

# Applicant's To-Do List

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## Community Forests Program

This to-do list is designed to help an applicant prepare and submit a grant application for the Community Forests Program.

*Grants may be used to acquire fee-simple title of working forestlands to help communities protect and enhance their surrounding forests and develop collaborative models of community-based forest management and use. Projects also may include forest and habitat restoration or development of recreation facilities on the property.*

An applicant must submit the information required through [PRISM Online](#), the online project data system used by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). These steps will guide an applicant through the application process.

NOTE: for all documents, forms, and manuals referenced here, go to the [grant program web page](#) and [grant manuals web page](#).

To get this document in an alternative format or help accessing its contents, please contact RCO Communications at [rco\\_communications@rco.wa.gov](mailto:rco_communications@rco.wa.gov) or 360-902-3000. People with hearing impairments or speech disabilities may dial 711 for the Washington Telecommunications Relay Service.

### Step 1: Establish Eligibility

**Eligible Applicants:** Cities or counties; special purpose districts or other political subdivisions of the state (e.g., park and recreation districts, port districts, public utility districts); public development authorities; Native American Tribes; nonprofit conservation organizations; state agencies working directly with one of the previously mentioned entities.

- A first-time applicant must submit a legal opinion to establish eligibility (due by the technical completion deadline—see step 5). RCO has a sample form—reach out to a grants manager if needed.

- ❑ A nonprofit organization must meet all the following eligibility requirements:
  - Be registered in the State of Washington as a nonprofit corporation as defined by Chapter 24.03 Revised Code of Washington AND meet the definition for a nonprofit conservancy in Revised Code of Washington 84.34.250.
  - Consistent with Revised Codes of Washington 24.03.220, 24.03.225, and 24.03.230, identify a successor organization to ensure management continuity of any RCO grants received by the corporation or association.
  - Demonstrate experience and capacity to actively manage projects relevant to the types of activities eligible for Community Forests Program funding. Experience can be demonstrated through the capacity and knowledge of individuals within the organization, its partners, or contracted professionals and should not be based on how long the organization has existed.
  - Provide a copy of the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws. Please email these documents directly to the RCO grants manager.

## Step 2: Review Materials

- ❑ Review the appropriate Recreation and Conservation Office manuals below for this grant category.
  - *Manual 25: Community Forests Program*
  - *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*
  - *Manual 4: Development Projects*
  - *Manual 5: Restoration Projects*
- ❑ Review the Applicant Resolution/Authorization on the grant program web page and schedule time for the governing body's approval. The signed authorization is due by the technical completion deadline (see step 5).

## Step 3: Submit Application—April 30, 2026

### SecureAccess Washington Account

Before beginning an application, an applicant must have a [SecureAccess Washington](#) account. A new applicant also should submit a [PRISM New User Account Form](#). When using either of these databases for the first time, an applicant must complete a double sign-in.

### PRISM Online Application

PRISM will open in February. To start an application, go to [PRISM Online](#) and select + *New Application*. Follow the prompts to fill out the application. On-screen instructions, tool tips, and links are available throughout the *Application Wizard*.

### PRISM Attachments

The PRISM Online application includes an *Attachments* page. Attach the documents below before submitting the application. Include the applicant name, project name, and RCO project number on each attachment. Maps must include a north arrow, scale, and labels for any major highways, roads, cities, water bodies, etc. If the project includes any combination of acquisition, development, or restoration, attach the documents required for all project types.

- Applicant Resolution/Authorization<sup>1</sup>** (due by the technical completion deadline). Shows the application is approved by the elected council or commission, board, or executives of the applicant's organization. A standard form is available on the grant program web page. NOTE: An applicant must adopt RCO's text verbatim even if using a different format. Native American Tribes, if funded, submit this attachment with a signed grant agreement.
- Landowner Acknowledgement.** An applicant must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the applicant's interest in buying the land. There are several options to meet this requirement (see "Section 3: Application Requirements" in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*); however, the landowner's receipt and acknowledgement of notice must be clearly documented in writing.
- Local Jurisdiction Review.** An applicant must notify the county or city with jurisdiction over the project area of the proposed project. Attach documentation

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<sup>1</sup>Tribes are not required to submit a project authorizing resolution.

demonstrating that this **process has begun** (see “Section 3: Application Requirements” in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*). A sample letter is available in the [Acquisition Tool Kit](#) on RCO’s website. NOTE: If acquiring property in an applicant’s own jurisdiction, the applicant resolution/authorization meets this requirement.

- ❑ **Map—Parcel Map.** Shows the parcels to be acquired in the scope of work as well as adjacent landownership. Show the parcels in relation to local roadways, landmarks, etc. Include the county parcel numbers on the map.
- ❑ **Map—Proposed Boundary Map** (for combination acquisition and development or restoration projects only) shows the extent of the site covered by the grant agreement. The map is used by RCO and the sponsor to ensure compliance with provisions in the grant agreement. Factors to consider when establishing boundary maps include project scope, a complete recreation or public access experience, site management unit or area, and past RCO grant assistance at the site. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* and *Manual 5: Restoration Projects* for additional details and boundary map requirements.
- ❑ **Map—Regional Location.** One, single-sided page that shows the location of the project in a geographic region of the state. The regional map should identify the county, incorporated areas, major highways, and water bodies, etc., so RCO staff and evaluators can locate the general worksite to within a few miles.
- ❑ **Map—Site Location.** One, single-sided page showing the specific location of the project. This map must show the project in relation to local roads, park or ranger district boundaries, water bodies, landmarks, etc. If possible, show the boundaries of the site on the map.
- ❑ **Photograph.** At least one general project photograph in .jpg format. A current ground shot or aerial view of the project site is appropriate.
- ❑ **Site Plan—Development Site Plan** (for combination acquisition and development projects only). Shows the proposed improvements at the project site. This plan should show site boundaries, major site features, and proposed project elements. Existing and future elements should be distinguished from those in the current project. Master, schematic design, design development, and construction document level plans are suitable for a development site plan.
- ❑ **Site Plan—Restoration Site Plan** (for combination acquisitions and restoration projects only). Shows the restoration activities to take place on the project site.

Existing and future restored areas should be distinguished from those in the proposed project scope.

The following attachment types are not required, but an applicant is strongly encouraged to attach the following:

- Evaluation—Packet Visuals.** Up to two pages of photographs or other graphics such as schematic drawings, renderings, etc. An applicant may submit visuals in a collage style with several images on each page.
- Property Designation.** Attach a written notice from the county assessor, a current property tax notice, or a recent title report for all parcels identified in the application that documents county designation as either timberland or forestland.
- Timber Management Plan.** Attach a county-approved timber management plan, if one is available for the site.
- Letters of Support** (optional). May be attached using the *Project Support/Concern Documents* attachment type. The evaluation committee can view attachments, but an applicant also should summarize project support in the written evaluation criteria responses.

NOTE: Except for a few protected items, such as cultural resources data or confidential appraisal documents, as soon as the application is started in PRISM, it and most attachments will be available for review by RCO staff, evaluators, and the public.

## Submit Application

Submit the application in PRISM Online by the deadline or the application will be ineligible.

### Step 4: Technical Review (Written)—May 1 to June 26, 2026

RCO staff reviews the application for eligibility, completeness, and clarity, and then returns it in PRISM Online with questions or suggested changes.

### Step 5: Resubmit Application by Technical Completion Deadline—July 15, 2026

- Address issues raised during technical review and make modifications, if needed.

- ❑ Attach a signed **Applicant Resolution/Authorization** (if not already attached) to show the application is approved by the elected council or commission, board, or executives of the applicant’s organization. A standard form is available on the grant program web page. NOTE: An applicant must adopt RCO’s text verbatim even if using a different format.
- ❑ **Local Jurisdiction Review and Conferral.** Attach documentation demonstrating that this **process has been completed** (see “Section 3: Application Requirements” in *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*). A sample letter is available in the [Acquisition Tool Kit](#) on RCO’s website. NOTE: If acquiring property in the applicant’s own jurisdiction, the applicant resolution/authorization meets this requirement.
- ❑ Legal opinion (only for an applicant who has never applied for a RCO grant). RCO has a sample form—reach out to the grants manager if needed.
- ❑ **Complete all revisions and resubmit the application in PRISM Online by the technical completion deadline or the application will be ineligible.**

### Step 6: Project Evaluation (Written)—July 28 to August 20, 2026

RCO provides the application to the advisory committee for review and evaluation. Evaluators typically are given three to four weeks to score the projects.

RCO staff tabulate the results and share the preliminary ranked list with the advisory committee to validate the results, establish the committee’s funding recommendation, and discuss any proposed process or policy changes. RCO then announces the results of the evaluation and posts the preliminary ranked lists on its website.

RCO staff present the preliminary ranked list to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for final approval and inclusion with the board’s recommendation to the Governor and the Legislature.

### Step 7: Submit Certification of Match—May 1, 2027

- ❑ Upload the **Certification of Applicant Match Form** to the PRISM Online *Attachments* page to show what amounts and sources of match are in hand for the project. There is a standard form available on the grant program web page. This must be provided at least one month before the board funding meeting.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286

## Step 8: Submit Pre-Agreement Materials—July 2027

Within two months of the board funding meeting, upload the following pre-agreement materials to the PRISM Online *Attachments* page:

- ❑ Any other requested pre-agreement materials (e.g., cultural resource documents, [electronic signature authorization form](#), permits, project schedule, or [milestone worksheet](#)) as required by RCO.

## Step 9: Sign Project Agreement—After July 1, 2027

The RCO director approves grants after the Legislature authorizes funding. RCO works with the applicant to execute a grant agreement before work begins.

- ❑ Applicant reviews the following Recreation and Conservation Funding Board manuals:
  - *Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations*
  - *Manual 8: Reimbursements*
- ❑ Applicant reviews the Successful Applicant Webinar materials, then completes the project.

Updated February 12, 2026.