

Manual 12

Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

June 11, 2025

Table of Contents

At a Glance.....	1
Section 1: Introduction.....	3
The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program.....	3
Program Administration.....	3
Who Makes Decisions.....	5
Where to Get Information.....	6
Grant Process and Timeline.....	6
Time Limits and Extensions.....	10
Section 2: Policies.....	13
Categories and Grants Offered	13
Eligible Applicants	14
Eligible Project Types	16
Eligible Project Activities and Costs.....	18
Ineligible Projects and Costs	20
Proration of BIG Eligible Activities	23
Environmental Requirements.....	23
Property Requirements.....	26
Other Requirements and Things to Know	29
Section 3: Money Matters	34
Grant Limits.....	34
Matching Share	35
Types of Match	38
Additional Requirements	39
Section 4: Project Evaluation	41
How Project Evaluation Works	41
Evaluation Criteria.....	43

At a Glance

Boating Infrastructure Grant (Tier 1 and 2)

Purpose	This federal program provides grants to develop, renovate, and maintain 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 staying at a single facility for up to fifteen days.	
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Counties • Native American tribes • Private marina operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualified nonprofits • Special purpose districts • State agencies
Is a plan required?	No	
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and renovation • Education • Tier One: Maintenance, development, or renovation • Tier Two: Development or renovation, which may include some maintenance 	
What are the grant limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier One: \$5,000 to 288,046 • Tier Two: \$300,001 to \$1,440,230 	
What must the project sponsor contribute?	25 percent. Projects with a match 26 percent or more will receive additional points during evaluation	
How is the project evaluated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier One: A state advisory committee reviews written applications and scores the projects. • Tier Two: A national review panel evaluates written applications and scores the projects. 	
When are pre-applications due?	June 5, 2025	
When are final applications due?	July 17, 2025, estimate. The due date may change to ensure applicants meet the federal application deadline.	
When are grants awarded?	July 2026, pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval	
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded <u>moorage facilities</u> must be dedicated exclusively to eligible boaters. • Increased grant limit for Tier 1 projects and minimum grant request for Tier 2. • Included in this manual, existing rules about time limits, extensions, inspections, acknowledgments, and signs. • The federal Notice of Funding Opportunity is expected by June 2025. The Recreation and Conservation Office 	

Boating Infrastructure Grant (Tier 1 and 2)

will notify applicants of any federal changes or additional requirements.

Section 1: Introduction

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 1998.¹ 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.

Program Administration

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

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

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

Advisory Committee Decisions

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

Director Decisions

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

Hearing Impaired 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 outdoor grants managers are available to answer questions about this manual and grant program. Please feel free to call. In addition, manuals, forms, and most other materials referenced in this manual are available on RCO's website on the [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. Each can be made available in an alternative format.

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

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

Webinars. RCO conducts webinars in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered.

Entering Applications. RCO strongly encourages the applicant to start the online application early. PRISM Online usually opens by March 1.

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 PRISM home page.

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

To begin an application, log into PRISM Online and select the + *New Application* button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides the applicant through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether the proposal is eligible, and may visit the project site to discuss site-specific details. More information about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#) may be found online.

Applications Due. While RCO typically accepts Tier One applications during even-numbered years only, Tier Two applications are accepted annually. Pre-applications for both tiers are typically due in May. Final applications are due in early July. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. The applicant should *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. As part of a written review process, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review the project to identify any issues of concern, assess the technical merits of project, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the

proposal. Grants managers will review the application also and send comments to the applicant. An applicant then may make changes to improve the project, if needed. The applicant must complete all changes and resubmit the application by the technical completion deadline. 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 in its final form. After this date, the applicant will not be able to make any further changes. RCO will score applicable evaluation criteria as of this date.

Board Reviews Projects. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will review the project, consider written public comments submitted before the meeting, and hear public testimony at the meeting. The applicant is encouraged, but not required, to attend. This review may happen at the same time as the technical review.

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.

Proof of Matching Funds. An applicant with match included in the application must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least one calendar month before board approval of funding.²

Project Evaluations—A Written Process. For Tier One projects, the Boating Program 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 a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service assembles a panel of staff to review, rank, and recommend Tier Two 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. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked list and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and

²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff posts 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

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

Grant Agreement Materials. After the funding announcement, the applicant has two calendar months to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers).³ This typically includes 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 calendar months.⁴ Once the agreement is signed, the applicant, now referred to as a project sponsor, may begin the projects, according to the terms of the grant agreement. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff.

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 sponsors' responsibilities to comply with the grant agreements, 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.

³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(5)

Time Limits and Extensions

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

Application Phase

An applicant must provide reasonable assurance that the project can be completed on time and meet milestones. Reasonable assurance may include such evidence as the following:

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

At least one calendar month before the funding meeting, when requested by RCO, applicants must provide written certification of matching fund availability.⁵

Applicants may submit only projects that are likely to be completed within four years.

Pre-Agreement Phase

- An applicant must submit the pre-agreement materials requested by RCO within two calendar months of funding approval.⁶
- With RCO staff assistance, applicants must develop milestones, to be included in the grant agreement and a timeline that does not exceed two to three years.

Implementation Phase

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

⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4)

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensure timely completion of projects as follows:

- Maintenance project Two years
- Development project Two to three years
- Exceptionally complex project Three to four years

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

- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting project milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.⁷
- Submit progress reports at intervals designated by the RCO grant agreement.

Extensions

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

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

Extension requests must be in writing and provided to RCO not less than sixty days before expiration of the project's completion date.⁸ The request must justify the need and commit to a new set of specified milestones.

Project Completion

The grant agreement end date will be written into the grant agreement. It is the date that is the end of the period of performance and all project work must be complete and may be extended only when authorized by the board or director, or in some instances, the U.W. Fish and Wildlife Service.

⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(6)

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

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.⁹ If the bill and documentation are not submitted within six months of the end date within the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the agreement without payment.

⁹Washington Administrative Code 286.13.040(7)

Section 2:

Policies

This section covers the following:

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

Categories and Grants Offered

There are two tiers of grants offered in BIG. For the most part the categories are almost identical; however, there are a few key differences, which are as follows:

Tier One: State Grants

- An applicant may submit a stand-alone maintenance project.
- States can use Tier One funds to administer the BIG program.
- Applications are reviewed, evaluated, and ranked by the Washington State Boating Programs Advisory Committee.
- Each year the US. Fish and Wildlife Service makes funding available to each state. The State can submit one or many projects.
- RCO's director uses the annual appropriation to award grants to the ranked list of Tier One grant applications submitted during the even-numbered year. If not enough applications were submitted, RCO will run a supplemental grant round in the odd-numbered year.

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.
- Each year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service accepts Tier Two grant proposals. The State can submit multiple projects.
- The director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service awards grants to Tier Two projects the year after proposals were submitted.

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. The key difference in the two categories is the total project cost and how the project will be selected for funding. 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.¹⁰ 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)

¹⁰Title 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.

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 that the applicant is eligible to do 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.

Not Eligible

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

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 in order 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.

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

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 Projects¹¹

Maintenance projects are defined in the federal regulations¹² 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.

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 was previously funded with a BIG grant, the program requires extension of the useful life of each affected capital improvement.

Other Considerations

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants discuss phasing very expensive or complex projects with RCO staff. Phased projects are subject to the following parameters:

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

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

¹¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted in February 2016

¹²50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

Eligible Project Activities and Costs

Incurring Pre-Agreement Costs

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 or floating breakwaters, wave attenuators, sea walls and other improvements that provide a harbor of safe refuge¹³
- Marine fuel dock and pump-out stations
- Navigational aids (beacons, signals, and markers)
- Signs (safety, invasive species prevention, and boater information)
- Transient¹⁴ moorage floats and slips, fixed docks, piers, gangways, and mooring buoys
- Upland support facilities such as laundry, restrooms, showers, utilities, etc.

¹³A *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.

¹⁴Transient means an eligible recreational vessel traveling to a single facility for day use or staying overnight for up to fifteen consecutive days.

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.
- 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 within 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 Facilities¹⁵

Examples of eligible maintenance actions, which excludes 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.

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.

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 for trailerable or “car-top” boats (boats typically less than twenty-six feet in length), such as launch ramps and carry-down walkways.
- Construct, renovate, or maintain boating infrastructure for the following:

¹⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted in February 2016

- Shops, stores, food service, retail businesses, or lodging.
 - Facility administration or management, such as a harbor master'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 includes 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 in excess of 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, etc.)
- 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 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. 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. To determine how to prorate the project costs, see [§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 historic properties. The goal is to ensure that reasonable action is taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate harm to those resources.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, within the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages this federal grant program. RCO collects information pertinent to this review as part of the application. RCO will work with the Service to review the projects for effects to

cultural 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 cost of a cultural resources survey is highly dependent on the size, scope, and location of the project. RCO encourages applicants to work with qualified cultural resources professionals to estimate the costs. The Association for Washington Archaeology provides [a 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 commencing any ground-disturbing activities. 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 notice to proceed. For acquisition projects, cultural resources requirements must be completed before final reimbursement will be made.

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, sponsors 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, project sponsors are 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 5 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 grant sponsors to consider how their projects may spread invasive species, and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction and restoration activities. Here is how it could happen:

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

The key to preventing the 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.

Sustainability¹⁶

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

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

Property Requirements

Control of the Land

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

Projects on State-Owned Aquatic Lands

If a project will occur over, in, or alongside a navigable body of water, 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 calendar months¹⁷ after director

¹⁶Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2011-22 and 2014-06

¹⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

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

Local government, nonprofit, and private operator applicants that need to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do the following:

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

State agency applicants 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 Records¹⁸

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.

¹⁸Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.18

The permanent record must include a signed and dated boundary map that documents the project area¹⁹ subject to the grant agreement.

Project sponsors must agree to this requirement as a condition of receiving grants. Prospective applicants should carefully consider their 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.

Grant Program Acknowledgement and Signs²⁰

Federal Requirements

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requires sponsors 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 related materials.

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

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.²¹

RCO Acknowledgement

In addition, a 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.

¹⁹ Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(19)

²⁰Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.92

²¹Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86: Boating Infrastructure Grant §86.94

A sponsor should notify RCO at least two weeks before any project dedication ceremony. Basic acknowledgment sign plates are available for funded projects at no charge. A sponsor should notify RCO 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 sponsors developing their own signs, below are suggestions for how to incorporate appropriate acknowledgement:

- Funding provided by the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.
- Grant funding from Boating Infrastructure Grant program made available from 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 the funding acknowledgement by attaching photographs or other evidence to PRISM.

Other Requirements and Things to Know

Public Access²²

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

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

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

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.²⁴ 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 proposal must be for only one location or site. 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 costly, interrelated, or complex project proposals.

Accessibility

Facilities or elements²⁵ constructed with RCO grants and sponsor match are required by law to be accessible regardless of whether there are specific standards adopted in the State Building Code, Americans with Disabilities Act, or Architectural Barriers Act, as amended. Other federal laws, guidelines, and best practices also may apply to achieve accessibility. In case of conflict between minimums, the one providing the most access shall prevail. RCO shall have final determination.

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

²⁴[50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86.31](#)

²⁵A 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).

Inspections

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

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

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.²⁶ 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 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.

Additional Rules and Instructions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may issue additional or modified rules, instructions, interpretations, and guides from time to time as 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 underway.

Protection of Federal Investments and Ongoing Stewardship²⁷

A RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area²⁸ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in 50 Code of Federal

²⁶Revised Code of Washington 42.56

²⁷Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations*.

²⁸Project area is the defined geographic area where the project occurs and is described in the project's boundary map.

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 law discourages casual discards of land and facilities by ensuring that the grant sponsor replaces the lost value when changes or conversions of use take place.

In general, the project area funded with a 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 a RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

Compliance Period²⁹

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.

²⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted in February 2016

Section 3:

Money Matters

This section covers the following:

- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Matching share
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Additional requirements

Grant Limits

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to expand the sponsor's existing capacity, not replace funding that would have been used for a project without the grant. 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 of at least \$5,000 and not more than \$288,046 per project.
- **Tier Two National Grants:** An applicant may request a grant of at least \$300,001 and not more than \$1,440,230 per 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.

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.

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 a project. By requiring a match for grants, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board intends to meet statutory requirements, foster and demonstrate local commitment to the projects, and spread the money from the grant program to a greater number of projects.³⁰

Applicants must provide a minimum of 25 percent in matching resources for each project. For example, if an applicant requests a \$75,000 grant, the applicant must contribute \$25,000 for a total project cost of \$100,000.

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

Except for state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.³¹ For example, if a total project cost is \$500,000, the applicant must provide \$50,000 in matching share from a local source such as local government appropriation, cash, private grants, or in-kind donations.

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 note below)
- Force account³²—the value of using the sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials (see note below)

³⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(2)

³¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

³²"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.

- Grants—state, local, and private (see note below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see note 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

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- 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.
- 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.

Match Requirements

Before the RCO director awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward.

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.

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.³³

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure the project is ready for implementation when approved, the applicant must have matching funds available for expenditure before the director approves funding. The applicant must sign and submit a Certification of Match Form to ensure the project is included in the funding recommendation. The applicant is advised to plan for a project with match dependent on a citizen vote or ballot measure. This certification is due at least one calendar month before the director takes action.³⁴ 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

³³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

³⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

providing the match from 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 or community service labor), and material is discussed in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages an applicant to secure written confirmation of all donations planned for use as match and attach the donation letters to the PRISM Online application.

Force Account

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

Other Grants

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

An applicant must clearly identify in the grant application all grants to be used as match. RCO will help determine if the sources are compatible with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match³⁵

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

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program.
- Only elements eligible in *both* grant programs are counted as match.

³⁵Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits as if the match were coming from elsewhere.
- The applicant must provide a minimum of 10 percent of the total costs of the eligible elements being matched. This sponsor match may not be from federal or state funds and may include in-kind contributions. This policy does not apply to Native American tribes.
- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.³⁶

For evaluation scoring, a RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.³⁷

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.

Additional Requirements

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.

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

³⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

³⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

Federal Rules

For all projects funded with federal funds or other grants that are used by RCO as match to a federal source, grant administration is governed by [Part 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#).

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

Records

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

Audits

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

Section 4:

Project Evaluation

This section covers the following:

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

How Project Evaluation Works

The evaluation process begins when the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the evaluation process³⁸ and evaluation criteria³⁹ during public meetings. 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 each grant proposal. In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experiences and knowledge of boating in Washington. The director may appoint *ex officio* members to the advisory committee to provide additional representation and expertise. Visit RCO's website for [membership and other details](#).

As an attachment to the PRISM application, an applicant must provide written responses to the evaluation criteria outlined below. Advisory committee members individually review the written responses and application materials, and score the project. Scoring is confidential.

RCO staff score the objective sections of the application, such as the amount of matching share an applicant is providing and conformance to growth management planning. Staff scores are based on information submitted by applicant and obtained from the state Office of Financial Management and the state Department of Commerce.

Tier One Projects

The advisory committee and staff scores are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to

³⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

³⁹The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the criteria for Tier 1 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves the criteria for Tier 2.

the RCO director, who makes the final decision.⁴⁰ 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

For projects to be evaluated, scored, and ranked for funding consideration, applicants must follow the requirements in the latest federal "Notice of Funding Opportunity." 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. Applicants must work with their RCO grants managers and check the RCO website to make sure they 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 recommendation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, who makes the final funding decision.

Do Not Fund Recommendation⁴¹

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.

⁴⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

⁴¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

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 Projects⁴²

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. An applicant may provide a maximum of four, single-sided pages using 8.5" x 11" paper with one-inch margins and a twelve-point font for evaluation criteria responses. In the criteria below, eligible vessels and users means vessels twenty-six feet and longer.

Evaluation Criteria Summary

Criteria	Evaluation Element	Possible Points
Scored by the Advisory Committee		
1	Meet a Documented Need	10 points
2	Demonstrate Cost Efficiency	7 points
3	Improve Boater Access	3 points
4	Project Design	3 points
5	Demonstrate Partnerships	3 points
6	Advance Technology	3 points
7	Demonstrate Innovation	2 points
8	Environmental Stewardship	1 point
Scored by RCO		
9	Match	7 points
Total Possible Points:		39 points

⁴²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-11 adopted February 2016

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: zero to ten 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.

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

Applicants 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.

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

▲ Point Range: zero to seven 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: zero to three 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: zero to three 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: zero to three 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.

Applicants 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, applicants must describe the current standards and how they will exceed the standards. Points will not be awarded for followings standards set by law.

▲ Point Range: zero to three 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: zero to three 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: zero to one point

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

▲ Point Range: zero to seven 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.

One point	26-30.99 percent cash match
Two points	31-35.99 percent cash match
Three points	36-40.99 percent cash match
Four points	41-45.99 percent cash match
Five points	46-50.99 percent cash match
Six points	51-80.99 percent cash match
Seven points	81 or higher percent cash match

Tier Two Projects

The evaluation criteria⁴³ 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

Question	Subject	Maximum Points
A	Meet a Documented Need, Improve Eligible Boater Access, and Demonstrate Cost Efficiency	20 points
B	Meet Match Requirements and Demonstrate Partnerships	10 points
C	Demonstrate Innovation and Environmental Stewardship	6 points
Total Possible Points		36

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
- e. Make other improvements to accommodate an established need

⁴³Criteria found in the Final Rule for BIG (50 CFR 86.51) published May 6, 2015 in the [Federal Register](#).

▲ Point Range: zero to ten 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.

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

Applicants 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

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

▲ Point Range: zero to seven 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: zero to three points

- ▲ Total Point Range for Question A: zero to twenty 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:

One point	26-30.99 percent cash match
Two points	31-35.99 percent cash match
Three points	36-40.99 percent cash match
Four points	41-45.99 percent cash match
Five points	46-50.99 percent cash match
Six points	51-80.99 percent cash match
Seven points	81 or higher percent cash match

- ▲ Point Range: zero to seven 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 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

- d. The demonstrated ability of the partner to fulfill its commitment

▲ Point Range: zero to three points

▲ Total Point Range for Question B: zero to ten 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.

Applicants 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, applicants must describe the current standards and how they will exceed the standards. Points will not be awarded for following standards set by law.

▲ Point Range: zero to three 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: zero to two 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: zero to one point

▲ Total Point Range for Question C: zero to six points