

# Manual 26

# Outdoor Learning Grants

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August 2022



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# At a Glance

Outdoor Learning Grants	
<b>Purpose</b>	Provide grants to develop and support educational experiences for students in Washington public schools.
<b>Who may apply?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federally recognized tribes</li> <li>• Outdoor education providers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Local governments (cities, towns, counties, port districts, park and recreation districts, etc.)</li> <li>○ Nonprofit organizations (501(c)3, 501(c)1, or 501(c)4 tax-exempt organizations)</li> <li>○ State agencies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>What are the grant limits?</b>	Minimum grant request: \$25,000 Maximum grant request: \$250,000
<b>What is the estimated amount of funding?</b>	\$1,850,000
<b>What must I contribute?</b>	No match is required for this grant program
<b>How is my project evaluated?</b>	Advisory committee reviews and scores written applications
<b>When are applications due?</b>	September 1, 2022
<b>When are grants awarded?</b>	October 2022
<b>When can programing occur?</b>	October 2022 to June 30, 2023
<b>How will the grant be paid?</b>	Grant recipients are reimbursed after paying bills.
<b>What costs are eligible?</b>	Staff, equipment and supplies, transportation costs, contracted services (See "Eligible Costs" for complete list)
<b>Are indirect costs eligible?</b>	Yes
<b>What costs are not eligible?</b>	Acquisition or capital construction projects

# Section 1: Introduction

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## In this section, you will learn about the following:

- ✓ The purpose and history of the grants
- ✓ The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- ✓ The Recreation and Conservation Office
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ The grant process and timeline

## Outdoor Learning Grants

All children deserve equitable access to outdoor spaces where they can learn, play, and grow, but access to outdoor educational opportunities is inequitable. In 2022, the Washington State Legislature funded the Outdoor Learning Grants program, with a goal to develop and support outdoor educational experiences for students in Washington public schools.

The grant program is managed by the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which teamed up with the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to administer the grant program.

Grants are available for federally recognized tribes and outdoor education providers to support existing capacity and to increase future capacity for outdoor learning experiences.

## About the OSPI

OSPI is the primary agency charged with overseeing public kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education in Washington State. Working with the state's 295 public school districts and 6 state-tribal education compact schools, OSPI allocates funding and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance so every student in Washington is provided a high-quality education.

## Mission

Transform K-12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators. We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

## Vision

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

## Values

- Ensuring Equity
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- Focus on the Whole Child

## Equity

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

## About RCO

RCO is a small state agency that manages grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and working lands, and help return salmon and orca from near extinction.

## Manual Authority

This document provides basic information on procedures and policies used to administer this grant program.

This manual is created under the authority granted to RCO in the Outdoor Learning Grant enabling legislation and in Revised Code of Washington [28A.300.793](#).

## 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: Call 711

[Web site](#)

*Mailing Address*

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

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

## Other Grant Manuals Needed

- [Manual 8: Reimbursements](#) provides additional information for grants and is available on the RCO Web site. It can be made available in an alternative format.

## Grant Process and Timeline

The grant process, from application to grant award is expedited for this funding program for the 2022-23 school year. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, visit the RCO Web site for precise dates.

Successful applicants have until June 30, 2023 to complete their projects.

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

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

### **PRISM Double Sign In**

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

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

To begin an application, log into [PRISM Online](#) and select the "+ New Application" button to enter grant application information. RCO uses this information to assign an outdoor grants manager. This manager guides applicants through the process, reviews application materials, helps determine whether proposals are eligible, and may visit the project sites to discuss site-specific details. Visit RCO's Web site to learn more about [PRISM's components and technical requirements](#).

**Applications Due.** Applications are due September 1, 2022. 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.

**Project Evaluation.** The advisory committee members use the application materials, which include the responses to the evaluation criteria in Section 4 of this manual. The members score each proposal against a set of criteria approved by OSPI.

**Projects Approved.** RCO submits the ranked list of projects to OSPI, which awards the grants.

**RCO Issues Grant Agreements.** RCO staff prepare the grant contracts, called RCO grant agreements. Applicants must return the signed agreements within 2 calendar months. 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.

**Successful Applicants' Webinar.** After OSPI approves funding, RCO hosts an online workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers sponsors' responsibilities to comply with the grant agreements, issues that might come up when implementing

projects, billing procedures, amendments for changes and time extensions, closing project procedures, and long-term compliance.

## Ongoing

**Project Implementation.** 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 by **June 30, 2023**. 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 progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO grant agreements.

**Project Completion.** When projects are completed, sponsors must submit their final bills, final reports, and supporting documents needed to close the projects as specified in the agreements.<sup>1</sup> If the bills and documentation are not submitted by the deadline, RCO may terminate the agreements without payment.

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<sup>1</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286.13.040(7)



# Section 2: Policies

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

- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Eligible program and costs
- ✓ Equipment policy

## Eligible Applicants

The following organizations may apply for grants:

- Federally recognized tribes
- Outdoor education providers
  - Local governments (cities, towns, counties, port districts, park and recreation districts, etc.)
  - Nonprofit organizations (501(c)3, 501(c)1, or 501(c)4 tax-exempt organizations)
  - State agencies

Nonprofit corporations or associations must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Be registered in the State of Washington as a nonprofit as defined by Revised Code of Washington 84.34.250.
- Demonstrate at least 3 years of actively managing projects relevant to the types of projects eligible for funding in the Outdoor Learning Grant Program. "Actively managing projects" means relevant pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade experience.

If awarded funding, grant sponsors must obtain a statewide vendor number through the Washington State Department of Enterprise Services and meet the standard terms and conditions of the grant agreements (Appendix B).

## Eligible Programs and Costs

### Eligible Programs

Pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade experiential youth outdoor education program activities learning in, for, and about the outdoors. Programs must develop and support educational experiences for students in Washington public schools. Grants are available to support existing capacity and to increase future capacity for outdoor learning experiences.

Programs should have a focus on outdoor education aligned with the [Washington State content learning standards](#) and the [development of social and emotional learning skills](#). Programs are encouraged to review the [Since Time Immemorial Curriculum](#) developed by the Office of Native Education at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and infuse traditional ecological knowledge into the field experiences for students. In implementing student educational experiences, outdoor education providers should ensure equitable access for students in all geographic regions, and high levels of accessibility for students with disabilities.

### Eligible Costs

Eligible costs include the following (must be essential to program purpose):

- Contracted services
- Curriculum development (aligned with Washington State learning standards)
- Equipment
- Indirect costs (Fixed rate of 10 percent)
- Lodging
- Staff
- Stipends
- Supplies
- Training

- Transportation
- Mobile equipment and cargo trailers

## Ineligible Programs

Ineligible programs include the following:

- Land acquisition
- Facility construction projects
- Programs that do not include direct youth outdoor education programming

## Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs include the following:

- Purchase of motor vehicles or motorboats.
- Out-of-state travel.
- Pre-agreement costs. RCO will pay only for work performed after grant agreements have been signed by both RCO and the project sponsor.
- Preparation of this grant application.
- Religious activities.

## Equipment Policy

### Equipment

Buying equipment necessary to implement an approved program is permissible when included in the agreement. Equipment means capital equipment and small and attractive assets necessary for program implementation, as determined by RCO. Capital equipment is an individual capitalized item that costs more than \$5,000. Small and attractive assets are items that typically cost between \$500 and \$5,000 and are vulnerable to loss.

### Management and Use

A sponsor must maintain a record of all equipment purchased with grants. The sponsor, not RCO, always takes title. This inventory record begins with the list of any equipment purchases proposed in the grant application. Upon approval of the project, this listing is entered into the grant agreement.

A sponsor's equipment records shall include, at a minimum, 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.
- Location, use, and condition of the equipment and the date the information was reported.
- Ultimate disposition data, including date of disposal and sale price, including the method used to determine current fair market value when a sponsor compensates RCO for its share, if sold.

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

Sponsors may use the equipment for the purposes authorized in the agreement for as long as needed after the agreement ends, whether or not the program continues to be supported by RCO. After the grant agreement ends, the equipment may be used for continued or similar outdoor educational or recreational activities supported by the grant applicant's organization without liquidation. The equipment is subject to periodic inventory reporting requirements until the equipment is liquidated.

The sponsor may make the equipment available for use in other projects as long as such use does not interfere with the work on the originally authorized project. The cost or use value of equipment acquired with a grant may not be included in other or subsequent grants.

The sponsor may not use the equipment for personal use or to provide services for a fee to compete unfairly with private companies providing equivalent services.

## **Inventory**

For grant-assisted equipment, 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 and inventory records must be maintained for audits.

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.

## **Equipment Liquidation and Disposal**

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.** It may be used for other activities as follows:
  - Original cost of \$5,000 or less: The sponsor may use the equipment for other activities without reimbursement to RCO.
  - Original cost of more than \$5,000: The sponsor may retain the capital equipment for other uses provided compensation is made to RCO. The amount of compensation shall be computed by applying the percentage of program participation in the cost of the original project, as specified in the grant agreement, to the current fair market value of the equipment.
- **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. When the sponsor disposes of the equipment, procedures that provide for fair competition, to the extent practicable, and result in the highest possible return, shall be established. RCO may instruct the sponsor to transfer title to a third party named by RCO who is eligible under existing statutes. In such cases, the sponsor will be compensated in the amount equal to its share of the current fair market value of the equipment.
  - Original cost is \$5,000 or less: The sponsor may sell the equipment and return the proceeds to RCO.
  - Original cost of more than \$5,000: The sponsor shall sell the equipment and reimburse RCO an amount computed by applying to the sales proceeds the percentage of program participation in the cost of the original project as recorded in the signed grant agreement.
- **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 may be removed from equipment inventory reporting requirements.

# Section 3: Money Matters

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

- ✓ Grant Limits
- ✓ Match
- ✓ Important things to know

## Grant Limits

- \$25,000 (minimum)
- \$250,000 (maximum)

## Match

### Matching Share

No match is required

Match is the project sponsor's contribution to a project. Although match is not required, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide matching resources to demonstrate a local commitment to the project and to make funds available to more projects.

## Important Things to Know

### Number of Grant Proposals Allowed

In general, RCO does not limit the number of grant proposals from a single applicant during the biennial grant cycle. However, each proposal must be for a different scope of work. Each application must stand alone on its own merits with a viable, outdoor experience and not be dependent on other projects or future phases of work.

## Grant Sponsors Must Pay First

RCO pays grants through reimbursement. A sponsor may request reimbursement only after paying employees and vendors. RCO does not provide money before vendors are paid. RCO will pay only after the sponsor has presented an invoice documenting cost incurred and compliance with the provisions of the grant agreement.

## Audits and Keeping Records

All records relevant to projects funded by RCO must be on file with the grant 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 RCO.

## Public Disclosure Rules

RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.<sup>2</sup> More information about [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available on its Web site.

## Statewide Vendor Number

Grant sponsors must have a statewide vendor number to receive payments. They can be paid by check or electronic fund transfer (EFT). Visit the Department of Enterprise Services Web site [to register](#).

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<sup>2</sup>Revised Code of Washington 42.56

# Section 4: Project Evaluation

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

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

## How Project Evaluation Works

The evaluation process begins when OSPI adopts the evaluation process and evaluation criteria.

OSPI approves people to serve on an advisory committee to evaluate each grant proposal. In recruiting members for the committee, OSPI and RCO seeks to appoint people who possess a statewide perspective and are recognized for their experiences and knowledge of youth outdoor recreation and education in Washington. Visit RCO's Web site for [membership and other details](#).

Applicants prepare written responses to Evaluation Criteria 1-4 in the PRISM application and submit all required application materials in PRISM for the written review.

Advisory committee members individually review the written responses, graphics included in the applications, and summary application materials, and score the projects.

The resulting ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations that RCO submits to OSPI.



**Evaluation Criteria**

Scored by	#	Criteria Title	Maximum Points Possible
Advisory Committee	1	Outdoor Education Program	20
Advisory Committee	2	School and Student Information	15
Advisory Committee	3	Program Evaluation	10
Advisory Committee	4	Budget	5
		<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

Applicants must address all the factors under each of the following evaluation criteria:

**1. Outdoor Education Program**

What is the student outdoor education experience this program will provide?

Information should include the following:

- Is this proposal funding the existing capacity, expansion of a program, or a new program?
- Grade/age of students
- Number of students served
- Number of hours of outdoor education per student
- Curriculum
- Activity types
- Program locations
- Schedule of program events

How specifically will the program meet the needs of students in communities historically underserved by science and outdoor education?

Will the program infuse traditional ecological knowledge into the field experiences for students? (if "yes," please describe.) How will you consult or collaborate with tribal nations and schools specific to the program? Please attach consultation letters from tribal leadership if applicable.

How will the program provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in outdoor education experiences? Please include specific examples.

Will the outdoor educational program offer opportunities for work-integrated learning in science, natural resources, education, land management, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and other employment sectors?

Describe the experience of the staff and team members who will lead outdoor education activities. Describe the team's experience serving Washington's many diverse students.

▲ Point Range: 0-20 points

## 2. School and Student Information

Describe the students who will participate in this program.

Which Washington State public schools will be supported by your program? Are the schools located in communities historically underserved in science and outdoor learning?

These communities may include, but are not limited to:

- Tribal Nations (including [State-Tribal Education Compact Schools](#), schools on or near tribal reservations, and schools required to consult with the nearest federally-recognized tribe through Section 8538 of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Please visit the [Office of Native Education's web page](#) for more information.)
- [Migrant students](#)
- [Schools with high, free, and reduced-price lunch populations](#)
- Rural and remote schools
- [Students in alternative learning environments](#)
- Students of color
- Emergent multilingual learner students
- [Students receiving special education services](#)

Please use information from the [Washington State Report Card](#) and the [Washington School Improvement Framework](#) when applicable.

Describe the relationship that the program has with participating schools and your organization's experience working in collaboration with the schools (this may include partnership agreements, MOUs, etc.). Please also provide specific examples and attach letters of recommendations, commitment from participating schools/districts, and/or letters of consultation for State-Tribal Education Compact Schools and tribal schools.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

**3. Program Evaluation**

How will the impact and success of the program be assessed?

▲ Point Range: 0-10 points

**4. Budget**

Please provide a detailed narrative description of the program's budget and how the grant will be used. Grants must be spent by June 30, 2023. Describe in detail how this will be achieved. Attach a [Budget Worksheet](#) using the supplied template (refer to "Attachments" page in the application).

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points