
- Be open and accessible to eligible vessels on navigable waters that are at least six feet deep at the lowest tide or fluctuation, unless a justification has been provided indicating the facility still will serve its intended purpose for typical eligible users that visit that location.
- Clearly designate eligible uses and inform the public of restrictions.
- Limit stays to no more than fifteen consecutive days.
- Limit use of overnight docks and moorings to eligible vessels that are twenty-six feet or more in length.
- Offer security, safety, and service for eligible users and vessels.

- Record a federal Notice of Grant with the public property records office.
- Serve its intended purpose for its useful life as specified in the grant agreement or as extended pursuant to 50 Code of Federal Regulations 86.14(b)(2), except in the case of a catastrophic event.

## Eligible Project Types

### Development or Renovation Projects

A development project is construction or work resulting in new elements, including but not limited to structures, facilities, or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources. Development projects may include new elements or renovation of existing public outdoor recreation facilities and support amenities such as restrooms or showers. Renovation work is intended to improve an existing site or structure to increase its useful service life beyond current expectations or functions. Grants for development projects also may cover demolition, site preparation, architectural and engineering services, permitting, and similar activities that are essential to complete the proposed project scope.

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

### Education and Information Projects

An education project provides information for the benefit of boaters. The materials must be designed to target eligible vessels or a BIG-funded project.

### Maintenance Projects<sup>12</sup>

Maintenance projects are defined in the federal regulations<sup>13</sup> as those that keep structures or equipment in a condition to serve the intended purposes. It includes cyclical or occasional actions to keep facilities fully functional. It does not include operational actions such as janitorial work.

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<sup>12</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted in February 2016

<sup>13</sup>50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

In Tier One, BIG allows two types of maintenance projects: A stand-alone maintenance project or as part of a development or renovation project, as long as it relates to the development or renovation activities of the project.

Maintenance activities are allowed as part of a Tier Two development or restoration project only if they are directly related to the development and restoration activities of the project and do not exceed more than 50 percent of total project costs.

Maintenance projects must directly benefit eligible users. If an applicant requests funds for maintenance at a facility that previously was funded with a BIG grant, the program requires extension of the useful life of each affected capital improvement.

## **Planning Projects**

A planning or preconstruction project is one that completes the actions necessary for the construction of eligible boating infrastructure. The project may involve one or more of the following: cultural, economic, environmental, feasibility, or historic studies or assessments; and architectural and engineering services, contracting, planning, or permitting. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services encourages the applicant to consider using BIG Tier 1 funds for this type of preliminary work.

A planning grant proposal is eligible as a stand-alone project because of the often lengthy period needed to conduct studies for in-water work or obtain permits for development.

A planning project may include the following:

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

Please see “Proration of BIG Eligible Activities” for information on prorating preconstruction costs for facilities designed for multiple uses.

Reimbursement of preconstruction costs 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 scope of work, RCO reserves the right to request repayment of the grant.

## **Other Considerations**

### **Phased Projects**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that the applicant discuss phasing a very expensive and large-scale 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.

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

## **Eligible Project Activities and Costs**

### **Incurring Pre-Agreement Costs**

RCO may reimburse a sponsor for certain allowable expenses incurred before the start date of a grant agreement. However, any costs associated with the preparation or presentation of the grant application are ineligible.

RCO will pay only for work performed after grant agreements have been signed by both RCO and project sponsors with one exception. Expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits, may be eligible for reimbursement, if approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If requesting pre-agreement costs, the application must include the amount, date, and description of work.

Construction performed before the execution of a grant agreement and compliance with cultural resource laws (section 106 of the National Environmental Policy Act) will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project.

## Developing or Renovating Facilities

Examples of facilities and support amenities that may be developed and renovated include the following:

- Dinghy or courtesy docks
- Dredging (additional details highlighted below)
- Fixed docks, piers, gangways, and mooring buoys
- Fixed or floating breakwaters, wave attenuators, sea walls and other improvements that provide a harbor of safe refuge<sup>14</sup>
- Marine fuel dock and pump-out stations
- Navigational aids (beacons, signals, and markers)
- Signs (safety, invasive species prevention, and boater information)
- Transient<sup>15</sup> moorage floats and slips that are fully dedicated to eligible vessels
- Upland support facilities such as laundry, restrooms, showers, utilities

## Dredging

An applicant must show in the grant application all the following:

- Dredging is needed to fulfill the purpose and objectives of the proposed project.

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<sup>14</sup>A *harbor of safe refuge* gives eligible vessels protection from storms. The facility must offer a place to secure vessels and access to provisions and communication for users.

<sup>15</sup>Transient means an eligible recreational vessel traveling to a single facility for day use or staying overnight for up to fifteen consecutive days.

- Dredging costs have been prorated between the expected use by eligible vessels and ineligible vessels.

Other requirements related to dredging are as follows:

- Dredging-related actions may not exceed \$200,000 in federal funds.
- The dredging may be anywhere in the basin, but it must support the project. The applicant must state in the application how the dredging is necessary and reasonable for completion of the project and how it meets the objectives of the project.
- The dredge area must allow safe navigation to, from, and in the funded facility and allow vessels to dock safely and securely at transient slips.
- When completed, the dredged area must have a water depth at least six feet at the lowest tide or fluctuation, unless the sponsor can show that with a depth of less than six feet, the funded facility will serve its intended purpose for the typical eligible user that visits that location.
- The sponsor must maintain the dredged area at the approved width and depth for the useful life of the BIG-funded facility, unless awarded BIG funds in the future that provide for maintenance dredging.

Additional guidelines for development projects are in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

## **Producing Education or Information Materials**

Examples of education and information activities that are eligible for funding include the following:

- Advertising in print or electronic media with emphasis on the funded facility or services for eligible users (may not market a marina as a whole)
- Brochures that direct boaters to funded sites
- Charts and cruising guides
- Newsletter articles, marina or agency web pages, and other communications that are directly related to the funded project

## Maintaining Existing Facilities<sup>16</sup>

Examples of eligible maintenance actions, which exclude janitorial work, include the following:

- Lubricating mechanical components of BIG-funded equipment
- Replacing minor components of a BIG-funded improvement, such as bolts, boards, and individual structural components
- Painting, pressure washing, and repointing masonry.

## Planning Tasks

Examples of eligible planning or preconstruction activities include providing the following:

- Construction-ready bid documents (plans and specifications)
- Cultural resources survey
- Feasibility study
- Master plan
- Permits “in hand” that will allow a sponsor to proceed with development when funds to construct become available.

Planning work, including the pre-agreement activities referenced above, performed before the execution of a grant agreement will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project.

## Paying Indirect Costs

RCO allows agency indirect costs for all projects that receive federal funding or are used by RCO as programmatic match to a federal grant. An applicant is required to attach the RCO Fiscal Data Collection Sheet before submitting an application. Start filling out this form early and work with accounting staff to estimate the indirect costs.

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<sup>16</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted in February 2016

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## Ineligible Projects and Costs

### Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects include the following:

- Conduct surveys to determine boating access needs.
- Construct or renovate structures not expected to last at least ten years.
- Construct, renovate, or maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities for the following:
  - Moorage slips available for occupancy for more than fifteen consecutive days by a single party.
  - Dryland storage or haul-out features.
  - Boating features, such as launch ramps and carry-down walkways, for trailerable or “car-top” boats (boats typically less than twenty-six feet in length).
- Construct, renovate, or maintain boating infrastructure for the following:
  - Shops, stores, food service, retail businesses, or lodging.
  - Facility administration or management, such as a harbormaster’s office.
- Construct, renovate, or maintain roads or parking lots.
- Develop a state program plan to construct, renovate, and maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities.
- Do not provide public benefits, for example, a project that is not open to the public for use.
- Fund operations or routine custodial and janitorial maintenance of the facility.
- Involve law enforcement activities.
- Involve multiple worksites.

- Purchase real property or interests in real property, including riparian rights.
- Purchase or operate service boats to transport boaters to and from mooring areas.
- Significantly degrade or destroy valuable natural resources or alter the cultural or historic nature of the area.
- Specific projects identified as mitigation as part of a habitat conservation plan approved by the federal government for incidental take of endangered or threatened species, or other projects identified for habitat mitigation purposes. Also, see *RCO Manual 4: Development Projects* for exceptions.

## Ineligible Costs

*Manual 4: Development Projects* and Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations §86.16 provide additional information about ineligible costs, which include the following:

- Ceremonial or entertainment expenses
- Charges for contingency or other similar reserves
- Charges for deficits or overdrafts
- Charges incurred contrary to the policies of the sponsor
- Charges more than the lowest bid when competitive bidding is required
- Costs not directly related to implementing the project such as unrelated mitigation
- Costs of discounts not taken
- Damage judgments whether determined by judicial decision, arbitration, or otherwise
- Direct administration, operation, and routine maintenance costs
- Donations or contributions made by the project sponsor, such as to a charitable organization

- Employee facilities, including residences, appliances, office equipment, furniture, etc.
- Environmental cleanup of illegal activities (i.e., removal of contaminated materials or derelict vessels, trash pickup, methamphetamine labs)
- Expenses for publicity
- Fines and penalties
- Interest expenses
- Items not included in the grant agreement
- Legal, professional fees paid in connection with raising funds
- Losses arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims and related costs
- Marketing or outreach efforts, including giveaway items, general agency newsletters or websites, exhibits promoting ineligible facilities or activities
- Purchase of supplies and other expendable personal property not directly related to achieving the project objectives
- Salaries and expenses of the executive (harbormaster, mayor, etc.), project sponsor, or local governing body (board, city, county, etc.)
- Support facilities that exclusively serve ineligible facilities
- Taxes that the project sponsor would not have been liable to pay

### **Proration of BIG Eligible Activities**

If the facility or a discrete element will benefit boats of all sizes, an applicant must prorate the share of costs that will benefit eligible vessels, which are transient recreational boats twenty-six feet and longer. If there is uncertainty around the appropriate allocation amount, the cost allocation should be in favor of BIG-eligible vessels. In other words, BIG may pay less than the estimated use by eligible vessels but should not pay more than the estimated use by eligible vessels. Common examples of costs that might be used by all boaters and often must be prorated include fuel docks, restrooms, showers, retaining walls, bulkheads, breakwaters, pump-out stations, dredging, and other features that are

expected to partially benefit ineligible users. The applicant must prorate planning or preconstruction costs, such as engineering, design, and permitting, when planning facilities that benefit both eligible and ineligible users. To determine how to prorate the project costs, see [50 Code of Federal Regulations §86.19](#) of the federal regulations.

Moorage facilities, however, must be dedicated to eligible vessels and may not be prorated. They must remain open and available at all times for eligible boaters.

An applicant does not need to prorate costs if the facility is solely for eligible users or when producing information and education materials.

An applicant must include explanations of prorating, the method used, as well as data to validate the method in the Budget Narrative. See the Applicant's To-Do List on the RCO website. An application will not be considered for funding if costs are not prorated appropriately.

## Environmental Requirements

### Environmental Regulations

Once projects have been selected for funding, compliance with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies, including environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act, and applicable executive orders must be satisfied before the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can award a grant.

Supplemental information, such as the National Environmental Policy Act checklist, may be required pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review.

### National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Process

The federal government, through section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, requires federal agencies to consider the effects that their actions (or "undertakings") have on cultural or historic properties, 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.

## Review Process

RCO collects information pertinent to this review as part of the application. RCO will work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to review the project area and all proposed project actions for effects to cultural or historic resources. The review may require a sponsor to conduct a cultural resources survey or may add requirements to the grant agreement. The Service is the lead federal agency for ensuring compliance with section 106. An applicant should not initiate consultation with the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation or Native American Tribes.

If a cultural resources survey is requested, the project sponsor must retain the services of qualified cultural resources professionals to complete the survey and provide it to RCO before a grant agreement may be issued. The sponsor must work with RCO to review the survey methodology before commencing field work. If the sponsor commissions a cultural resources survey report before review and formal consultation has begun, the existing cultural resources study may not be sufficient to meet the requirements of the agency that oversees the cultural resource's compliance for the project.

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

A sponsor must complete all required cultural resources investigations and documentation and satisfy all the requirements from the consultation process before a sponsor may start any project activities that have the potential to impact cultural or historic resources. Ground disturbance or demolition started without approval will be considered breaches of the grant agreement. Typically, cultural resources approval will be authorized as part of the RCO Notice to Proceed.

If research shows that cultural resources do exist, they must be identified and descriptions of how they will be protected included in any required environmental assessment.

This review and the review under the National Environmental Policy Act are two separate, distinct processes. They can, and should, occur simultaneously. They should be coordinated to avoid duplication of public involvement or other requirements.

### Intergovernmental Review

To receive BIG grants, a sponsor must notify directly state, area-wide, and regional agencies, and local governments that would be affected by the project. This may be accomplished by publishing the project notice in the Federal Register or (preferred) by sending information directly to affected agencies. Such notices should include a detailed description of the proposal, an address where comments may be forwarded, and the deadline for comment. A sixty-day comment period is suggested.

### Public Review

At a minimum, a project sponsor is required to ensure the public has had an opportunity to review and provide written comments on completed environmental assessments. This public comment period must be at least thirty days. The notice must be published in the local newspapers and community notices and on the applicant's website. The goal is to ensure the notice is broadcast widely so people have ample time to comment. The grant applicant must review the comments and include responses to substantive comments in the application to RCO.

If the proposal is revised in response to public comments, or for any other reason, RCO should consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine if the public needs another opportunity to review the revised environmental assessment.

See the "Cultural Resources" section in manual 4 for additional details.

### 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, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here are examples of how it could happen:

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

The key to preventing the 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.

## **Sustainability<sup>17</sup>**

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 and access routes, trails, and parking areas; energy-efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

## **Property Requirements**

### **Control of the Land**

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to assure public access to those investments, the sponsor must have adequate control of a project site to construct, operate, and maintain the area for the term required by the grant program and grant agreement. This control and

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<sup>17</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2011-22 and 2014-06

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, an authorization to use state-owned aquatic lands may be needed.

All marine waters are, by definition, navigable, as are portions of rivers influenced by tides. Navigable rivers and lakes are those determined by the judiciary, those bounded by meander lines, or those that could have been used for commerce at the time of statehood. The Department of Natural Resources' aquatic land managers will help the grant applicant determine if the project will fall on state-owned aquatic lands and provide more information on its authorization process. See the [land manager coverage map](#) online for contact information for the Department of Natural Resources aquatics 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 two months<sup>18</sup> after director approval to show control and tenure for the site. The lease or easement is required before the project will be placed under agreement, unless RCO's director approves an extension in advance. Review the control and tenure requirements in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

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, nonprofit, and private operator applicant that needs to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do the following:

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<sup>18</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

- 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.

### **Public Property Records<sup>19</sup>**

All funded sites, regardless of the grant amount, must be maintained for outdoor recreation purposes for the compliance period identified in the grant agreement. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires that the project sponsor record a “Notice of Grant” in its public property records that notes that the site was developed, renovated, or maintained with BIG assistance and cannot be converted to other than public outdoor recreation use without the written approval of RCO and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The permanent record must include a signed and dated boundary map that documents the project area<sup>20</sup> subject to the grant agreement.

The project sponsor must agree to this requirement as a condition of receiving a grant. The prospective applicant should consider carefully its ability and willingness to comply with this provision before applying for a grant. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for more information on creating the required boundary map.

## **Additional Federal Requirements**

### **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](#).

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<sup>19</sup>Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.18

<sup>20</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19)

[Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.](#)

RCO may require additional information to meet federal grant requirements. RCO will provide an Applicant's Next Steps document outlining these additional requirements.

In addition, all sponsors must sign a certification form about debarment, suspension, ineligibility, and voluntary exclusion—lower tier covered transactions and lobbying. RCO will provide the CD-512 certification form.

### Build America, Buy America<sup>21</sup>

Build America, Buy America Act requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used for, or incorporated into, a federally funded project are produced in the United States. This includes the purchase of bridges, girders, docks, fencing, drinking fountains, play structures, and more. The procurement preference applies to the following categories of products and materials:

- **All iron and steel.** All manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, must occur in the United States.
- **All manufactured products.** Must be manufactured in the United States and the cost of its domestically mined, produced, or manufactured components must be greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all its components unless another standard applies under law or regulation.
- **All construction materials.** All manufacturing processes for the construction material must occur in the United States.

The Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are incorporated into or affixed to an infrastructure project. It does not apply to the following:

- Non-infrastructure spending in an infrastructure project.
- Tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before project completion.

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<sup>21</sup>[Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#), Public Law 117-58, Sections 70901-52

- Equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, used at or within the finished structure but not an integral part of or permanently affixed to it.

If documentation of domestic steel and iron manufacturing is not available, then a waiver request is necessary (see below).

## Buy America Waivers

Once a project is under agreement, a sponsor may request a waiver for items that do not meet Buy America requirements through RCO. The request will be reviewed by the public, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Office of Management and Budget's Made in America Office. The Department of the Interior may waive the Buy America procurement preference in any case in which it is determined that one of the following circumstances applies:

- **Non-availability Waiver:** the types of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials are not produced in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities or of a satisfactory quality.
- **Unreasonable Cost Waiver:** the inclusion of iron, steel, manufactured products, or construction materials produced in the United States will increase the cost of the overall project by more than 25 percent.
- **Public Interest Waiver:** applying the domestic content procurement preference would be inconsistent with the public interest.

There may be instances where a project qualifies, in whole or in part, for existing Department of the Interior General Applicability Waivers. The project sponsor must work with the grants managers, who will coordinate review of the waiver request. For more information, see the [Department of the Interior's Buy America](#) web page.

## Other Requirements and Things to Know

### Public Access<sup>22</sup>

"Public access" means access by eligible users for eligible activities or other users for activities that either support the purpose of the funded project or do not

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<sup>22</sup>Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.92

interfere with the purpose. The sponsor must allow public access to any part of the funded facility during its useful life.<sup>23</sup> The funded site must be open to the public for reasonable periods. Also, the sponsor must allow reasonable public access to other parts of the facility that normally would be open to the public and must not limit access in any way that discriminates against any member of the public.

### **Guest Moorage Fees**

A sponsor may charge the public reasonable fees for use of guest recreational moorage and tie-up facilities developed, renovated, maintained, or replaced with BIG. The fees must be based on the prevailing rate for the area and may not pose an unfair competitive amount, based on other publicly and privately owned tie-up facilities in the area.<sup>24</sup> RCO must approve any changes in the fee structure for twenty years from project completion. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* and Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110 for more information.

### **Number of Grant Proposals Allowed**

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the grant cycle. However, each application must be for only one location or site and have a different scope of work. The application may contain one or more eligible activities. Each application must stand alone on its own merits with a viable, recreation experience and not be dependent on other projects or future phases of work.

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

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<sup>23</sup>Sponsor may limit access due to an emergency; for repairs, construction or safety; or when seasonally closed for business.

<sup>24</sup>[50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86.31](#)

## Accessibility

Facilities or elements<sup>25</sup> 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 a sponsor 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](#). 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, to monitor and evaluate performance, compliance, and quality assurance. Normally, RCO staff conduct 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.

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<sup>25</sup>A facility is all or any portion of buildings, structures, site improvements, elements, and pedestrian routes or vehicular ways located on site. An element is an architectural or mechanical component of a building, facility, space, or site (2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design, Department of Justice, September 15, 2010).

This request must be made only after the project is complete, architects and 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” above.

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 Signs<sup>26</sup>

### Federal Requirements

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires the sponsor to use the Sport Fish Restoration logo to show the source of funding for a BIG project. The logo must do the following:

- Be posted at all BIG sites funded with a development, renovation, or maintenance grant.
- Be printed on web-based material or other visual representations of BIG projects or achievements.
- Be included on funded and related educational and informational materials.

Federal guidelines include language a sponsor may use to acknowledge BIG participation. RCO can provide the signs.

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<sup>26</sup>Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.92

A sponsor also must provide clear information, using signs or other methods (i.e., website, brochures), that directs eligible users to the funded facility and includes restrictions, operating periods, and ineligible use.<sup>27</sup>

## RCO Acknowledgement

In addition, the sponsor must acknowledge the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board 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.

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

## RCO 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 a sponsor developing its own signs, below are suggestions for how to incorporate appropriate acknowledgement:

- Funding provided by the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.
- Funding from the Boating Infrastructure Grant program made available by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

Funding acknowledgement signs must be posted before the grant agreement end date and final reimbursement. RCO may provide funding acknowledgement signs for many grant programs upon request. A sponsor must provide proof of

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<sup>27</sup>Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.94

the funding acknowledgement by attaching photographs or other evidence to PRISM.

## **Nondiscrimination**

RCO activities are intended to follow state and federal guidelines for nondiscrimination. If you believe RCO or its programs are discriminatory, express concern to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board or director of the [Office of Civil Rights](#), U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.

## **Public Disclosure Rules**

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.<sup>28</sup> More information about the [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available on the website.

## **Reports**

### **Annual Billing to RCO**

A sponsor must submit a reimbursement request at least once a year during the state's fiscal year (July 1-June 30) for eligible expenses incurred during that time.

### **Progress Reporting**

RCO requires the project sponsor to report on project progress periodically. The date when progress reports are due is stated in the milestones of the grant agreement and the sponsor will receive electronic notice when reports are due. Progress reports are entered into and submitted through the PRISM database system.

### **Final Performance Report**

At project completion, the sponsor will submit a final report detailing the objectives and work performed through the project, project changes, estimated versus actual costs expended, etc. A final performance report is required before RCO will release final retainage payment.

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<sup>28</sup>Revised Code of Washington 42.56

## **Additional Rules and Instructions**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and RCO may issue additional or modified rules, instructions, interpretations, and guides from time to time as they believe 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 the effective date to minimize impacts to projects already in process at the time of announcement.

## **Protection of Federal Investments and Ongoing Stewardship<sup>29</sup>**

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area<sup>30</sup> after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Final Rule and 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 compliance policy 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, forestland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the grant agreement. For development and renovation projects, the period is often 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.

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<sup>29</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations.

<sup>30</sup>Project area is the defined geographic area where the project occurs and is described in the project's boundary map.

## **Compliance Period<sup>31</sup>**

The compliance period for Tier One and Tier Two projects is a useful life period for the entire project based on the longest useful life period identified for one or more capital improvement(s) within the BIG-funded project.

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<sup>31</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11

# Section 3: Money Matters

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## This section covers the following:

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Matching share
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Cost increases
- ✓ Records and reimbursements

### Grant Limits

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to expand the sponsor's existing capacity and not replace funding that would have been used for a project without the grant.<sup>32</sup> The board establishes grant limits for its programs. The grant limits for each category are shown below.

- **Tier One State Grants:** An applicant may request a grant between \$5,000 and \$288,046 for a project.
- **Tier Two National Grants:** An applicant may request a grant between \$300,001 and \$1,440,230 for a project.

BIG funds may not exceed 75 percent of a project's total cost. The sponsor is responsible for project cost overruns. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's actual out-of-pocket expenditures.

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<sup>32</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(6)

## Development Projects: Administration, Architecture, Engineering

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

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums is contained in *Manual 4: Development Projects* (architectural and engineering costs).

### Matching Share

Match is the project sponsor's contribution to the cost of a project. By requiring a match for a grant, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board intends to meet statutory requirements, foster and demonstrate local commitment to the project, and spread the money to more projects.<sup>33</sup>

All applicants are encouraged to contribute matching shares and reduce government cost.

An applicant must contribute matching resources of at least 25 percent of the total project cost.

For example, if the total project cost is \$100,000 and the applicant requests a \$75,000 grant, then the applicant must contribute \$25,000.

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.<sup>34</sup>

Except for state agencies and Native American Tribes, the applicant must contribute at least 10 percent of the total project cost in the form of a local contribution, not from a state or federal source. .<sup>35</sup>

For example, if the total project cost is \$100,000 and the applicant is requesting a \$75,000 grant, the applicant must provide \$25,000 in matching resources. Also, 10 percent of the total project cost (in this case \$10,000) must come from a local source such as local government appropriation, private grant, in-kind, or donation. The remaining \$15,000 of match may come from an eligible state source.

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<sup>33</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(2)

<sup>34</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

<sup>35</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

Projects with a match of 26 percent or more will receive additional points in the evaluation criteria.

For example, if the total project cost is \$150,000 and the applicant is requesting a \$75,000 grant and providing \$75,000 in cash, the applicant will receive five points for the match evaluation criteria because the applicant's match is 50 percent of the total project cost. See Tier 1 evaluation criteria 9.

### **Eligible Match**

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

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Corrections labor
- Donations—the value of using cash, equipment use, labor, materials, or services (see the “Types of Match” section below)
- Force account<sup>36</sup>—the value of using the sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials (see the “Types of Match” section below)
- Grants—state, local, and private (see the “Types of Match” section below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see the “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.

### **Not Allowed as Match**

- Costs or in-kind contributions that have been or will be used to satisfy match for another federal grant, cooperative agreement, or contract, unless authorized by federal statute. This includes funds from another federal source.

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<sup>36</sup>“Force account” means to use the applicant agency's or organization's employees or resources as opposed to, for example, a contractor's staff, volunteers, or others.

- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Cost that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Costs for items or work that is not included in the grant agreement.
- Cost associated with meeting a mitigation requirement unrelated to the funded project. See "Mitigation Funds as Match" below.
- Cost incurred before a grant agreement is executed, except for pre-agreement costs approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Donations or in-kind contributions of personal property, structures, and services, including volunteer labor, contributed outside of the period of performance.
- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.

### **Match Requirements**

All matching resources must meet all the following criteria:

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

Rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example, if a grant applicant uses donated moorage slips as a match, RCO rules requiring the moorage to remain in public recreation use throughout the compliance period apply to the donated slips as well.

In many grant programs, particularly those where match is not required, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted evaluation criteria to encourage applicants to contribute matching shares. This typically is reflected in the criteria when points are given for non-governmental contributions or for

exceeding the minimum match requirements. Applicants should carefully review the evaluation instrument to determine if this applies to their projects.

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.

## Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure the project is ready for implementation upon approval, the applicant must have matching funds available for expenditure before the director approves funding. The applicant must sign and submit a Certification of Applicant Match Form for to be included in the funding recommendation. The applicant is advised to plan for a project with match dependent on a citizen vote or ballot measure. This certification is due at least one month before the director takes action.<sup>37</sup> The form 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 director'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 conditioned on receipt of the other grant or on the sponsor providing the match with other resources. 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 inmate, community service labor, and volunteers), and material is discussed in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages the applicant to secure written confirmation of all donations planned for use as match and attach the donation letters to the application.

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<sup>37</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

## Force Account

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

## Other Grants

In some cases, a sponsor may use funds awarded from another grant program as its match. Other grants are eligible if 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. Federal grants are not eligible as match.

An applicant clearly must identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. The applicant must document the compatibility of other grants with the RCO grant program and category. RCO will review the documentation provided to determine if the source is compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

## Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match<sup>38</sup>

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

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in *both* grant programs are counted as match.
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- Except for Native American Tribes and state agencies, at least 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched is provided in the form of a non-federal, non-state contribution
- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

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

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

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

### **Mitigation Funds as Match**

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

### **Cost Increases**

Cost increases may be granted by the board or RCO director if approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and if financial resources are available and the increase does not exceed the federal grant limits. Each cost increase request will be considered on its merits. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for more details on cost increases.

### **Records and Reimbursements**

#### **Sponsors 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 documenting cost incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

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

Reimbursement shall not be approved for any donations, including donated land.

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<sup>40</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

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 about 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

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## This section covers the following:

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

## How Project Evaluation Works

Project evaluation involves the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopting the evaluation criteria<sup>41</sup> and the RCO director setting the evaluation process.<sup>42</sup> Also, it is the process the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uses to make its funding decisions.

The RCO director appoints people to serve on an advisory committee to evaluate the grant proposals. In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience 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](#).

## Tier One Projects

The applicant prepares written responses to address the evaluation criteria in PRISM. Advisory committee members individually review the written responses,

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<sup>41</sup>The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the criteria for Tier One and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves the criteria for Tier Two.

<sup>42</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

graphics included in the application, and summary application materials, and score the project. Scoring is confidential.

At the same time, RCO staff score the objective sections of the application, such as the amount of matching share an applicant is providing. Staff scores are based on information submitted by the applicant.

The advisory committee's and staff's scores are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to the RCO director, who makes the final decision.<sup>43</sup> The public is given an opportunity to comment on the grant proposals at a meeting of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

## **Tier Two Projects**

The applicant prepares written responses to address the evaluation criteria in the annual Notice of Funding Opportunity and attaches them in PRISM. The notice outlines the required documents and specifies the format and page limits for each. These documents generally include a project summary, project statement, responses to evaluation criteria, maps, site plans, drawings, photographs, letters of commitment, and other supporting documents.

NOTE: The Notice of Funding Opportunity often is not available until after RCO begins accepting grant applications, and each year the page limits, questions, and other requirements may change. RCO will provide an Applicant's Next Steps document outlining these additional requirements. The applicant must work with RCO staff and check the RCO website to make sure to have the latest requirements.

The advisory committee reviews Tier Two proposals and makes a recommendation to RCO's director as to whether the projects should be submitted for the national competition.

The public is given an opportunity to comment on the grant proposals at a meeting of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. After board review, the projects are submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which assembles a panel of professional staff to review and evaluate projects. This national review panel uses evaluation criteria published with the annual "Notice of Funding Opportunity" to score and rank projects. This committee then makes a

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<sup>43</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

recommendation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, who makes the final funding decision.

### **Do Not Fund Recommendation<sup>44</sup>**

Occasionally during evaluations of Tier One projects or following review of Tier Two projects, 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. For Tier Two projects, RCO staff will notify applicants of the proposed “Do Not Fund” recommendation before projects are sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the national competition.

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 advisory committee, and invite the applicant to attend the post-evaluation meeting to respond to questions. The applicant also may submit a written response to the advisory committee’s concerns. To ensure all projects are treated equally, no additional testimony from applicants or visitors is taken at the post-evaluation meeting. The advisory committee determines a “Do Not Fund” recommendation by a simple majority vote of the committee members that participated in application evaluations.

RCO staff will forward to the director a summary of the “Do Not Fund” recommendation, any committee member comments, and the applicant’s response. The director will consider the advisory committee’s recommendation before the ranked list is approved. The director retains discretion in awarding all grants.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

### **Tier One Projects<sup>45</sup>**

The questions listed below will be used to evaluate and rank all Tier One projects. An applicant must address in writing each criterion for each project application.

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<sup>44</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

<sup>45</sup>Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted February 2016

### Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Points
<b>Scored by the Advisory Committee</b>	
1. Meet a Documented Need	10
2. Demonstrate Cost Efficiency	7
3. Improve Boater Access	3
4. Project Design	3
5. Demonstrate Partnerships	3
6. Advance Technology	3
7. Demonstrate Innovation	2
8. Environmental Stewardship	1
<b>Scored by RCO</b>	
9. Match	7
<b>Total 39</b>	

### Detailed Evaluation Questions

- 1. Meet a Documented Need.** Will the proposed boating infrastructure meet a need for more or improved facilities?

Evaluators will consider if the project will do any of the following:

- Construct new boating infrastructure in an area that lacks it, but where eligible vessels now travel or would travel if the project were completed
- Renovate a facility to improve its physical condition, follow local building codes, improve safety, or adapt it to a new purpose
- Create accessibility for eligible vessels by reducing wave action, increasing depth, or making other improvements
- Expand an existing facility that is unable to accommodate current or projected demand by eligible vessels
- Make other improvements to accommodate an established need

▲ Point Range: 0-10 points

**2. Demonstrate Cost Efficiency.** Will eligible users receive benefits from the proposed boating infrastructure that justify the cost of the project?

Evaluators will consider the total cost of the project, the benefits made available to eligible users, and the objectivity or reliability of the data and information used to demonstrate benefits relative to costs. Evaluators may consider the availability of preexisting structures and amenities, but only in the context of the identified need. Because costs vary depending on local factors, evaluators do not use a cost per slip to compare projects.

The applicant should relate costs and benefits to the need for the project (see §86.43(a)).

The applicant should describe any factors that would influence costs such as the following:

- The need for specialized materials to meet local codes, address weather, future sea level rise, terrain, or extend useful life.
- Increased transportation costs due to facility location.
- Other factors that may increase costs but support needed benefits.

The applicant should describe any costs associated with providing a harbor of safe refuge, if applicable.

▲ Point Range: 0-7 points

**3. Improve Boater Access.** Will the proposed boating infrastructure accommodate boater access to significant destinations and services that support transient boater travel?

Evaluators will consider the following:

- The degree of access that the BIG-funded facility will provide to activities, events, or landmarks near the facility, how well known they are, how long they are available, and how likely they are to attract boaters to the facility.
- The availability of services and the degree of safety at and around the facility, the ease of access to these services, and how well they meet the needs of eligible boaters.

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

4. **Project Design.** Is the proposal appropriately designed for the intended use?

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

- Accurate cost estimates
- Aesthetics
- Environmental impacts
- Future maintenance needs
- Materials and specifications
- Risk management
- Space relationships
- User friendly elements
- Universal accessibility

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

5. **Demonstrate Partnerships.** Will the proposed project include contributions by private or public partners that contribute to the project objectives?

Partners may include non-federal entities such as sub-grantees, private businesses, state agencies other than the primary recipient of BIG funds, nonprofit organizations, or federal agencies other than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To be considered a partner, the entity must commit a financial or in-kind contribution or take a voluntary action that is necessary for, and directly and substantively contributes to, completion of the project. See §86.55 and §86.57 for additional guidance.

Evaluators will consider the following:

- The significance of the contribution to the success of the project

- How the contribution supports the actions proposed in the project statement
- How the partner demonstrates its commitment to the contribution
- The demonstrated ability of the partner to fulfill its commitment

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

**6. Advanced Technology.** Will the proposed project include physical components, technology, or techniques that improve eligible user access?

Evaluators will consider whether the project will increase the availability of the BIG-funded facility for eligible users or improve eligible boater access to the facility.

The applicant should describe if the project will be doing either of the following:

- Using a new technology or technique
- Applying a new use of an existing technology or technique

Evaluators will consider if the project will use an optional or advanced technology or technique. If going beyond the minimum technical requirements for a project component, the applicant must describe the current standards and how they will be exceeded. Points will not be awarded for following standards set by law.

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

**7. Demonstrate Innovation.** Will the proposed project include innovative physical components, technology, or techniques that improve the BIG-funded project?

Evaluators will consider if the project will include physical components, technology, or techniques that are newly available or repurposed in a unique way. Examples include components, technology, or techniques that do the following:

- Extend the useful life of the project

- Are designed to help save costs, decrease maintenance, or improve operation
- Are designed to improve services or amenities for BIG-eligible users
- Reduce the carbon footprint of the facility
- Reduce negative environmental impacts (beyond compliance requirements)
- Improve facility resilience

▲ Point Range: 0-2 points

- 8. Environmental Stewardship.** Has the facility where the project is located demonstrated a commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship and has an organization officially recognized the facility for its commitment?

Evaluators will consider if the application documents that the facility has received official recognition for its voluntary commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship by exceeding regulatory requirements. The official recognition must be part of a voluntary, established program administered by a federal, state, or local agency, Sea Grant or equivalent entity, or a state or regional marina organization. The program must require the facility to use management and operational techniques and practices that will ensure it continues to meet the high standards of the program and must contain a component that requires periodic review. The facility must have met the criteria required by the program and received official recognition by the due date of the application.

▲ Point Range: 0-1 point

- 9. Match.** Applicant does not answer. Will the proposed project include matching funds from private, local, or state sources (including grants) totaling 26 percent or more?

▲ Point Range: 0-7 points

Please note that, while in-kind services and materials may be included in the minimum 25 percent match requirement, the application will be scored

only on this criterion for additional cash match. As given in §86.56, points will be awarded as follows.

1 point	26-30.99 percent cash match
2 points	31-35.99 percent cash match
3 points	36-40.99 percent cash match
4 points	41-45.99 percent cash match
5 points	46-50.99 percent cash match
6 points	51-80.99 percent cash match
7 points	81 or higher percent cash match

## Tier Two Projects

The evaluation criteria<sup>46</sup> listed below will be used to review all Tier Two projects. An applicant must fully address in writing a response to each evaluation criterion. Refer to the latest Notice of Funding Opportunity for criteria updates and other specific requirements, such as page limits.

### Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Points
A. Meet a Documented Need, Improve Eligible Boater Access, and Demonstrate Cost Efficiency	20
B. Meet Match Requirements and Demonstrate Partnerships	10
C. Demonstrate Innovation and Environmental Stewardship	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>

### Detailed Evaluation Questions

#### A. Meet a Documented Need, Improve Eligible Boater Access, and Demonstrate Cost Efficiency

- (1) Will the proposed boating infrastructure meet a need for more or improved facilities?

Evaluators will consider if the project will do any of the following:

- a. Construct new boating infrastructure in an area that lacks it, but where eligible vessels now travel or would travel if the project were completed
- b. Renovate a facility to improve its physical condition, follow local building codes, improve safety, or adapt it to a new purpose
- c. Create accessibility for eligible vessels by reducing wave action, increasing depth, or making other improvements
- d. Expand an existing facility that is unable to accommodate current or projected demand by eligible vessels

<sup>46</sup>Criteria found in the Final Rule for BIG (50 CFR 86.51) published May 6, 2015 in the [Federal Register](#).

- e. Make other improvements to accommodate an established need

▲ Point Range: 0-10 points

- (2) Will eligible users receive benefits from the proposed boating infrastructure that justify the cost of the project?

Evaluators will consider the total cost of the project, the benefits made available to eligible users, and the objectivity or reliability of the data and information used to demonstrate benefits relative to costs. Evaluators may consider the availability of preexisting structures and amenities, but only in the context of the identified need. Because costs vary depending on local factors, evaluators do not use a cost per slip to compare projects.

The applicant should relate costs and benefits to the need for the project (See §86.43(a)).

The applicant should describe any factors that would influence costs such as the following:

- a. The need for specialized materials to meet local codes, address weather, future sea level rise, terrain, or extend useful life
- b. Increased transportation costs due to facility location
- c. Other factors that may increase costs but support needed benefits

The applicant should describe any costs associated with providing a harbor of safe refuge, if applicable.

▲ Point Range: 0-7 points

- (3) Will the proposed boating infrastructure accommodate boater access to significant destinations and services that support transient boater travel?

Evaluators will consider the following:

- a. The degree of access that the BIG-funded facility will provide

- b. Activities, events, or landmarks near the facility, how well known they are, how long they are available, and how likely they are to attract boaters to the facility
- c. The availability of services and the degree of safety at and around the facility, the ease of access to these services, and how well they meet the needs of eligible boaters

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

▲ Total Point Range for Question A: 0-20 points

**B. Meet Match Requirements and Demonstrate Partnerships**

- (1) Will the proposed project include private, local, or state funds greater than the required minimum match?)

Please note that, while in-kind services and materials may be included in the minimum 25 percent match requirement, the application will be scored only on this criterion for additional cash match. As given in §86.56, points will be awarded as follows:

1 point	26-30.99 percent cash match
2 points	31-35.99 percent cash match
3 points	36-40.99 percent cash match
4 points	41-45.99 percent cash match
5 points	46-50.99 percent cash match
6 points	51-80.99 percent cash match
7 points	81 or higher percent cash match

▲ Point Range: 0-7 points

- (2) Will the proposed project include contributions by private or public partners that contribute to the project objectives?

Partners may include non-federal entities such as sub-grantees, private businesses, state agencies other than the primary recipient of BIG funds, nonprofit organizations, or federal agencies other

than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To be considered a partner, the entity must commit a financial or in-kind contribution or take voluntary action that is necessary for, and directly and substantively contributes to, completing the project. See §86.55 and §86.57 for additional guidance.

Evaluators will consider the following:

- a. The significance of the contribution to the success of the project
- b. How the contribution supports the actions proposed in the project statement
- c. How the partner demonstrates its commitment to the contribution
- d. The demonstrated ability of the partner to fulfill its commitment

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

▲ Total Point Range for Question B: 0-10 points

### **C. Demonstrate Innovation and Environmental Stewardship**

- (1) Will the proposed project include physical components, technology, or techniques that improve eligible user access?

Evaluator will consider whether the project will increase the availability of the BIG-funded facility for eligible users or improve eligible boater access to the facility.

The applicant should describe whether the project will be doing either of the following:

- a. Use a new technology or technique
- b. Apply a new use of an existing technology or technique

Evaluators will consider if the project will use an optional or advanced technology or technique. If going beyond the minimum technical requirements for a project component, the applicant must

describe the current standards and how they will be exceeded.  
Points will not be awarded for following standards set by law.

▲ Point Range: 0-3 points

- (2) Will the proposed project include innovative physical (components, technology, or techniques) that improve the BIG-funded project?

Evaluators will consider if the project will include physical components, technology, or techniques that are newly available or repurposed in a unique way. Examples include components, technology, or techniques that do the following:

- a. Extend the useful life of the project
- b. Are designed to help save costs, decrease maintenance, or improve operation
- c. Are designed to improve services or amenities for BIG-eligible users
- d. Reduce the carbon footprint of the facility
- e. Reduce negative environmental impacts (beyond compliance requirements)
- f. Improve facility resilience

▲ Point Range: 0-2 points

- (3) Has the facility where the project is located demonstrated a commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship and has an organization officially recognized the facility for its commitment?

Evaluators will consider if the application documents that the facility has received official recognition for its voluntary commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship by exceeding regulatory requirements. The official recognition must be part of a voluntary, established program administered by a federal, state, or local agency, Sea Grant or equivalent entity, or a state or regional marina organization. The program must require the facility to use management and operational techniques and practices that

will ensure it continues to meet the high standards of the program and must contain a component that requires periodic review. The facility must have met the criteria required by the program and received official recognition by the due date of the application.

▲ Point Range: 0-1 point

▲ Total Point Range for Question C: 0-6 points

# Appendix A: Definitions<sup>47</sup>

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**Boating infrastructure:** All the structures, equipment, accessories, and services that are necessary or desirable for a facility to accommodate eligible vessels. See “Eligible Project Activities” for examples of structures.

**Capital improvement:**

- A new structure that costs at least \$25,000 to build; or
- Altering, renovating, or repairing an existing structure if it increases the structure's useful life by ten years or if it costs at least \$25,000.

**Eligible user:** An operator or passenger of an eligible vessel.

**Eligible vessel:** A transient recreational vessel at least twenty-six feet long. The term includes vessels that are owned, loaned, rented, or chartered. The term does not include the following:

- Commercial vessels
- Vessels that dock or operate permanently from the facility where a BIG-funded project is located
- Vessels that receive payment to routinely transport passengers on a prescribed route, such as cruise ships, dive boats, and ferries

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<sup>47</sup>[50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 86--Boating Infrastructure Grant Program](#)

**Maintenance:** Keeping structures or equipment in a condition to serve the intended purpose. It includes cyclical or occasional actions to keep facilities fully functional. It does not include operational actions such as janitorial work. Following are examples of maintenance actions:

- Lubricating mechanical components of BIG-funded equipment;
- Replacing minor components of a BIG-funded improvement, such as bolts, boards, and individual structural components
- Painting, pressure washing, and repointing masonry

**Navigable waters:** Waters that are deep and wide enough for the passage of eligible vessels within the water body.

**Project** means one or more related actions that are eligible for BIG funding, achieve specific goals and objectives of BIG, and in the case of construction, occur at only one facility.

**Renovation:** Rehabilitating all or part of a facility to restore it to its intended purpose or to expand its purpose to allow use by eligible vessels or eligible users.

**Scope of a project:** The purpose, objectives, approach, and results or benefits expected, including the useful life of any capital improvement.

**Transient:** Travel to a single facility for day use or staying at a single facility for up to fifteen days.

**Useful life:** The period during which a BIG-funded capital improvement can fulfill its intended purpose with adequate routine care and maintenance.