

Section 4: Project Selection

This section covers the following:

- ✓ How project evaluation works
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

How Project Evaluation Works

The evaluation process begins when the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board adopts the evaluation process⁴⁶ and evaluation criteria during public meetings.

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

An applicant prepares a PowerPoint presentation to address the evaluation criteria and delivers it to the advisory committee during a virtual, oral presentation.⁴⁷ Advisory committee members may ask follow-up questions before they score the grant proposal. The virtual online presentation process is broadcast live on YouTube for the public, but the public is not invited to comment.

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

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

⁴⁶Washington Administrative Code 286-13-020

⁴⁷Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2023-24

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

The advisory committee and staff scores are combined for an application's total evaluation score. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations that the RCO director submits to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, which makes the final decision about funding in a public meeting.⁴⁸ The public is given an opportunity to comment on the grant proposals before the board makes its decision.

Do Not Fund Recommendation⁴⁹

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

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

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

Growth Management Act Compliance

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers an organization's compliance with the Growth Management Act when awarding grants for public facilities.⁵⁰ The board gives preference through evaluation scoring to towns, cities, and county applicants that are required to plan under the Growth Management Act.⁵¹ Scoring for compliance with the Act and other staff-scored evaluation criteria are based on the organization's status

⁴⁸Washington Administrative Code 286-13-050

⁴⁹Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-06

⁵⁰Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250

⁵¹Revised Code of Washington 36.60A

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

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

Evaluating Combination Projects

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

Evaluation Criteria		
Summary of Evaluation Criteria		
Scored by Advisory Committee		
Criteria	Project Type	Possible Points
1. Need	All Projects	15 points
2. Immediacy of threat	Acquisition Projects	10 points
	Combination Projects	5 points
3. Project design	Development Projects	10 points
	Combination Projects	5 points
4. Impact on surrounding property*	All Projects	5 points
5. Expansion or renovation	All Projects	5 points
6. Health and safety	All Projects	15 points
7. Budget development	All Projects	5 points
8. Mandated uses	All Projects	10 points
9. Public access	All Projects	15 points
10. Need satisfaction	All Projects	10 points
Scored by RCO		
11. Applicant Match	All Projects	5 points
12. Growth Management Act compliance	All Projects	0 points
Total Points Possible for Existing Sites:		95 points
Total Points Possible for New Sites:		90 points

*Applies only to existing sites and projects certified as qualifying for a higher funding level. See question 3.

Detailed Evaluation Criteria

1. **Need.** To what extent is this type of FARR project needed in the service area?

This question measures the need for this type of project. It is closely related to question 10, which measures how well this proposal actually fulfills this need. Begin by displaying a graphic that describes the area to be served by this project. That is typically the area from which about 80 percent of the facility's users will come.

Considerations:

- What are this area's range needs and how reliable is the support information?
- What is the role of safety and/or noise related to the stated need? Explain.
- What is the service area's population and estimated growth, and what major annual range events currently take place?
- Within the service area of this project, what related opportunities exist? Describe.

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

Zero points	Insufficient or no evidence presented
One to two points	Limited or modest need
Three points	Moderate to above average need
Four to five points	Unusually high to urgent need

Revised December 2002.

2. **Threat Immediacy** (acquisition and combination projects only). To what degree will implementation of this proposal reduce the impact of a threat to the future availability of this opportunity?

An example is a proposed land acquisition for a shooting facility. If it can be demonstrated that the site will be lost to another use within three years, the threat immediacy would be rated "high." Considerations include the following:

- How clearly identified and imminent is the threat?
- How vulnerable is the facility to this threat? That is, will the threat have a small, medium, or large impact on the quality of the opportunity or its availability for public use?

- What alternatives are available to avoid the threat?

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

Zero points Insufficient evidence presented or there is no threat.

One to Two points Minimal threat; the FARR program opportunity is susceptible only marginally to this threat, which may arrive within thirty-six months.

Three points Medium threat; the FARR program opportunity is susceptible moderately to this threat, or even though the threat is significant and due to arrive within thirty-six months, it only is under serious consideration and may not actually occur.

Four to five points High threat; the site is very vulnerable to this type of threat

And it has been shown that the threat will arrive within thirty-six months

or a threat has occurred, or is imminent, and has led some entity to acquire rights in the land at the request of the applicant

or RCO has granted a written Waiver of Retroactivity that advisory committee members feel has merit based on a threat situation.

3. Project Design (development and combination projects only). Has this project been designed in a high-quality manner?

Does the design agree with generally accepted practices? For example:

- Environment. How are aesthetic, accessibility, and environmental issues addressed? If applicable, how are lead recovery, soil, and water conditions addressed?
- Sustainability. How does the project design include sustainability features or shooting range best management practices?
- General. If this is a new facility project, is it designed for ease of maintenance and traffic flow, operation of several types of shooting experiences simultaneously, etc.? Is the site's size, location, and topography appropriate?

- Small works. The above considerations may not fully apply to projects composed of one or two small items, such as toilets, fencing, or lighting. In such cases, consider how the items may contribute to the entire facility's general design features.

▲ Point Range: zero to five, which are multiplied later by two for development projects.

Zero points	Poor. Insufficient evidence presented or the design is inappropriate for the intended uses.
One to two points	Moderate. The design, or contribution to the overall design, does a fair job of addressing intended uses.
Three points	Good. The design, or contribution to the overall design, is adequate and reasonable for intended uses.
Four to five points	Excellent. The design, or contribution to the overall design, is outstanding.

Revised January 2014 by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2014-05

4. Impact on Surrounding Property. How much will this project protect surrounding properties from noise impacts and/or projectile hazards originating from the range?

This question may be addressed only by an applicant who has had noise abatement and/or safety elements certified by RCO's director or designee as qualifying for a higher funding level and who is seeking to improve an existing range site. For additional information, see "Legal Requirements" and "Noise Abatement and Safety Improvement Projects" in this manual.

This question supports the 1996 amendments to Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720 by encouraging the reduction of impacts to land that surrounds FARR facilities and improvements to older facilities. Certified elements only, for existing acquisition or development sites.⁵²

Noise Abatement

Consider the degree to which the proposal will help reduce impacts on surrounding properties by lessening auditory disturbances. That is, does the project add the following:

- Land for buffer purposes?

⁵²Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720

- Containment structures (walls, roofs, berms, baffles)?
- Sound insulation?

Safety

Neither RCO nor its advisory committee will evaluate the degree to which a range is safe or not. Responses to this question are meant solely to suggest, for discussion purposes, the role of this specific project in contributing to improving safety on surrounding properties. That is, does the project add the following:

- Perimeter fencing for safety?
- Land for buffer purposes?
- Projectile containment structures (walls, roofs, berms, baffles)?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points	Poor. Insufficient evidence presented, or this proposal will have no effect on noise or safety issues.
One to two points	Fair. This project improves an existing range by reducing noise impacts and/or improving safety conditions on surrounding land to a small degree.
Three points	Good. This project improves an existing range by reducing noise impacts and/or improving safety conditions moderately.
Four to five points	Excellent. This project improves an existing range by reducing noise impacts and/or improving safety conditions markedly.

Revised March 1997

5. **Expansion and Renovation.** Will the project effectively expand or renovate an existing facility?

This question recognizes that expansion or phased projects generally provide greater benefit-to-cost ratios than new projects. For example, projects that add to existing FARR facilities frequently provide greater management flexibility and resource diversity.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points	Poor. Insufficient evidence presented or the project does not effectively expand or renovate an existing facility.
One to two points	Low. The project is primarily concerned with expansion or renovation of utilities (water, electricity, etc.).
Three points	Medium. The project is primarily concerned with expansion or renovation of support facilities (restrooms, clubhouses, picnic shelters, parking areas), or the project is some combination of expansion or renovation of support facilities, utilities, and/or direct shooting facilities.
Four to five points	High. The project primarily consists of expansion or renovation of facilities that directly involve shooting or archery activities (firing lines, target lines, pits, backstops, side berms, safety baffles, etc.).

6. Health and Safety. How much will this project improve the health and safety qualities of the range property?⁵³ How does the project address the safety guidelines required in the FARR program?

Neither RCO nor its advisory committee will evaluate the degree to which a range is safe or not. Responses to this question are meant solely to suggest, for discussion purposes, the role of this specific project in improving the health and safety of the facility. That is, does the project add the following:

- Fencing for buffer or safety purposes?
- Projectile containment structures (walls, roofs, berms)?
- Sound-limiting elements?
- Improved range firing line separations, the communication of cease-fire orders (especially to the visually and hearing impaired), or similar elements?
- Improved safety-related health conditions, such as the provision of sanitary facilities or lead containment and abatement?
- Has the project design been reviewed by an independent range safety specialist? Are costs associated with an independent range safety evaluation included in the application cost estimate?

⁵³Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720

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

Zero points	Poor. Insufficient evidence presented, or this proposal will have no effect on health or safety issues.
One to two points	Fair. This project will improve health and safety conditions.
Three points	Good. This project will improve health and safety conditions moderately.
Four to five points	Excellent. This project will markedly improve health and safety conditions.

Revised March 1997

7. Budget Development. Is the budget appropriately developed with enough detail to ensure a successful, cost-effective project?

Considerations include the following:

- Is there parity or disparity between the applicant's cost estimates and the perceived real value of the proposed improvements?
- What is this applicant's past record with cost estimates (on-target, overruns, shortages, etc.)?
- What portion of the budget elements appear inaccurate, unnecessarily expensive, or unwisely underestimated? Have all important elements been included? Are some omitted? Are unnecessary elements added?

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points	Weak. Overall detail is insufficient for a higher rating or the cost estimates for too many elements appear unrealistic or the elements themselves unnecessary.
One to two points	Moderate. Only a few cost estimates appear unrealistic or the elements themselves unnecessary.
Three points	Good. Each element and cost estimate appears adequate and reasonable for this proposal.
Four to five points	Excellent. Not only do virtually all elements appear on-target, but the budget is clear and will contribute to efficient implementation.

Revised March 1997

8. Mandated Uses. To what extent will the applicant make the facility available for range purposes to license holders, hunter or firearm education, or law enforcement?⁵⁴

By law, all project facilities must be available and convenient for use by: (1) law enforcement personnel, or (2) people possessing Washington concealed pistol licenses, or (3) people possessing hunting licenses, or (4) people enrolled in hunter safety or firearm safety classes.

Considerations include the following:

- Number and types of personnel trained annually (enforcement, license holders, safety class participants), and training activities or opportunities offered.
- Number of activities served (archery, pistol, black powder, rifle, shotgun, trap, etc.).
- Factors that limit or extend service (for example, the presence of all-weather facilities; the need to close one opportunity when another is opened; the number of special events that limit other uses).
- How well the proposal addresses any recent program growth among "mandated" uses.

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

Zero points	Limited or unsure. The facility will be of limited use to any of the four groups (see above—enforcement, license holders, etc.).
One to two points	Moderate. Convenient, with frequent and regular hours set for at least one or two groups (see above—enforcement, license holders, etc.).
Three points	Good. Convenient, with frequent and regular hours set for at least three groups (see above—enforcement, license holders, etc.) or the facility serves just one of these groups but does it well with good attendance.
Four to five points	Excellent. Convenient, with frequent and regular hours set for all four groups (see above—enforcement, license

⁵⁴Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.720, paragraph 3.

holders, etc.) or the facility serves just one or two of these groups but does it extremely well with high attendance.

9. Public Access. To what extent will the FARR facility be available for access by the public?⁵⁵

All FARR projects are required to provide for public use. "Public use" means that the general public (for example, people not affiliated with the applicant's club) has access to the shooting facility. Competitive events that require certification to participate do not meet RCO's definition of public use.

In addition to public use, many clubs and facility managers allow the public to purchase memberships. This is recognized as increasing the public's access to shooting facilities.

Public access is measured by determining if appropriate and convenient access is provided to people who wish to shoot at the range.

"Appropriate" combines these public access considerations:

- Is access at times when demand is greatest?
- Is access at times that are cost-efficient for the organization?
- Are any access restrictions based solely on safety considerations?
- Are any membership requirements and costs reasonable?

"Convenient" combines these public access considerations:

- Are access hours regularly allocated each day, month, and year?
- Are access hours at times when potential users can attend?
- Are access hours posted at the facility?
- Are access hours published in a widely available schedule?
- Is it easy for the public to obtain a membership?

⁵⁵Revised Code of Washington 79A.25.210 and Recreation and Conservation Funding Board Resolution 2002-40

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

Zero points	Too limited. Public access is not appropriate or convenient.
One to two points	Marginal. Public access is appropriate and convenient only somewhat.
Three points	Good. Public access is appropriate and convenient.
Four to five points	Excellent. Public access is exceptionally appropriate and convenient

Revised March 1997

10. Need Satisfaction. How well does this project satisfy the need identified in question 1?

Proposals that do the most to satisfy any urgent service area needs will score well here. Those that do little to address such needs, or those where the previously identified needs are not high or urgent (question 1), will not score as well.

Considerations:

- To what extent will this project effectively fulfill a verified and important need? That is, how strong is the link between the previously identified need and this proposal? Explain.
- Is this need met in a similar way elsewhere in the service area? Explain. Consider both formal and informal opportunities and whether the other opportunities are struggling, successful, crowded, etc.?
- What is the background and experience level of the personnel assigned to this project? Describe their past successes and learning opportunities.
- Is the project named by location or type as a priority in an adopted plan? Explain.
- If this is a land acquisition project, how suitable is the site's size and location?

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

Zero points	Project does a poor job of addressing service area needs.
One to two points	Project does a marginal job of addressing service area needs.

Three points	Project does a good job of addressing service area needs.
Four to five points	Project does an excellent job of addressing service area needs.

Revised December 2002

11. Applicant Match (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). What is the value of applicant contributions to this project?

This question rewards applicants who provide more than 50 percent of the total project cost. Only elements considered reimbursable may be used in calculating the following percentages. Consider cash, goods, services, etc.

▲ Point Range: zero to five points.

Zero points	50 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources
One point	50.01-55 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources.
Two points	55.01-60 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources.
Three points	60.01-65 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources.
Four points	65.01-70 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources.
Five points	More than 70 percent of the project's value will be contributed from non-RCO sources.

Revised March 1997

12. Growth Management Act Compliance (applicant does not answer in evaluation session). Has the applicant made progress toward meeting the requirements of the Growth Management Act?⁵⁶

State law requires that:

- A. Whenever a state agency is considering awarding grants to finance public

⁵⁶Revised Code of Washington 43.17.250 (Growth Management Act-preference required.)

facilities, it shall consider whether the applicant⁵⁷ has adopted a comprehensive plan and development regulations as required by Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.040 ("state law").

- B. When reviewing such requests, the state agency shall accord additional preference to an applicant that has adopted the comprehensive plan and development regulations. An applicant is deemed to have satisfied the requirements for adopting a comprehensive plan and development regulations if it accomplishes any of the following:
- Adopts or has adopted within the time periods specified in state law.
 - Adopts or has adopted by the time it requests a grant or loan.
 - Demonstrates substantial progress toward adopting within the time periods specified in state law. An agency that is more than six months out of compliance with the time periods has not demonstrated substantial progress.
- C. A request from an applicant planning under state law shall be accorded no additional preference based on subsection B over a request from an applicant not planning under this state law.

RCO staff scores this question 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, it cannot be penalized during the period of appeal. Scoring occurs after RCO's technical completion deadline.

▲ Point Range: Minus one to zero points.

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

Revised July 1999

⁵⁷Applicants in this question are counties, cities, and towns only.