

Manual 16

Recreational Trails Program

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Table of Contents

At A Glance	1
Section 1: Introduction	2
Recreational Trails Program.....	2
Recreation and Conservation Funding Board	3
Where to Get Information.....	6
Grant Process and Timeline.....	6
Section 2: Policies	10
Categories.....	10
Eligible Applicants	14
Eligible Project Types	15
Eligible Activities and Costs.....	20
Ineligible Projects and Costs.....	26
Environmental Requirements.....	28
Property Requirements.....	30
Equipment Policies.....	32
Other Requirements and Things to Know	36
Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations	38
Section 3: Money Matters	40
Grant Limits.....	40
Match Requirements	40
Types of Match	43
Cost Increases	45
Federal Rules	45
Fees and Income	45
Records and Reimbursement.....	46
Section 4: Project Evaluation	47
How Project Evaluation Works	47
Advisory Committee	48
Evaluation Criteria.....	49
Appendix 1: RTP Category Decision Tree	62

At A Glance

Recreational Trails Program	
Purpose	This program provides grants to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails and their amenities that provide a backcountry experience for motorized and nonmotorized uses. Grants also are used to educate visitors about proper trail use.
Who may apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Counties • Federal agencies • Native American tribes • Nonprofit trail organizations • Special purpose districts • State agencies
Is a plan required?	No
What types of projects are eligible?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development • Education • Maintenance
What are the grant limits?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance: \$5,000-\$150,000 • Education: \$5,000-\$20,000
Must I contribute match?	No. However, project scores are weighted to reward projects that reduce government costs by documented use of donations or other resources.
How is my project evaluated?	An advisory committee reviews the written application materials and scores the project.
When are applications due?	November 1, 2020
When are grants awarded?	June 29-30, 2021 (Estimate, and pending federal approval of funding)
What's new this year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed PRISM Online to make applications easier. • Added an advance implementation option for Education Category projects. • Eliminated the required match. • Removed the 10 percent non-state, non-federal match requirement. • Reduced the points and simplified the Sustainability criterion, which now only applies to development projects. • Increased the maximum points for the Maintenance criterion. • Suspended the Matching Shares criterion.

Section 1: Introduction

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

- ✓ The Recreational Trails Program
- ✓ The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board
- ✓ Where to get more information
- ✓ Grant process and timeline

Recreational Trails Program

Every 6 years, Congress schedules passage of the nation's surface transportation bill. Since 1991, this massive funding authorization law has included provisions for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

Program Goals

RTP is a federal assistance program to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and nonmotorized uses, including walking, hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, and off-road motorized vehicle driving, including off-road motorcycling and all-terrain and four-wheel vehicle riding.

Each state develops its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding in response to its recreational trail needs. In Washington State, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board has chosen to use RTP money to reduce the backlog of deferred maintenance¹ on recreational trails that provide a backcountry experience.

¹A backlog of activities that organizations deem necessary to bring facilities into good repair. Deferred maintenance generally is work that is left undone due to the lack of resources or perceived lower priority than projects funded. Failure to perform deferred work may result in the progressive deterioration of the facility condition or performance, and if not addressed, will significantly increase restoration cost.

To determine the presence of a “backcountry experience,” consider:

- The project’s setting, which does not need to be pristine, but should be predominately natural. A backcountry experience can be found in an urban area.
- The extent to which the user will experience the natural environment as opposed to seeing or hearing evidence of human development and activity.

RTP supports trails used for the following:

- 4x4 and light truck driving
- All-terrain vehicle and utility task vehicle riding
- Cycling
- Horseback riding and pack animal activities
- Hiking and pedestrian use²
- Motorcycling
- Mountain biking
- Nonmotorized snow trail activities
- Snowmobiling
- Water trails

Categories

RCO offers two categories of RTP grants. General Category projects involve development, renovation, or maintenance of recreational trails. Education Category projects provide information, education, training, or outreach that benefit recreational trail users. More information is in Section 2.

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board

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

The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) supports the board. RCO is a 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 from near extinction. In Washington, the board administers RTP grants in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration. Many of the regulations governing this program are prescribed by the federal government.

²Note: Wheelchair use by mobility-impaired people, whether operated manually or powered, constitutes pedestrian, nonmotorized trail use.

Program and Manual Authority

Authority for this program is found in the federal Recreational Trails Program Guidance, the Revised Code of Washington 42.56.040 of the Public Records Act and Washington Administrative Code Chapter 286.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopted these policies in a public meeting and the RCO director approved the manual under the authority granted in Washington Administrative Code 286-04-060.

This manual provides basic information on procedures and policies used by RCO to administer this program. Authority for the policies was provided by the Governor of Washington and federal legislation.³

Who Makes Decisions

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

Board Decisions

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

- Initial grant approval.
- A project cost increase of more than 10 percent of the project total in the grant agreement for board-funded projects. Cost increases are allowed only in certain grant programs. Review the cost increase information in this manual for more details.
- A "conversion" that changes the project site or how the site is used from that described in the grant agreement. See *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations* for more information about conversions.
- A significant reduction in the project's scope after receiving a grant. Typically, the board will make decisions about scope reductions if the RCO director thinks the project's evaluation score would have been different with the reduced scope. Not

³The [Fixing America's Surface Transportation \(FAST\) Act](#) reauthorized the Recreational Trails Program for Federal fiscal years 2016 through 2020 as a set-aside of funds from the [Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside](#) under [Surface Transportation Block Grant Program](#).

included are changes that do not modify significantly the way the public uses a facility, the intended opportunity, or restoration objective funded.

- Changes in policy; for example, establishing new grant limits or eligible expenditures.
- Time extensions beyond 4 years of the board or director approval date. Maintenance and education projects are limited to 2 years.

Director Decisions

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

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

Advisory Committee Decisions

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board establishes the RTP Advisory Committee⁴ to advise it on administration of the RTP. By law committee members must include both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail uses and must meet at least once a year. The committee recommends policies and procedures for administering grants and may waive requirements for the State's use of its RTP funds. See Section 4 for more information about the advisory committee.

Not a Hearings Board

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's role is to award grants and *not* to act as a hearings board that rules on land use issues. The board's intent is that all proposals, to the extent possible, meet the following criteria:

- Are the outcome of a public process in which all interests have had an opportunity to be heard.
- Have resulted from a community-supported decision to submit the application.
- Are ready for implementation.

⁴See the State Recreational Trails Advisory Committee requirements in the federal Recreational Trails Program Guidance.

- Will ensure that maximum benefit is gained from the grant.

The board's grant allocation meeting must not be the first public meeting in which interested parties have a chance to express views on a project.

Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street

Olympia, WA 98501

[E-mail](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000

FAX: (360) 902-3026

Hearing Impaired Relay Service: (800) 833-6388

[Web site](#)

Mailing Address

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

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

Other Grant Manuals Needed

These manuals provide additional information for grants and are available on [RCO's Web site](#). Each can be made available in alternative formats.

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

Federal Program Information

[Federal Highways Administration Recreational Trails Program Guidance](#)

Grant Process and Timeline

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

Even-Numbered Years

Webinars. RCO conducts workshop Webinars (an online meeting) each summer to provide information about the grant programs offered that year.

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

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

Applications Due. Applications are due in early November of even-numbered years. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants should "submit" their applications before the deadline. The "Check Application for Errors" button on the Submit Application screen will indicate which pages are incomplete. Incomplete applications and applications received after the deadline will be rejected unless RCO's director has approved a late submission in advance. Follow the requirements in the [Applicant's To-Do List](#) online.

Technical Reviews. Grants managers review the applications to ensure they are eligible, identify any issues of concern, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal.

Odd-numbered Years

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

Project Evaluations—A Written Process. The RTP Advisory Committee uses the application materials, which include the responses to the evaluation questions, cost estimates, maps, graphics, and photographs. The committee scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.

Post-Evaluation Conference. After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulates the scores and shares the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked lists and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable

process; guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff posts the preliminary ranked lists on RCO's Web site. The resulting ranked lists of projects are the basis for the funding recommendations to the board.

Board Approves Project List. In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the recommendations of the advisory committees, written public comments submitted before the meeting, and public testimony at the meeting. The board then approves the ranked lists of projects for funding consideration.

Legislature Approves Funding. When it develops the state capital budget, the Legislature considers the potential federal funds that may be awarded to Washington State for RTP and generally approves funding authority for RCO.

Proof of Matching Funds. Applicants with match included in their applications must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least 1 calendar month before board approval of funding.⁵

Board Awards Grants. After the Legislature and Governor approve the capital budget, the board makes the final grant awards⁶ in a public meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to attend.

Grant Agreement Materials. After grant awards, applicants have 2 calendar months⁷ to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers). RCO staff then prepare and issue the grant agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 3 calendar months.⁸ Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as project sponsors, may begin their projects, according to the terms of the grant agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations* for more information.

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

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

⁶Pending Federal Highway Administration's approval of funds.

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

⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(5)

Ongoing

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

- Develop milestones for project implementation that ensures timely completion as follows:
 - Development grants: Up to 3 years
 - Education grants: Up to 1 federal fiscal year
 - Maintenance grants: Up to 2 years
 - Exceptionally complex projects 3 years
- RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones established in the grant agreements.
- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting project milestones.
- Submit a reimbursement request at least once a year.⁹
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO grant agreement.
- If a time extension is needed, the sponsor must submit a written request at least 60 days before expiration of the grant agreement.

Project Completion. When a project is completed, the sponsor must submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project as specified in the agreement.¹⁰ If the bill and documentation are not submitted within 6 months of the end date within the agreement, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board may terminate the grant agreement without payment.

⁹Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040

¹⁰Washington Administrative Code 286.13.040(7)

Section 2: Policies

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

- ✓ Grant categories
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible project types, activities, and costs
- ✓ Ineligible projects and costs
- ✓ Environmental requirements
- ✓ Property requirements
- ✓ Equipment policies
- ✓ Other requirements and things to know
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

Categories

RCO offers two categories of RTP grants: General Category grants for trail development, renovation, or maintenance, and Education Category grants for trail education and information. Federal policies dictate how the funding is disbursed to each category to ensure equitable distribution for both motorized and nonmotorized uses.

Funding Priorities

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board gives preference to projects that further specific goals of the following statewide strategic plans:

- Washington State [Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities Plan](#)
- Washington [State Trails Plan](#)
- [Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan](#)

This preference is shown in evaluation criteria that place a high priority on projects that excel by doing the following:

- Filling an established need.
- Adhering to high design standards.
- Reducing trail maintenance backlogs.
- Being ready to proceed and having widespread public support.
- Demonstrating sustainability and environmental stewardship
- Presenting a favorable benefit-cost ratio and appropriately estimating and explaining costs.
- Bringing a high proportion of non-government contributions and matching value to the project (cash, goods, services, etc.)
- Exhibiting compliance the Growth Management Act, when applicable.

40-30-30 Requirement

Federal legislation¹¹ requires the following:

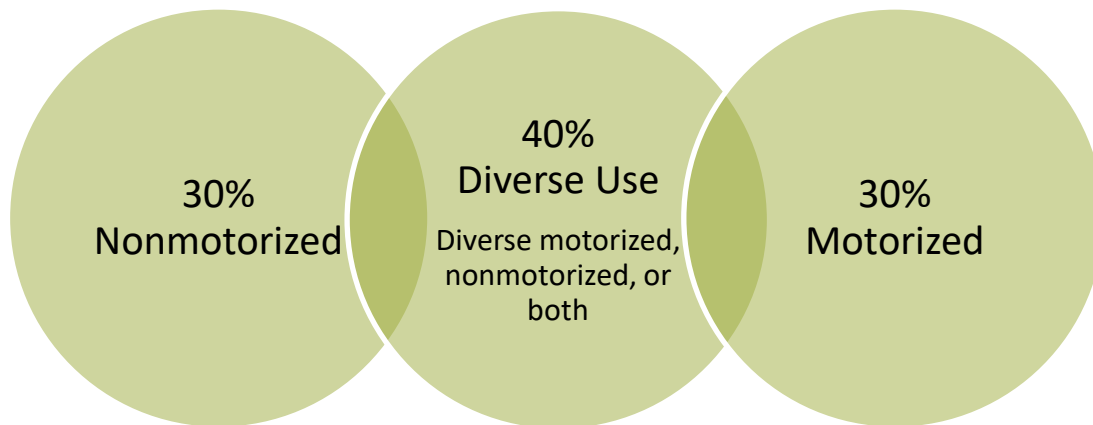
- 40 percent of this program's funds must be used for recreational trail or related projects that facilitate diverse recreational trail use in recreational trail corridors, trail sides, or trailheads. Diverse means more than one trail activity, such as the following:
 - More than one nonmotorized trail activity
 - More than one motorized trail activity
 - A combination of compatible nonmotorized and motorized trail activities.
- 30 percent of this program's funds must be used for motorized recreation, either multiple or single use.
- 30 percent of this program's funds must be used for nonmotorized recreation, either multiple or single use.

RCO applies the 40-30-30 formula to the money it receives from the federal government. It then applies the formula to the amount of money awarded in the General and Education Categories. These percentage requirements may not be waived, and the money must be carried over to the next grant cycle if there are insufficient applications to meet the 40-30-30 minimums.

¹¹23 U.S.C. 206, (d)(3)(A)

By federal rule and board practice, no more than 5 percent of RTP funds may be allocated to education projects.

Note: It is possible to exceed the minimum percentage requirements. For example, a diverse motorized project, such as snowmobile and motorcycle trails, may satisfy the 40 percent diverse use requirement and the 30 percent motorized use requirement simultaneously. The same applies for nonmotorized use.



Classifying Projects

As applications arrive, RCO uses the decision tree (Appendix 1) to designate which user category is most appropriate to meet federal rules. Staff also determines if there are other user categories in which the project is eligible based on use and the Primary Management Objective (described below). Projects are categorized as one of the following:

- **Nonmotorized, Single Use:** A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of nonmotorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian only or equestrian only.

Note: A trail for pedestrian use could include walking, hiking, running, bird watching, and backpacking. It's considered a single use because all use is by pedestrians. Similarly, only winter uses such as cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, would be considered a single use because all use is by pedestrians.

- **Nonmotorized, Multiple Use:** Projects that benefit more than one mode of nonmotorized recreational trail use at the same time (such as walking and bicycling; hiking and horseback riding) or in different seasons (such as hiking in the summer and cross-country skiing in the winter).
- **Diverse Use:** A project intended to benefit single or multiple nonmotorized use, single or multiple motorized use, or a combination of compatible nonmotorized and motorized uses. For example, a trail that is built for equestrian use in the

summer and snowmobile use in winter or a trailhead serving all-terrain vehicles and bicycles.

- **Motorized, Multiple Use:** A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of motorized recreational trail use, such as: motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle use or all-terrain vehicle use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. These projects may benefit some nonmotorized uses, but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.
- **Motorized, Single Use:** A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of motorized recreational use, such as snowmobiling. These projects may benefit some nonmotorized uses, but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

Classifying Motorized Use

In most years, it has been a challenge for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to meet the 30 percent motorized use requirement because too few applications are submitted for motorized recreation.

To help the board meet the federal requirement to spend a minimum of 30 percent of the funding on motorized projects, RTP projects are defined as motorized if the application shows the amount of approved motorized use to be more than incidental. In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

- If an education project, it must target motorized use.
- If a trail project, the manager must have certified it as having a motorized Primary Management Objective.
- If a trail project, it must be open to motor vehicles and include features clearly designed to accommodate recreational, motorized trail vehicles (climbing turns, tread hardening, groomed paths, off-road vehicle or snowmobile-related signs, loading ramps, etc.)

Changing Categories to Meet Funding Requirements¹²

To meet the minimum funding requirements, projects may be moved between categories. The process is described below.

After projects are evaluated, but before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board meets to award grants, staff identify the highest scoring, partially funded, or unfunded project and determine if it could be funded by moving it (or a project higher on the list)

¹²Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2008-16

to a category with extra funds. Staff, in consultation with the advisory committee, then recommend that the board shift the project if all the following conditions are met:

- It is eligible for placement in the new category.
- There are enough excess funds for the project in that category.
- The category change does not affect an education project.

The process is repeated, in order of project scores, until the excess funds are exhausted or there are no more projects eligible for a move. Any remaining unobligated money is applied to the same category in the next grant cycle.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are shown below.

- Local agencies (cities, towns, counties, port districts, park and recreation districts, etc.).
- Federal agencies.
- State agencies.
- Native American tribes.
- Nonprofit organizations (see Nonprofit Organizations below).

Applicant Requirements

Nonprofit Organizations

A qualified nonprofit organization must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- Be registered with the State of Washington as a nonprofit corporation per Revised Code of Washington 24.03.
- Have been active in trail-related activities for at least 3 years. "Actively managing projects" means performing the tasks necessary to manage a funded site such as designing and implementing development projects, performing maintenance, conducting education activities, securing and managing funds and other resources, and other trail-related tasks.
- Have named a successor at the time of any change in organizational status (for example, dissolution), as required by state law.

- Not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, income, race, religion.
- Provide the articles of incorporation and by-laws, including any amendments.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's intent is that nonprofits maintain nonprofit status. Because this is not always possible, a successor organization must agree in writing to assume any ongoing project responsibilities should the original organization's status change. The responsibilities are identified in RCO's grant agreement with the project sponsor. A qualified successor is any party eligible to apply for RTP funds and capable of complying with contract responsibilities. The board recommends, whenever possible, a government agency be sought as a successor. A successor need not be named for maintenance or education projects.

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 all the activities below. The legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

- Contract with the State of Washington and the United States of America.
- Meet any statutory definitions required for Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant programs.
- Receive and spend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.
- Develop and 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.

Eligible Project Types

This section describes project types that are eligible for funding. To be eligible, all project proposals must be directly associated with an existing recreational trail. RTP projects are subject to compliance under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders. Review the environmental compliance section of the manual for additional information.

Development Projects

A development project is construction or work resulting in new elements, including but not limited to structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources.¹³ Development projects are for the construction of *new* trailside and trailhead facilities¹⁴ for recreational trails and the development of short trail linkages that connect two or more trail systems together. Trailside and trailhead facilities should have a direct relationship with an existing recreational trail; a highway rest area or visitor center is not an appropriate use of funds.

Development also includes renovation of existing facilities when they have deteriorated to the point where their usefulness or safety is impaired (although not because of inadequate maintenance) or the facility has become obsolete. Renovation means a project that improves an existing site or structure in order to increase its service life or functions.¹⁵ Renovation can be extensive repair, reconstruction, or rehabilitation to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use and extend its useful service life. A development project may include both new construction and renovation activities in the same project.

Development projects must conform to policies and procedures found in *RCO Manual 4: Development Projects*. RCO strongly encourages applying [federal trail design standards](#) as a best practice for newly constructed and altered trails.

Below are examples of development projects.

- Construction of new trailside or trailhead facilities adjacent to an existing recreational trail.
- Construction of a new trail linking two existing trails by constructing a new, connecting trail of 1-mile or less.
- Renovation or reconstruction of an existing trail.
- Construction or replacement of bridges, boardwalks, and other trail structures.
- Construction of enhanced recreational access for people with disabilities.

Examples of Ineligible Development Projects

- Building a new trail that departs from an existing trailhead.

¹³Washington Administrative Code 286.04.010(7)

¹⁴Trailside and trailhead facilities mean trail components or associated facilities that serve the purpose and safe use of a recreational trail and may include, but not be limited to, the following: drainage, crossings, stabilization, parking, signs, controls, shelters, and water, sanitary, and access facilities.

¹⁵Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(21)

- Sidewalks along or next to public roads or streets.
- Maintenance of an existing trail.¹⁶

Maintenance Projects

Maintenance projects are those that maintain existing areas and facilities through repairs and upkeep for the benefit of outdoor recreationists.¹⁷ Maintenance is routine or periodic repair of existing trails, trail segments, or trailside facilities to restore them to standards or conditions to which they were originally designed and built. Maintenance does not change the original purpose, intent, or Primary Management Objective¹⁸ for which the trail was designed and built, and which occurs within the existing operational right-of-way¹⁹ of the trail. Except for snow-based winter recreation trails, maintenance projects shall be allowed only at trails, facilities, and areas that are currently managed and in use.

Maintenance projects also must conform to the accessibility policies and procedures found in *RCO Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Applicants for maintenance projects may request a grant for up to 2 consecutive years.

Below are examples of maintenance projects.

- Removing debris and vegetation such as fallen trees, noxious weeds, and branches from the trail, clearing encroaching brush or grasses, and removing rockslides.
- Maintaining trail tread such as filling ruts, reshaping a trail bed, repairing a trail surface or washout, installing riprap to retain cut and fill slopes, constructing retaining wall or cribbing to support trail tread, and concrete and asphalt repairs.
- Performing erosion control and drainage work such as replacing or installing drainage dips, water bars, or culverts, and realigning sections of trail to prevent erosion or avoid sensitive areas.
- Repairing or replacing deteriorated, damaged, or vandalized trail or trailhead structures, including sections of bridges, boardwalks, puncheon, signs, information kiosks, fencing, railings.

¹⁶Deminimus amounts of maintenance may be permitted when directly associated with, and necessary for, the development project to occur.

¹⁷Washington Administrative Code 286.04.010(11)

¹⁸Or Trail Management Objective

¹⁹“Operational right-of-way” refers to the area that previously has been disturbed and maintained as a recreational trail.

- Grooming and canopy clearing for winter snow trails.

The State's priority is reducing backlogged maintenance on trails that provide a backcountry experience.

Examples of Ineligible Maintenance Activities

- Re-opening a closed trail.
- Projects to purchase supplies and equipment without performing trail maintenance.
- Operational costs and activities such as litter pick up, cleaning restrooms, garbage service, septic service, etc.

Education Projects

Education projects are those that provide information, education, and outreach programs for the benefit of outdoor recreationists.²⁰ These grants are for programs to promote safety or environmental protection. Below are examples of education projects.

- Developing and providing trail-related safety education or environmental education programs.
- Developing and providing training on trail accessibility and sustainability.
- Producing trail-related education materials, including information displays, in print, video, audio, interactive computer displays.
- Development and distribution of brochures, flyers, and kiosk information.
- Developing publications related to trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, operation, and assessment.
- Patrolling trails to educate trail users on protecting environmentally sensitive areas.
- Patrolling trails to monitor trail use, safety, conditions, and environmental impacts.
- Patrolling trails to provide trailside assistance including emergency aid, search and rescue, and helping trail users repair equipment.

²⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-04-010(10)

- Providing training related to trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, operation, and assessment. Note: this does not include training related to club or organizational development or grant-writing skills.

Note: Some publications are partially educational. For example, a trail system map, in general, is not an allowable education project. However, if one side of a map is dedicated to trail safety and environmental protection, then education funds may be used for a prorated portion of the cost to produce the publication.

Acknowledgement of Education Projects

All training and educational materials and programs developed with RTP grants must acknowledge RTP and the Federal Highway Administration. Written materials developed with RTP funds and the results of the planning and research developed with RTP funds should be available to the public. Except in rare circumstances, materials produced with RTP funds should be available as public domain material.

Duration of Education Projects

Education grant funds and match must be spent during the federal fiscal year in which they are awarded and may not be carried forward.²¹ Federal fiscal years end September 30. Education funding that is not spent during the federal fiscal year will be reallocated to trail maintenance or development projects. See Advance Implementation for Education Category Projects for more information about the federal fiscal year.

Examples of Ineligible Education Projects

- Law enforcement
- Creating a roadside area (parking, fencing, restrooms, drinking fountain, etc.) where signs and an interpretive trail will convey a trail safety or environmental protection message. Only the signs are eligible. The other elements may qualify as a separate RTP development project.

Other Considerations

Phased Projects

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board recommends that applicants discuss phasing very expensive or complex projects with RCO. Sponsors may phase larger proposals into two or more stand-alone projects. Phased projects are subject to the following:

²¹23 United States Code 206(d)(2)(G)

- Approval of any single phase is limited to that phase. No endorsement or approval is given or implied toward future phases.
- Each phase must be submitted as a separate application.
- 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.

Progress and sponsor performance on earlier phases are considered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board when making decisions on current project proposals.

Joint and Cooperative Projects

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

Primary Management Objective

When combining different types of uses on a trail system, the sponsor must select a Primary Management Objective, which means the main type of use for which a trail is managed. Not all trails are managed for a specific use. Primary Management Objectives are adopted by policy and communicated to a trail's users. For example, if an agency carries out a policy to manage a trail specifically for hiking, and communicates this fact to users, the Primary Management Objective is hiking. A hiking Primary Management Objective does not necessarily mean that other trail uses are prohibited. A Primary Management Objective's advantage is that it provides all users with an understanding of the type of trail experience to expect. Applicants must select one Primary Management Objective for each project. All other uses are considered secondary.

Compatibility

When a trail accommodates diverse uses, the sponsor must ensure that the uses are compatible. For example, a sponsor builds a trail for all-terrain vehicles, which may not be compatible with equestrian use.

Eligible Activities and Costs

Only allowable costs may be included in the project. A cost is allowable if it is reasonable, necessary to complete the approved scope of work, eligible in the grant program, and incurred during the period of performance set forth in the grant agreement. Costs outside the period of performance may be allowed. See Pre-agreement Costs below. A

cost is considered reasonable if the work or materials and the cost reflect what a prudent person would have spent under the circumstances.

Developing or Renovating Facilities

Work types are distinct scopes of work within a project. Costs for the work types below are eligible for reimbursement: Information about reimbursement limits for architecture, engineering, and administrative costs is in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

- Architecture and engineering
- Buildings and structures (such as restrooms, warming huts, shelters, and storage)
- Campgrounds
- Environmental compliance (see Pre-agreement costs below)
- Fencing and gates, including barrier rocks and bollards
- Landscaping, including irrigation, trees, shrubs, etc.
- Park furniture (benches, bike racks, trash cans, etc.)
- Parking
- Permits
- Signs
- Site preparation
- Stock facilities (corrals, highlines, hitching posts, loading ramps, water troughs, etc.)
- Trails, including trail structures such as boardwalks, retaining walls, bridges, culverts, puncheon, trestle conversions, turnpikes, water bars, etc.
- Viewpoints
- Water access facilities

Maintaining Facilities

When directly associated with an existing recreational trail, costs for the following activities *are* eligible for reimbursement.

- Equipment and boot decontamination to prevent the spread of noxious weeds
- Equipment repair and maintenance
- Liability insurance to cover volunteers
- Labor, including salaries and benefits
- Materials
- Noxious weed removal

- Professional services
- Purchase, rental, and leasing trail construction and maintenance equipment²²
- Supplies, including small maintenance tools and minor equipment²³ (i.e. small and attractive assets) and personal protective equipment
- Transportation or travel (mileage, per diem)

Providing an Education Program

When closely associated with an existing trail, costs for the activities below are eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible costs for education activities include the following:

- Communication
- Professional services such as graphic design, recording, production, etc.
- Salaries and benefits
- Supplies*
- Training*
- Travel and transportation*

*Costs must be less than \$1,000.

Incurring Pre-agreement Costs

RCO will pay only for work performed after grant agreements have been signed by both RCO and project sponsors with two exceptions.

- For development projects, expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits may be eligible for reimbursement if approved in advance by the Federal

²²Equipment can include such items as mowers and trail grooming machines provided the equipment is used primarily to construct and maintain recreational trails. This does not include the purchase of equipment to be used for purposes unrelated to trails. For example, a mower purchased under this program must be used primarily for trail and trailside maintenance and not to maintain open lawn areas or sports fields.

²³This covers individual items costing less than \$1,000 per item such as small maintenance tools, minor equipment, forms, maps, gravel, training, and other goods and services needed for the project.

Highway Administration.²⁴ For more details, see *RCO Manual 4: Development Projects*.

- If construction begins before the execution of a grant agreement and before the adoption of required environmental decision documents, the entire project will be disqualified.
- For education projects, costs incurred before an RCO grant agreement are not allowable as a pre-agreement cost unless RCO has approved and issued an Advance Implementation Waiver.

Note: There are no eligible pre-agreement costs for maintenance projects.

Advance Implementation for Education Category Projects

RTP is a federal grant program that receives funding annually. The federal fiscal year starts October 1 of each year and ends September 30 of the following year. In most instances, the Federal Highway Administration does not approve funding for RTP at the beginning of the federal fiscal year. This presents a challenge for project sponsors because Education Category projects must be completed within the federal fiscal year. This is especially difficult for sponsors managing winter recreation projects that need to begin implementation in the fall.

In most situations, RCO will reimburse only for expenses incurred after the grant agreement is executed fully. With federal approval of an advance construction alternative,²⁵ applicants may get advance approval in writing from RCO to begin project activities and preserve the eligibility of costs incurred for a pending project. The approval is called an Advance Implementation Waiver, which waives the prohibition to reimburse costs incurred in before execution of the grant agreement. A pending project means the project sponsor has submitted a complete application that is on file with RCO for the upcoming biennium.

To request an Advance Implementation Waiver, the applicant must submit the following:

- A complete grant application, if not already on file with RCO
- A written request with a justification regarding the critical need to begin project implementation early
- A Certification of Applicant Match²⁶

²⁴Federal Highway Administration must provide written approval per 2 Code of Federal Regulations 200.458. Costs are limited to those incurred no more than 18 months before federal approval of the project.

²⁵2 Code of Federal Regulations 200.458.

²⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(3)

- All required pre-agreement materials, including any outstanding control and tenure documentation and updated milestones
- Any other materials needed to support the request

Applicants may begin work upon receipt of an Advance Implementation Waiver from RCO. Applicants compelled to begin work before securing a grant agreement, do so at their own risk. If a grant is not awarded, RCO will not reimburse any expenses. Should a grant subsequently be awarded, the applicant must have met all applicable federal and state program policies to receive reimbursement or to use the project activities as match toward a grant award. This includes following applicable state and federal procurement rules, including the Buy America Act that places restrictions on purchase of all steel and iron incorporated into a funded project.

Indirect Costs

RCO permits organizations receiving federal awards to bill indirect costs.²⁷ Indirect costs are costs that are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective. Applicants must attach the RCO Fiscal Data Collection Sheet before submitting applications. Sponsors should start filling out this form early and work with their accounting staff to estimate indirect costs.

Equipment Costs

Maintenance Projects

Purchasing equipment to maintain recreational trails and trailheads is permissible in maintenance projects. Equipment means capital equipment²⁸ and small and attractive assets²⁹ necessary for trail maintenance, as determined by RCO. See the equipment policies for definitions and additional details. Eligible equipment includes the following:

- All-terrain vehicle
- Backhoe
- Brush hog
- Bulldozer
- Chain saw
- Excavator
- Power wheelbarrow
- Rock drill

²⁷Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200.56

²⁸Equipment and vehicles that cost \$5,000 or more per unit (including sales tax and ancillary costs) with a useful life of more than 1 year.

²⁹Items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit (including sales tax and ancillary costs) with a useful life of more than 1 year, and which are vulnerable to loss.

- Skid steer
- String trimmer
- Tractor or trail builder
- Trailer
- Truck
- Utility task vehicle

Equipment must be wholly dedicated for trail maintenance activities and may not be prorated or used for non-permissible uses. Sponsors must have sufficient experience and inventory controls, maintain records of all equipment purchased and comply with RCO's equipment management policies found later in this section **Error! Bookmark not defined..**

Education Projects

Purchasing equipment to implement education projects are eligible. Equipment means small and attractive assets³⁰ necessary for implementing the education program, as determined by RCO. Small and attractive assets are limited to:

- Laptops, notebook computers, tablets, and smartphones with unit costs of \$300 or more
- Optical devices, binoculars, telescopes, infrared viewers, range finders, cameras and photographic projection equipment, desktop computers, television sets, DVD players, Blu-ray players, and video cameras with unit costs of \$1,000 or more.
- Other items as determined by the RCO

Purchasing Capital Equipment

RCO must get pre-approval from the Federal Highway Administration for some capital equipment purchases. This is equipment with a value of \$5,000 or more. Purchases must comply with the Buy America Act.

Roads

RTP grants may not be used for maintenance or improvements to roads or bridges, unless those roads or bridges are specifically designated for recreational trail use by the managing agency. Eligible work must directly support and be necessary for trail recreation. RCO may require prorating the allowable costs if the improvements benefit both trail recreation and vehicular traffic.

³⁰Items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit (including sales tax and ancillary costs) with a useful life of more than 1 year, and which are vulnerable to loss.

Grants may be used on high-clearance, primitive roads and bridges with a trail Primary Management Objective. These roads or bridges may include old county, town, or township rights-of-way that are no longer maintained for passenger vehicle traffic, provided the project does not open the road to regular passenger vehicles.

Ineligible Projects and Costs

Ineligible Projects

- Planning projects, including feasibility studies, master plans, site planning studies, and wildlife impact studies.
- Land acquisition or condemnation of any kind.
- Law enforcement. Commissioned law enforcement officers or rangers may, however, perform certain education activities.
- New trail development not directly related to an existing recreational trail.
- Projects that do not directly benefit recreational trails.
- Roads and bridges unless specifically designated for recreational trail use and not accessible to, or maintained for, regular passenger vehicles.
- Stand-alone engineering and permitting projects.
- Trails, sidewalks, and other paths that provide an urban experience.
- Those facilitating motorized use on national forest or Bureau of Land Management land unless any of the following are met:
 - The land is not designated Wilderness.
 - Construction is consistent with the management direction in Forest Service or Bureau plans.
 - Facilitating motorized use on, or access to, recreational trails on which motorized use was prohibited or had not occurred as of May 1, 1991.
- Those on property bought under a conditional sales contract, unless the project sponsor has title to the property.
- Those that severely restrict public use, such as on property with deed provisions that have a significant negative impact on public recreational use of the property. Projects may be on public or private land but must provide written assurances of public access.

Ineligible Costs

- Appliances, furniture, and utensils.
- Bonus payments of any kind.
- Ceremonies and entertainment expenses.
- Charges in excess of the lowest acceptable bid when competitive bidding is required, unless RCO's director authorizes the higher costs, in writing, before the award of a contract.
- Charges incurred contrary to the policies and practices of the organization involved or of the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Costs associated with preparation of the grant application.
- Costs incurred before execution of Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant agreement. Planning and environmental compliance costs may be allowed if incurred after the Federal Highway Administration's approval.
- Costs incurred before the Federal Highway Administration provides signed authorization to proceed.
- Damage judgments arising from developing a facility, whether determined by a judicial decision, arbitration, or otherwise.
- Donations or contributions made by the participant, such as to a charitable organization.
- Fines, penalties, interest expenses, deficit and overdraft charges, and losses from uncollectible accounts.
- Indirect costs for federal agencies (organization operation costs not directly associated with implementing the approved project).
- Losses arising from uncollected accounts.
- Payments to an equipment replacement fund.
- Publicity expenses, except legal requirements for public notice.
- Purchase of capital equipment that is not wholly dedicated to the maintenance of eligible recreational trails.
- Routine maintenance of vehicles.

- Taxes for which the organization involved would not have been liable to pay.
- The cost of donated materials if their values are not substantiated.
- The value of discounts not taken
- The value of personal properties, unless specifically approved in advance by RCO's director.
- Value of materials, equipment, and services donated to the project sponsor if unsubstantiated. See *Manual 8: Reimbursements* for information about what is needed for a verifiable audit trail.

Environmental Requirements

Applicants applying for development or maintenance grants must review and document compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other federal environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders. Each project must be reviewed to assure that it does not have a significant impact on the environment.

Some RTP projects will be classified as categorically excluded from National Environmental Policy Act documentation when they meet the criteria for an exclusion, which typically involves actions that do not have a significant environmental impact.³¹ However, before beginning any work, applicants and sponsors still are required to obtain all necessary permits, satisfy the State Environmental Policy Act, and comply with all applicable federal environmental regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and other state and local environmental requirements.

Projects that 1) have a significant environmental impact; 2) have substantial controversy on environmental grounds; 3) have significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; or 4) are inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, requirement, or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action are not exempt and are subject to further environmental review. Such projects may not qualify for categorical exclusion and in most instances, are not good candidates for RTP funding.

Documenting Environmental Compliance

To comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), within 2 months of funding approval and before RCO will issue a grant agreement, RCO must receive the environmental clearance documents.

³¹RCO Memorandum of Agreement with Federal Highway Administration
Page 28

Federal agencies must provide documentation of environmental clearance for their projects and for projects occurring on their land. The RTP Landowner Agreement for Maintenance Projects includes a certification that the federal landowner will review and document compliance with NEPA and the National Historic Preservation Act for applicants working on federal lands. RCO staff will submit all other projects to Federal Highways Administration for environmental review.

The Federal Highway Administration will accept federal management agency determinations for NEPA, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Endangered Species Act compliance for projects on lands under the control of that federal agency or requiring an approval action by that agency.

Cultural Resources and the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470), the Federal Highway Administration must take into account the effects of projects on historic properties and cultural resources. RCO will coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration to review background information on projects and ensure compliance with Section 106. The results of this consultation may require applicants to conduct additional archeological studies as necessary. This section applies to development and maintenance projects involving renovation, rehabilitation, restoration, or relocation of trails. See the Cultural Resources section in Manual 4 and 5 for more 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 and the Federal Highway Administration encourage sponsors to consider how their projects may spread invasive species and work to reduce that possibility. Invasive species can be spread unintentionally during construction, maintenance, and restoration activities. Here is how it could happen:

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

The key to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species on projects is twofold: Use materials that are known to be free of invasive plants or animals in the project and clean tools and equipment both before and after the job. Equipment to clean should include, but not be limited to, footwear, gloves, tools, vehicles, trailers, and tires.

Sustainability

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

The board encourages sponsors to incorporate sustainable design, practices, and elements into the scope of a project. Examples may include use of on-site or recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for circulation paths, access routes, trails, and parking areas; energy-efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

Property Requirements

Control of the Land

To protect investments made by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and to ensure public access to those investments, sponsors of development and maintenance projects 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,³² easement, or joint cooperative grant agreement approved by RCO. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for more information. The type of instrument needed depends on the project type, scope of work, and underlying landowner. For example, RCO’s landowner agreement for maintenance projects may be suitable for applicants with seasonal snow-grooming projects on public lands; however, RCO requires a longer compliance period for projects that restore or rehabilitate facilities and significantly extend a facility’s useful life.

Project on Privately Owned Land

Applicants that develop or restore trails or trail-related facilities on privately owned land must secure easements or other legally binding agreements that ensure public access to the recreational trail improvements funded with RTP assistance. An easement must authorize the recreational trail, ensure that the landowner will allow or cooperate with activities of the proposed project, and ensure public access to the trail improvements for at least 25 years after project acceptance by RCO.

³²Use agreements may not be accepted in all situations. Contact an RCO grants manager 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 aquatic land managers.

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

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 applicants that need to secure a use authorization meeting board policy must do all the following:

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

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.

Equipment Policies

Sponsors may rent, lease, or purchase equipment and vehicles to construct and maintain recreation trails and trailheads. Sponsors may rent, lease, or purchase some small and attractive assets to deliver education programs (see Education Project Costs above). Purchasing equipment and vehicles is not permissible in development projects. Sponsors may purchase equipment when all the following conditions are met:

- The equipment is an essential and necessary component to implement the project or program.
- Purchasing is more cost effective than renting or leasing equipment.
- The equipment is wholly dedicated for trail maintenance or education activities, not prorated or used for other, non-permissible uses.

Equipment includes capital equipment³³ and small and attractive assets,³⁴ as determined by RCO, which are necessary for trail maintenance projects. For Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants, equipment means the following:

- Capital equipment: Equipment and vehicles that cost \$5,000 or more per unit (including ancillary costs³⁵) and have a useful life of more than 1 year.
- Small and attractive assets: Items that cost less than \$5,000 per unit (including ancillary costs), have a useful life of more than 1 year, and are vulnerable to loss. RCO has determined that the following shall be considered equipment and are subject to the following equipment requirements and management:
 - Laptops, notebook computers, tablets, and smartphones with unit costs of \$300 or more
 - Optical devices, binoculars, telescopes, infrared viewers, range finders, cameras and photographic projection equipment, desktop computers, television sets, DVD players, Blu-ray players, and video cameras with unit costs of \$1,000 or more

³³Office of Financial Management State Administrative and Accounting Manual Chapter 30

³⁴Office of Financial Management State Administrative and Accounting Manual Chapter 30.40.20

³⁵Costs that are directly attributable to asset acquisition, such as freight and transportation costs, site preparation costs, and professional fees, that are necessary to place a capital asset into its intended state of operation.

- Mechanized and powered hand tools such as chainsaws, string trimmers, generators, rock drills, and power wheelbarrows with unit costs of \$300 or more
- Vehicles such as mountain bikes, motorcycles, and ATVs with a per-unit cost of \$300 or more
- Trailers for storage and/or hauling equipment
- Other items as determined by the RCO

Purchasing Equipment

To maximize the benefit of grants and ensure fair and ethical treatment of bids from suppliers, sponsors shall use a competitive procurement process³⁶ when purchasing equipment. RCO must get pre-approval from the Federal Highway Administration on behalf of the sponsor for capital equipment purchases. To justify the request, sponsors must provide RCO with a description of the capital equipment, including, make, model, and purchase price, and a description of how the equipment will be used. If the equipment is made of, or includes, steel or iron, its sourcing and assembly must satisfy the Buy America requirements. See Buy America above.

Equipment Management

A sponsor must maintain a record of all equipment that meets the definition of capital equipment or small and attractive assets and is purchased under a Recreation and Conservation Funding Board agreement. The sponsor, not the board or RCO, always takes title. This inventory record begins with the list of any equipment purchases proposed in the project application. Upon board approval of the project, this listing is entered into the grant agreement.

The sponsor shall have, and make available to RCO upon request, equipment records that include the following:

- A description of the equipment
- Manufacturer's serial number (model, stock, vehicle identification, or other unique number securely affixed to the equipment)
- Source of the equipment, including grant or other agreement number
- Acquisition date and cost

³⁶2 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 200

- Percentage of sponsor participation in the cost of the project or program for which the equipment was acquired as specified in the grant agreement
- Location, use, and condition of the equipment and the date the information was reported
- Ultimate disposition data, including date and method of liquidation and disposal, and sale price, including the method used to determine current fair market value when a sponsor compensates the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for its share, if sold

The sponsor shall establish adequate maintenance procedures to keep the equipment in good and working condition.

The sponsor shall institute a control system to ensure adequate safeguards to prevent loss, damage, or theft of the equipment. Any loss, damage, or theft shall be investigated and fully documented. The sponsor shall promptly notify RCO of any such occurrence.

Periodic Inventory

The sponsor shall conduct a physical inventory of equipment and reconcile the results with previous records at least once every 2 years. This should continue until final liquidation has been made. Inventory records must be maintained just as other records for audit purposes. Any differences in this physical inspection and those shown in the accounting records shall be investigated by the sponsor to determine the causes of the difference. In connection with the inventory, the sponsor shall verify the existence, current use, and continued need for the equipment. A detailed written report on the results of this inventory shall be provided to RCO upon request.

Continued Use

The sponsor shall use the equipment in the maintenance or education project or program for which it was acquired for as long as needed, whether or not support continues through subsequent grants from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board or program, without making a refund to the program.

The value of equipment utilization may not be included in any other RCO grant if the equipment was purchased with an RCO grant.

When the sponsor disposes of the equipment (see below), procedures that provide for fair competition, to the extent practicable, and result in the highest possible return, shall be established.

In an ongoing maintenance program, sponsors may trade-in or sell equipment and use the proceeds to offset the cost of purchasing new equipment used for allowable RTP program activities. In this situation, the equipment becomes part of the sponsor's

reportable equipment inventory and the sponsor must continue to follow the equipment management procedures in this manual for the new equipment, until liquidated.

Equipment Liquidation

When the sponsor discontinues use of the equipment (assets) for the purpose for which it was funded, the following liquidation procedures shall apply:

- **The sponsor wishes to retain the equipment.** When the sponsor no longer needs the equipment as provided above but wishes to keep it for uses not eligible in the program, the sponsor must compensate RCO as directed under Calculating Program Refund.
- **The sponsor does not wish to retain the equipment.** If the sponsor has no need for the equipment but it still has value, the sponsor shall request disposition instructions from RCO.
 - Original cost of more than \$1,000: The sponsor shall sell the equipment and reimburse the grant program as directed below under Calculating Program Refund.
 - RCO may instruct the sponsor to transfer title to a third party named by RCO who is eligible in the grant program under existing statutes. In such cases, the sponsor will be compensated by the receiving party in the amount equal to the proportional share (as specified in the grant agreement) of the current fair market value of the equipment.
- **The equipment has no value.** This occurs when the equipment has lost value or has outlived its useful life, not due to lack of maintenance. The sponsor may notify RCO and if RCO concurs, the equipment can be removed from equipment inventory reporting requirements.

Calculating the Program Refund

When selling equipment, the sponsor must refund the grant program RCO's proportional share listed in the grant agreement. The sponsor shall use procedures for the sale that result in the highest possible return.

The sponsor may deduct selling or handling expenses, not to exceed \$100 or 10 percent of the sale amount, whichever is less, from the amount owed RCO. The sponsor must document and submit any such selling or handling expenses along with the refund to RCO.

A sponsor may not use RCO's portion of the sale to buy replacement or other equipment.

Other Requirements and Things to Know

Number of Grant Proposal Allowed

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle. However, each proposal must be for a different scope of work.

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

Accessibility

Facilities or elements³⁷ 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.

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

Competitive Bid Requirements³⁸

Sponsors shall follow current state procurement procedures or write their own. When buying things, sponsors shall provide open and free competition, to the maximum extent practical. Be aware of organizational conflicts of interest. Contractors that develop specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, or requests for proposals cannot be hired for the resulting work. Sponsors receiving federal money also must follow federal laws and regulations online at [Federal Highways Administration Recreational Trails Program Guidance](#).

³⁷A 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).

³⁸RCO's project agreement standard terms and conditions, Section 16 or 18 (U.S. Forest Service agreement) Revised Code of Washington 46.09.530(2)

Buy America

Buy America requirements apply to all steel and iron incorporated in a funded project when the total value of the materials or equipment exceeds \$2,500.³⁹ This includes the purchase of equipment such as trail grooming vehicles, mechanized maintenance equipment primarily constructed with steel or iron, and all materials permanently incorporated into a project (e.g. bridge girders). Steel tools that do not comply with Buy America Act requirements must be inventoried and the total should not exceed \$2,500. The provision requires these materials be melted and manufactured domestically and that documentation is obtained to verify Buy America compliance. If documentation of domestic steel and iron manufacturing is not available, then a waiver request is necessary (see below). For more information, see the Federal Highway Administration's [Buy America Construction Program Guide](#).

Buy America Waivers

Waiver requests may be made for items that do not meet Buy America requirements. Project sponsors must work with their grants managers, who will coordinate the request with the Federal Highway Administration. When submitted, waiver requests are made available for public review and comment in a federal register. For vehicle and equipment purchase waivers, the Administration processes requests quarterly, on the condition that the product has final domestic assembly.

Youth Crews

RCO encourages all sponsors to use qualified, youth conservation or service corps for construction and maintenance of recreational trails in this program. For RTP⁴⁰ "qualified youth service or conservation corps" are those that are defined at 42 U.S.C. 12572(a)(2), which refers to the "Healthy Futures Corps," which is designed to identify and meet unmet health needs in communities, and 42 U.S.C. 12656(c)(3), which refers to "qualified urban youth corps," which means any program established by a state or local government or by a nonprofit organization that meets all the following criteria:

- Is capable of offering meaningful, full-time, productive work for individuals between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, in an urban or public works or transportation setting.
- Gives participants a mix of work experience, basic and life skills, education, training, and support services.
- Provides participants with the opportunity to develop citizenship values and skills through service to their communities and the United States.

³⁹U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, § 635.410

⁴⁰Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act 21 § 1524

Nondiscrimination

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and RCO activities are intended to follow state and federal guidelines for nondiscrimination. If you believe that this goal is not being met, express concern to RCO, or the Office of Civil Rights, Federal Highway Administration, 400 7th Street S.W., Room 4132, Washington, D.C. 20590.

Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.⁴¹ More information about the [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available online.

Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations⁴²

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area⁴³ after a project is complete. The long-term obligations are in RCO's grant agreement A [sample grant agreement](#) can be found on RCO's Web site.

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

In general, the project area funded with an RCO grant must remain dedicated to the use as originally funded, such as outdoor recreation, habitat protection, farmland preservation, or salmon recovery purposes, for as long as defined in the grant agreement. The ongoing obligation for RTP development and restoration projects is at least 25 years from the date RCO accepts the project as complete.

A conversion occurs when the project area acquired, developed, or restored with RCO grant funding is used for purposes other than what it was funded for originally. See RCO *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations* for a discussion of conversions and the process required for replacement of the public investment. Non-compliance with the long-term obligations for an RCO grant may jeopardize an organization's ability to obtain future RCO grants.

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

⁴¹Revised Code of Washington 42.56

⁴²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25, Washington Administrative Code 286, RCO's grant agreement standard terms and conditions, and *Manual 7: Long-term Obligations*.

⁴³Project area is the defined geographic area where the project occurs and is described in the project's boundary map.

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

Section 3: Money Matters

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

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

Grant Limits

- Grants should be used to expand an applicant's existing capacity to provide outdoor recreation facilities to its users. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board establishes grant limits for its programs to help make funds available to a greater number of projects. The grant limits for the Recreational Trails Program are as follows:
 - General projects \$5,000-\$150,000 per project
 - Education projects \$5,000-\$20,000 per project

The architecture and engineering limit for development projects is 20 percent of the estimated development costs. Allowable architecture and engineering costs are described in *Manual 4: Development Projects*.

Match Requirements

Matching Share

Match is the project sponsor's contribution to a project. By requiring a match for grants, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board intends to foster and demonstrate local

commitment to the projects and to spread the money from the grant program to a greater number of projects.⁴⁴

Applicants may contribute matching resources, however, for the 2020 grant cycle, match is not required.

Eligible Match

Applicant resources used for match must be eligible in the grant program. A sponsor's matching share may include one or a combination of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds—council or voter
- Corrections labor (see Types of Match section below)
- Donations—the value of using cash, equipment, labor, materials, or services (see Types of Match section below)
- Force account—the value of using sponsor's equipment, labor, or materials (see Types of Match section below)
- Grants—federal,⁴⁵ state, local, and private (see Types of Match section below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see Types of Match section below)
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

Not Allowed as Match

- Costs that are not eligible for grant assistance or included in the project agreement.
- Costs that are not necessary or an integral part of the project scope.
- Costs that are double counted. A cost incurred by a project sponsor on a previous project that already has been paid cannot be used as a match or expenditure on another RCO project.

⁴⁴Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

⁴⁵Sometimes, funds from other federal programs may be credited as a non-federal share. See Title 23 United States Code, §206. Recreational trails program. (Federal Share).

- A donation or costs toward a project for one federal program cannot be double counted for another federal program.
- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs associated with meeting a mitigation requirement for another project or action (e.g. permit requirement, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing, Habitat Conservation Plan, legal settlement, etc.).

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Match Requirements

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants are intended to be the last source of funding for a project. In other words, before the board awards the grant, the required match must be secured so the project can move forward. Board grants also are intended to supplement the existing capacity of a sponsor, not to replace existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.⁴⁶

All matching resources must be all the following:

- An integral and necessary part of the approved project.
- Part of the work identified in the application and project agreement.
- For eligible work types or elements.
- Committed to the project.

RCO rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example, if a grant applicant uses donated equipment as a match, RCO rules requiring the equipment to remain available for program purposes throughout its useful life apply to the donated equipment 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.

⁴⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(6)

The board may require the applicant to provide a portion of its matching resources in local resources.⁴⁷

Match Availability and Certification

To help ensure Recreation and Conservation Funding Board projects are ready for implementation upon approval, applicants must have matching funds available for expenditure before the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit a Certification of Match Form to ensure their projects are included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan for projects with match dependent on citizen votes or passage of ballot measures. This certification is due at least 1 calendar month before Recreation and Conservation Funding Board action.⁴⁸ The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

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

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

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, and material is discussed in *Manual 8: Reimbursements*. RCO strongly encourages applicants to secure written confirmation of all donations they plan to 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.

⁴⁷Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045(4)

⁴⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040 (3)

Force account values and the value of donated contributions must be recorded on a separate project financial ledger maintained by the sponsor in a way that readily is identifiable in federal and state audits.

Corrections Labor

In determining the value of corrections or convict labor for a project, only the actual out-of-pocket cost of paid labor is allowable. Corrections or convict labor is not volunteer labor or donated labor that may be valued at fair market value.

Other Grants

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

The eligibility of other federal funds used as a match is governed by federal requirements.

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

Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Grants as Match⁴⁹

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

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

⁴⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2005-24

- The grant applications are submitted in the same biennium.⁵⁰

For evaluation scoring purpose, an RCO grant used as match will not count toward the award of matching share points.⁵¹

Matching resources also must conform to the deadlines discussed in Section 1, Grant Process and Timeline.⁵²

Mitigation Funds as Match

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

Cost Increases⁵³

Cost increases for approved projects may be granted by the board or director if financial resources are available. Each cost increase request will be considered on its merits. The director may approve a cost increase request as long as it does not exceed 10 percent of the project's initial approved grant amount. See Manual 4: Development Projects for more details on cost increases.

Federal Rules

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

Fees and Income

User or other fees may be charged for areas and facilities developed or maintained with RTP grants. See *Manual 4: Development Projects*, Washington Administrative Code 286-13-110, and the project agreement for more information.

⁵⁰Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

⁵¹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

⁵²Washington Administrative Code 286-13-04

⁵³Washington Administrative Code 286-13-085

Records and Reimbursement

Sponsors Must Pay First

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

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

Reimbursement shall not be approved for any donations. Donations are eligible as match only. Applicants must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to *Manual 8: Reimbursements* for additional details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

Audits

All records relevant to projects funded by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board must be on file with the sponsors 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

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

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

How Project Evaluation Works

Project evaluation is the competitive process adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to guide it in allocating funds to grant applicants.

The RTP Advisory Committee evaluates grant applications based on a set of questions adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board. The questions are created from statutory and other criteria developed through a public process. The evaluation questions for each category may be found in the following pages.

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

Letters and other documented expressions of project support that are provided to RCO by attaching in PRISM by the technical completion date will be provided to the advisory committee as part of the evaluation packet. Applicants also should summarize this support when responding to evaluation Question 9 for general projects or Question 5 for education projects.

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

Scores from sections one and two are combined for a project's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final funding decisions in an open public meeting.

Advisory Committee

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

In recruiting members for the committee, RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experience and knowledge of outdoor recreation in Washington. By law, members must represent both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail users and must meet at least once each federal fiscal year.⁵⁴

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

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

Do Not Fund Recommendations⁵⁵

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

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

RCO staff will forward to the board a summary of the "Do Not Fund" recommendation and any committee member comments. The board will consider the advisory committee's recommendation at a regularly scheduled public meeting, before the ranked list is adopted (consideration may take place at the same meeting, but the "Do Not

⁵⁴[Title 23 U.S. Code §206\(c\)\(2\)](#)

⁵⁵Approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, January 9, 2014.

Fund” recommendation will be discussed before the ranked list is adopted). The board retains discretion in awarding all grants.

Evaluation Criteria

Education Projects

Education proposals are evaluated and funded separately from RTP General (development and maintenance) projects. The advisory committee assesses each principally on the criteria shown in the table below. RCO does not provide more information to encourage a variety of creative proposals.

Applicants must respond to the five evaluation questions individually in PRISM Online.

These responses along with an application fact sheet, maps, site plans, visuals, and letters of support, comprise the evaluation materials provided to the advisory committee for evaluation review and scoring.

RTP Education Projects Evaluation Criteria Summary			
Scored By	Question	Title	Maximum Points
Advisory Committee	1	Need	5
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction	5
Advisory Committee	3	Applicant’s ability	5
Advisory Committee	4	Cost-benefit	5
Advisory Committee	5	Support	5
Total Points Possible			25

Revised November 16, 2000

Education Projects Detailed Scoring Criteria

1. **Need.** Describe the need for this project.
2. **Need satisfaction.** Describe the extent to which the project satisfies this need.
3. **Applicant’s ability.** Describe the applicant’s ability to accomplish the project.
4. **Cost-benefit.** Describe the project’s cost-benefit.
5. **Support.** Describe the support for the project.

Development and Maintenance Projects

Development and maintenance applicants respond to each evaluation question individually in PRISM Online.

Applicants do not respond to the staff-scored criterion. RCO will score these questions based on other information, or information submitted with the application.

These responses, along with an application fact sheet, maps, plans, visuals, and letters of support, comprise the evaluation materials provided to the advisory committee for evaluation review and scoring

RTP Development and Maintenance Projects Evaluation Criteria Summary				
Scored by	Question	Title	Maximum Points	Project Type Questions
Advisory Committee	1	Need	15	All
Advisory Committee	2	Need satisfaction	15	All
Advisory Committee	3	Project design	10	Development
Advisory Committee	4	Maintenance	15	Maintenance
Advisory Committee	5	Sustainability	5	Development
Advisory Committee	6	Readiness to proceed	5	All
Advisory Committee	7	Cost-benefit	5	All
Advisory Committee	8	Cost efficiencies	5	All
Advisory Committee	9	Project support	10	All
RCO Staff	10	Growth Management Act preference	0	All
Total Points Possible			70	

Development and Maintenance Projects Detailed Scoring Criteria

Advisory Committee-Scored

- 1. Need.** How great is the need for improved trail facilities that provide a backcountry experience? The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their project.

State, Regional, Land Manager, or Community Needs

- Is the project supported by location or type in a publicly reviewed and adopted plan? For example: *Washington State Trails Plan* or the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's *Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities (NOVA) Plan* or the *Washington: State Recreation and Conservation Plan*?

- Describe how critical RTP funds are to the completion of this project.
- Describe any significant environmental damage in need of repair.
- Describe the consequences of not funding this project. For example, how immediate is any threat? Will actions be taken that will lead to a loss of quality etc.?

Trail Inventory Issues

- How large is any maintenance backlog?
- What similar trail opportunities are available now in the local area?
- How much of this need can be attributed to a history of inadequate care and maintenance?
- What is the current physical condition of the proposed facility?

Use

- How convenient will the finished project be to intended users?
- How heavily are trails and support facilities in the area used?
- How heavily will the finished project be used?
- Are there significant not served or under-served user groups?
- To what extent will safety hazards be resolved?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which staff later multiplies by 3.

0 points No or very weak need established.

1-2 points Fair to moderate need established.

3 points Strong need established.

4-5 points Very high to exceptional need, established in several ways.

Revised February 2006

- 2. Need satisfaction.** To what extent will the project satisfy the service area needs identified in Question 1, Need?

How well does the specific proposal satisfy the need established in Question 1? For example, on the proposed trail, will all surface water issues be remedied

(water bars, grade dips, puncheon, water crossings, etc.)? How about the trail corridor (clearing, brushing, tree removal, etc.), safety, and sign issues? Responses must be quantified. How efficiently does the proposal target these needs?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which staff later multiplies by 3.

0 points	No or weak evidence of need satisfaction
1-2 points	Fair to moderate evidence. Project fills only a small portion of the apparent or expressed need, or insufficient information is provided.
3 points	Strong evidence. The project will address an important need, although that need will not be filled completely by the project.
4-5 points	Very high to exceptional evidence. Project fills a critical need.

Revised February 2006

3. Project design (Development Projects Only). Is the proposal appropriately designed for intended uses and users? The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their projects.

- Describe how the project's setting is appropriate to the need? How does it complement the need?
- How does the design protect and complement the environment?
- Describe how the facility is designed for ease of maintenance.
- Describe the extent to which the design is user friendly and universally accessible.
- Describe the spatial relationships, surfacing, width, and grades. How tight are curves? Are there switchbacks? How is multiple use facilitated?
- If a trail, is it designed in a loop. Does it lead to a primary destination?
- Does the project have a Primary Management Objective?⁵⁶

⁵⁶"Primary Management Objective" means the main type of use for which a trail is managed. Not all trails are managed for a specific use. Primary Management Objectives are adopted by policy and communicated to a trail's users. For example, if an agency carries out a policy to manage a trail specifically for hiking, and communicates this fact to users, the Primary Management Objective is hiking. A hiking Primary Management

- For projects with a motorized Primary Management Objective, is an adequate level of difficulty maintained?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which staff later multiplies by 2.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 0 points | Poor evidence presented, or the design is inappropriate. For example: Environmental issues are not addressed; trail difficulty level and user experience are not addressed or can be expected to change substantially; or there is a high probability of user displacement. |
| 1-2 points | Below average to moderate. For example, design does only a fair job of addressing environmental issues; the difficulty level and user experience will be somewhat degraded; there appears to be some user displacement. |
| 3 points | Good. For example: Design is adequate and reasonable to address environmental problems, the difficulty level and user experience will be unchanged; not much user displacement will occur. |
| 4-5 points | Very good to excellent. Design is outstanding if a trail retains difficulty level and user experience with no user displacement. |

Revised February 2006

4. Maintenance (Maintenance Projects Only). To what degree will the project reduce recreational trail maintenance backlogs and/or recreate a recreational trail opportunity?⁵⁷ The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Applicants should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their projects.

- Typically, how often does this trail require maintenance work?
- When was maintenance performed last on this trail?
- How much of the area's trail maintenance backlog will be alleviated by this project? That is:
 - What is the total number of trail miles in the system you administer (i.e. park, ranger district)?

Objective does not necessarily mean that other trail uses are prohibited. A Primary Management Objective's advantage is that it provides all users with an understanding of the type of trail experience to expect.

⁵⁷Many winter recreation trail opportunities are re-created through snow grooming maintenance activities.

- What is the number of trail miles your jurisdiction plans to maintain each year?
- What is the number of trail miles needing maintenance due to unplanned events resulting from such things as unusual weather, etc.?
- Is this project request for support of regular planned maintenance or maintenance due to unplanned events? If unplanned events, what were the events?
- How are you qualified to complete this project in a quality and timely fashion? What is your experience with past maintenance projects?
- Are the project's maintenance goals specific and appropriate? Explain.
- To what extent will this maintenance project extend the service life of this facility?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which staff later multiplies by 3.

0 points	Poor. Too little information is presented, or the project likely will not reduce trail maintenance backlogs or not recreate a recreational opportunity.
1-2 points	Fair to moderate. Maintenance backlogs are reduced only somewhat or there appears to be only moderate ability to recreate a recreational opportunity.
3 points	Good. Project substantially reduces maintenance backlogs or a relatively important trail opportunity is recreated.
4-5 points	Very good to excellent. This project effectively eliminates trail maintenance backlogs or recreates a critical trail opportunity.

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

- 5. Sustainability (Development Projects Only).** Sustainability reflects choices made to balance the desired benefits and potential impacts of a project on the surrounding landscape and community. Please discuss how your project's location or design supports your organization's sustainability plan or how you considered the ecological, economic, and social benefits and impacts in the project plan.

Examples of sustainability factors that could be part of a project or maintenance plan are provided below for consideration but are not all-inclusive. Applicants and evaluators should treat this list as a guide, not a checklist. Applicants are

encouraged to be creative in expressing the sustainability factors of their projects, and evaluators should score projects based on the extent to which applicants have considered and addressed the benefits and impacts of their projects whether they discuss one of the factors below or many.

Ecological Factors

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

Social Factors

- Addresses an identified disparity in social or environmental services
- Encourages access via multi-modal and active transportation choices
- Promotes opportunities for physical activity, social and cultural connections, or community education

Economic Factors

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

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

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

- 6. Readiness to proceed.** Is the applicant prepared to begin the project? The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their projects.

There are often good reasons why managers are unable to initiate a project immediately. Even so, if other factors are equal, RTP favors projects that move the most quickly.

- Exactly when will work on the project begin? When will work be completed or the facility be open to use?
- Are all elements ready, such as the following:
 - Permits
 - Environmental clearances
 - Engineering
 - Signed agreements
 - Equipment
 - Labor force, etc.?
- Have any appeals been resolved? Explain.
- How urgent is it that immediate action is taken? Explain.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points.

0 points	Very large barriers exist that likely will delay the project a year or more.
1-2 points	Substantial to significant barriers exist that likely will be removed in less than 12 months.
3-4 points	Minimal to ordinary barriers exist that very likely will be removed by the time a grant and contract are awarded.
5 points	No barriers. The project is ready to move forward immediately.

Revised February 2006

- 7. Cost-benefit.** Do the benefits of the project outweigh costs? Costs may include prices that are too high, unacceptable harm to the environment, or factors that cause unnecessary ill will for trail users. Benefits are gains that come with the investment of public dollars. They can be gains for trail users, the environment, the public, or others.

The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their projects.

- What alternatives to the project were considered and why were they rejected in favor of the current proposal? For example, in a snow grooming project, was leasing, contracting work to a private party, or no action considered?
- What is the cost per mile for trails or other unit of measure for other projects?
- What is the long-term cost of maintenance? Will it be cost-effective over the long-term?
- What is your past record with cost estimates (on-target, overruns, shortages, etc.)?
- Describe other benefits this project will provide, such as community economic development, education, and stewardship.
- What will be the environmental cost-benefit of this project?

It is important that applicants quantify responses. For example, by how much will a new and faster or larger snow groomer reduce maintenance costs? How much will be saved on future reconstruction costs if maintenance backlogs are eliminated now?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 0 points | No evidence of a net benefit presented. |
| 1-2 points | Little to modest evidence of a mild net benefit. |
| 3-4 points | Adequate to strong evidence of a good net benefit. |
| 5 points | Substantial evidence of an exceptional net benefit. |

Revised February 2006

- 8. Cost Efficiencies.** To what extent does this project demonstrate efficiencies or a reduction in government costs through documented use of donations or other resources?

Donations—cash, real property, volunteer labor, equipment use, or materials

- What are the donations for this project?
- Who is making the donation?
- What is the value of the donation and how was the value determined?
- Is the donation in hand?
- If the donation is not in hand, do you have a letter of commitment from the donor that specifies what is being donated and when?
- Is the donation necessary for implementation of the project? Are donations included in the project proposal?

Private grants awarded by non-governmental organizations

- Is there a private grant that is being used as match for this project?
- Who awarded the grant?
- What is the grant amount?
- What is the purpose of the grant?
- When will grant funds be available?

Are there other efficiencies for this project that will result in cost savings?

- What is the cost efficiency?
- Who is providing it?
- What's the value?
- When was the commitment made and when does it expire?

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points.

Revised by Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2016-07 on February 2016.

9. Project support. To what extent do users and the public support the project?

The following considerations are provided to help applicants and evaluators understand some of the elements that help a project score well. A successful proposal need not address each bullet. Respondents should elaborate on all points clearly relevant to their projects.

Support can be demonstrated in both financial and non-financial ways and varies depending upon the project type. In scoring this question, evaluators consider the type of support that is most relevant. Examples of support and endorsement include the following:

- Efforts by the applicant to identify and contact all interested parties.
- The extent that there is support for the project. For example:
 - Level of land manager and user support (moderate, very strong, etc.)
 - Positive letters, oral testimony at public meetings, support from friends and user groups.
 - Positive, or the absence of extensive negative, media coverage.
 - The extent to which the public was involved in a comprehensive planning process that includes this project.
- Non-applicant donations to help complete the project: labor, equipment, money, materials, land.
- Advisory board approval or completion of a public planning process that endorsed this project.

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points, which staff later multiplies by 2.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 0 points | No or very weak evidence presented. |
| 1-2 points | Minimal or fair specific evidence of support. |
| 3 points | Moderate to good support. |
| 4-5 points | Exceptional to overwhelming support. |

Revised February 3, 2006

RCO Staff-Scored

10. Growth Management Act Preference. Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act? Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 requires that:

- A) Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant⁵⁸ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040 ("state law").
- B) When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to applicants that have adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it meets any of the following conditions:
 - Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law.
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan.
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than 6 months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.

A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on Subsection B) over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

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

▲ Point Range: 0 to -1 point.

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

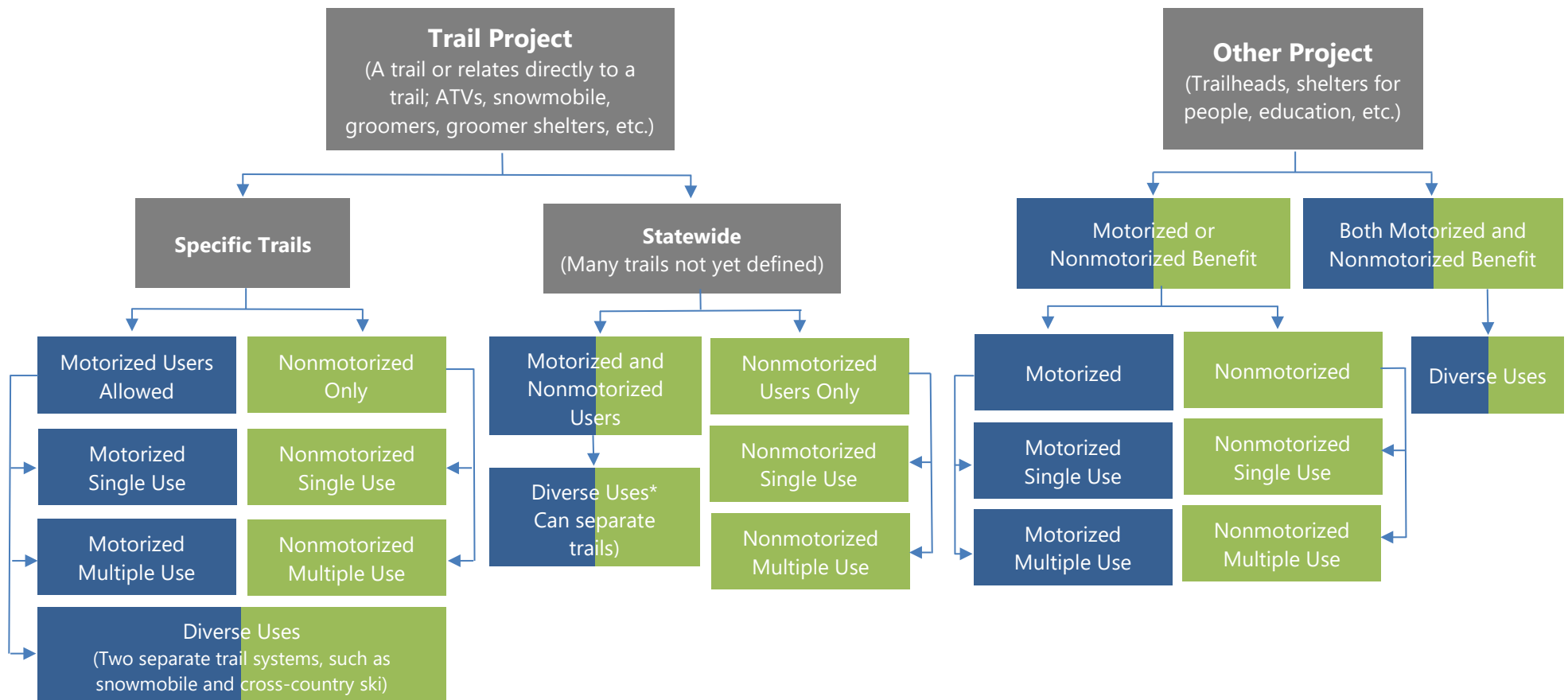
⁵⁸All references to applicants in this question refer to counties, cities, and towns only.

0 points The applicant meets the requirements of Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250.

0 points The applicant is a nonprofit organization or state or federal agency.

Revised July 1999

Appendix 1: RTP Category Decision Tree



Projects are classified as motorized if the amount of approved motorized use is more than incidental. In addition, at least one of the following criteria must be met:

- If an education project, it must target motorized use.
- If a trail project, the manager must have certified it as having a motorized “Primary Management Objective.” “Primary Management Objective” means the main type of use for which a trail is managed. Not all trails are managed for a specific use. Primary Management Objectives are adopted by policy and communicated to a trail’s users. For example, if an agency carries out a policy to manage a trail specifically for hiking, and communicates this fact to users, the Primary Management Objective is hiking. A hiking Primary Management Objective does not necessarily mean that other trail uses are prohibited. A Primary Management Objective’s advantage is that it provides all users with an understanding of the type of trail experience to expect.
- If a trail project, it must be open to motor vehicles and include features clearly designed to accommodate recreational, motorized trail vehicles, such as climbing turns, tread hardening, groomed paths, off-road vehicle- or snowmobile-related signs, loading ramps, etc.