

# **Manual 12**

# Boating Infrastructure Grant Program

---

March 1, 2014



# Table of Contents

<b>Section 1: General Information</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Background.....	1
Where to Get Information.....	2
Grant Process and Timeline.....	3
<b>Section 2: General Program and Policy Information</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Purpose.....	8
Eligible Applicants.....	9
Project Eligibility.....	11
Requirements and Other Things to Know.....	13
Project Agreement and Conversions.....	15
Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations.....	15
<b>Section 3: Money Matters</b> .....	<b>17</b>
Matching Resources.....	17
Match Requirements.....	18
Types of Match.....	20
Grant Limits.....	21
Records and Reimbursements.....	22
<b>Section 4: Project Selection</b> .....	<b>23</b>
How Projects are Selected.....	23
Evaluation Materials.....	24

# Section 1: General Information

---

## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ The Boating Infrastructure Grant program
- ✓ Where to get information
- ✓ The grant process and timeline

## Background

Congress created the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG) under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. The program provides funds to the states for development and renovation of boating facilities for recreational vessels 26 feet and larger.

Obtaining and managing a BIG project requires a high level of preparation from the applicant and the highest level of due diligence from a successful sponsor.

## Program Administration

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

This manual contains policies for the BIG program. The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, with support from staff at the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), administers this program for Washington State.

## Where to Get Information

Recreation and Conservation Office

Natural Resources Building

1111 Washington Street S.E.

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

E-mail: [info@rco.wa.gov](mailto:info@rco.wa.gov)

Phone (360) 902-3000

FAX (360) 902-3026

TTY (360) 902-1996

Web site: [www.rco.wa.gov](http://www.rco.wa.gov)

RCO outdoor grants managers are available to assist by answering questions about information contained in this manual; please feel free to call.

## Manual Authority

The authority and policies for this program is 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Final Rule and Title 286 Washington Administrative Code. Program policies are adopted by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board in public meetings.

## Other Information You Might Need

Related information is contained in:

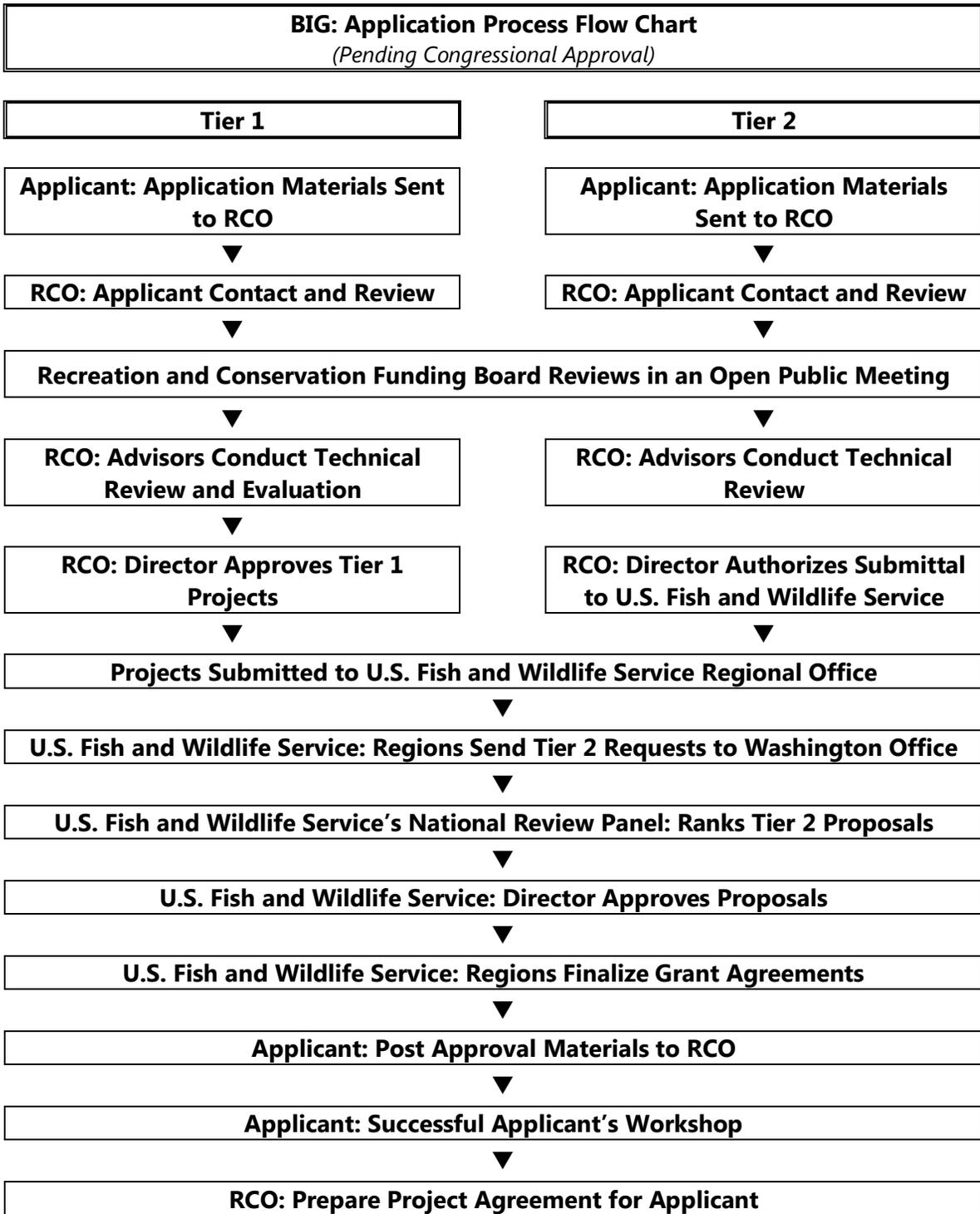
- [Manual 4, Development Projects](#)
- [Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations](#)
- [Manual 8, Reimbursements](#)
- [Manual 9, Boating Facilities Program](#)
- [50 Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Final Rule.](#)

## Workshops

RCO generally conducts workshops or Webinars in the winter or spring of even-numbered years to provide information about its funding programs. RCO finalizes the schedules of these workshops each January. Check the RCO Web site at [www.rco.wa.gov](http://www.rco.wa.gov) for information.

**Grant Process and Timeline**

RCO offers grants every year, in conjunction with the federal budget. The grant process, from application to grant award, spans 15 months, and is outlined below. While the order of the steps in this process remains consistent, for precise dates, visit the RCO Web site.



**Workshops.** RCO conducts workshops (usually as an online meeting) in the winter or early spring to provide information about the grant programs offered.

**Entering Applications.** RCO strongly encourages applicants to start online applications early. Applicants log into PRISM Online and select the "Get Started/Start a 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.

**Applications Due.** Applications are due in early May. The application includes the data entered into PRISM and all required attachments. Applicants should "submit" the application 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 returned unless RCO's director has approved a late submission in advance.

**Technical Reviews.** As part of a written review process, the Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review projects to identify any issues of concern, assess the technical merits of projects, and provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal. The grants managers will review the applications also and send comments to applicants. Applicants then can make changes to improve the projects, if needed. Applicants must complete all changes by the technical completion deadline. The committee then makes a recommendation to RCO's director on submittal of the Tier 2 projects to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding consideration.

**Board Reviews Projects.** In an open public meeting, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will review the projects, consider written public comments submitted before the meeting, and hear public testimony at the meeting. Applicants are encouraged, but not required to attend.

**Technical Completion Deadline.** RCO will establish a technical completion deadline by which applicants must make all changes to their applications. After this date, applicants will not be able to make any further changes.

**Proof of Matching Funds.** Applicants must provide proof of the availability of matching funds by the match certification deadline, which is at least one calendar month before board approval of funding.<sup>1</sup>

**Board Submits Biennial Budget Request.** The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board submits to the Governor a request for authority to spend any federal funding for BIG approved for the next biennium.

---

<sup>1</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

**Project Evaluations – A Written Process.** For Tier 1 projects, the Boating Program Advisory Committee reviews each grant application and the applicant’s written responses to the evaluation questions and scores each proposal against a set of criteria approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Post-Evaluation Conference.** After project evaluations, RCO staff tabulate the scores and share the results with the advisory committee. The committee discusses the preliminary ranked list and the application and evaluation processes. The public may join this advisory committee conference call; however, to ensure a fair and equitable process, guests may not testify. Shortly after the conference call, staff post the preliminary ranked lists on RCO’s Web site. The resulting ranked list of projects is the basis for the funding recommendation to the RCO director.

## **Odd-numbered Years**

**Preliminary Approval.** Near the beginning of the federal fiscal year, RCO’s director approves the Tier 1 projects and sends them to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding. The director also submits Tier 2 projects for the national funding competition. Section 4, Evaluations provides additional information about the evaluation process for Tier 2 projects.

**Funding Approval.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director announces funding, typically between December and March, and issues its contract to RCO.

**Pre-agreement Materials.** After grant awards, applicants have 60 days to submit pre-agreement documents (checklist provided by grants managers.) RCO staff then prepares and issues the grant contracts, called project agreements. Applicant must return the signed agreements within 90 days<sup>2</sup>. Once the agreements are signed, the applicants, now referred to as project sponsors, may begin their projects, per the terms of the project agreements. Each agreement will be written and monitored for compliance by RCO staff. See [Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations](#) for more information.

**Pre-agreement Costs.** RCO will pay only for work performed after project agreements have been signed by both RCO and project sponsors with one exception. Expenses, such as preliminary designs, environmental assessments, construction plans and specifications, cultural resource surveys, and permits, may be eligible for reimbursement, if approved by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Construction performed before the execution of a project agreement and compliance with cultural resource laws (Section 106 of the National Environmental Policy Act) will not be eligible for payment and may jeopardize funding for the entire project.

---

<sup>2</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(4).

**Successful Applicants' Workshop.** After the director approves funding, RCO hosts a workshop for successful grant applicants. This workshop covers:

- Project sponsor responsibility for compliance with the terms of the project agreement.
- Amending the project agreement to address project changes, time extensions, scope modifications, special conditions, and cost increases.
- Development and renovation, including construction plans and specifications, barrier-free design requirements, cultural resources, and bid procedures.
- Planning, including deliverables and reporting requirements.
- Project implementation, including meeting milestones, permitting, submitting progress reports, inspections, valuing donations, using RCO's online resources for understanding billing procedures, project close-out, and long-term compliance.

## Ongoing

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

- Submit only projects that will be completed within 4 years of the grant award.
- Provide assurances that the project can be completed within a reasonable time frame, which does not exceed the implementation period approved by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board.
- Develop milestones for project implementation that does not exceed 4 years.
- Begin project implementation quickly and aggressively to show measurable progress towards meeting project milestones.
- Submit progress reports at intervals as designated by the RCO project agreement.

RCO may terminate projects that do not meet critical milestones established in the project agreement.

By June 1 of each year, RCO will review the status of projects incomplete 3 or more years from the date of funding approval and will ask sponsors to provide assurances that their projects will be completed on time, such as:

- Proof of permitting approvals.

- Awarded construction contracts.
- Progress on other significant milestones listed in the grant agreement.

If satisfactory assurances are not provided, the director may terminate the project.

**Project Completion.** When a project is completed, sponsors have 90 days to submit the final bill, final report, and supporting documents needed to close the project. 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 project without payment.

# Section 2: General Program and Policy Information

---

## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ The purpose of the BIG program
- ✓ Eligible applicants
- ✓ Project eligibility
- ✓ Requirements and other things to know
- ✓ Project agreement and conversions
- ✓ Project area stewardship and ongoing obligations

## Purpose

The purpose of this program is to develop and renovate boating facilities targeting recreational boats 26 feet and larger that are available to the public. Funds also may be used to provide information and enhance boater education. Funds for the BIG program come from a portion of the federal Aquatic Resources Trust Fund as allowed by law.

## State and Federal Policies

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board first adopted BIG program policies in 2001 in an open public meeting. All program policies are adopted in such meetings or are requirements of the federal grant program.

Applicants and applications must meet all federal eligibility requirements as specified in 50 Code of Federal Regulations Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program; Final Rule.

## Federal Programs

Recipients of federal funds administered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board also are subject to the following Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars. Circulars may be viewed online at:

[www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html#numerical](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/index.html#numerical).

- Any sponsor that receives \$500,000 or more from any federal source must have OMB Circular A-133 audit. For state and local agencies, this is generally performed by the State Auditor's Office.
- Non-profit organizations that receive federal funds, regardless of the amount, are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations.
- State, local, and federally-recognized Indian tribes are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments.
- Educational Institutions are subject to the requirements of OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.

Sponsors may want to review the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards; Final Rule, which was issued December 29, 2013. This streamlined guidance document may be viewed online at:

[www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards](http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2013/12/26/2013-30465/uniform-administrative-requirements-cost-principles-and-audit-requirements-for-federal-awards)

RCO cannot execute a project agreement with the grant applicant until the federal government has given approval. RCO may need supplemental information from the applicant to be able to submit the grant application to the federal government.

## Eligible Applicants

Grants may be made to:

- Municipal subdivisions (cities, towns, counties, and districts: port, park and recreation, public utility, etc.)
- Native American tribes
- Qualified\* nonprofit organizations
- Qualified\* private operators

- State agencies.

\*A "qualified" private operator or nonprofit organization:

- Is registered with the State of Washington's Secretary of State;
- Has an equivalent successor identified in its articles of organization;
- Has been active in recreational boating for a minimum of 3 years;
- Does not require exclusive use of the facilities funded through this program;
- Does not discriminate on the basis of any protected class;
- Provides evidence that its primary purpose or business is recreational boating;  
and
- Meets federal eligibility requirements.

### **Legal Opinion for First-Time Applicants**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board requires all organizations wishing to apply for a board grant for the first time to submit a legal opinion that the applicant is eligible to do the activities below. The legal opinion is required only once to establish eligibility.

- Receive and expend public funds including funds from the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board;
- Contract with the State of Washington and/or the United States of America;
- Meet any statutory definitions required for board grant programs;
- Acquire and manage interests in real property for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes;
- Develop and/or provide stewardship for structures or facilities eligible under board rules or policies;
- Undertake planning activities incidental thereto; and
- Commit the applicant to statements made in any grant proposal.

## Project Eligibility

Additional guidelines for development projects are found in Recreation and Conservation Funding Board [Manual 4, Development Projects](#). Eligible projects include:

### Development and/or Renovation

Development means to improve, renovate, or provide new facilities for boating. Eligible project elements include:

- Transient moorage<sup>3</sup> floats and slips, fixed docks, piers, buoys
- Breakwaters, retaining walls, bulkheads, debris deflection booms
- Dinghy docks
- Marine fueling and pumpout stations
- Navigational aids
- Upland support facilities – restrooms, showers, utilities, etc.
- Dredging:

One-time only dredging to provide transient vessels safe channel depths between the BIG funded tie-up facility and maintained navigation channels or open water are eligible. Dredging costs must not exceed 10 percent of total BIG project costs, including match. The following rules apply to dredging:

- Eligible dredging costs are limited to those associated with dredging the most direct route from the tie-up facility to the maintained channel or open water (this would allow dredging where slips for transient, non-trailerable recreational vessels will be, but not between slips and the land);
- Maintenance dredging, which is dredging to maintain a channel after having received BIG funds for one-time dredging, is ineligible;
- Applicants must include an explanation of why the dredging is necessary and reasonable to meet the project objectives in their applications, including the need, dredging method, and planned maintenance of the dredging project (maintaining a dredged area is not an eligible cost under BIG);

---

<sup>3</sup> Transient moorage is defined as a single party with an eligible recreational vessel occupying for no more than 10 consecutive days.

- The proposed dredged area must be part of a navigable water body or channel. Dredging may restore channels, but must not create new access;
- Dredging must be to a minimum draft of 6 feet at the lowest point during the lowest tide or fluctuation. A project must meet the required 6 feet depth at project completion. Project sponsors must maintain the dredged area to meet this minimum requirement for 20 years (maintaining a dredged area is not an eligible cost under BIG);
- Maintenance of the channel and costs associated with the 20-year maintenance are responsibilities of the grantee and are not eligible grant costs;
- If boats that do not meet the definition of transient, non-trailerable recreational vessel will travel the dredged area, dredging costs must be prorated appropriately; and
- After selection, but before grant approval, sponsors may be required to submit copies of permits and approvals needed for the dredging project.

## **Education and Information**

- Charts, guides, and brochures

## **Ineligible Projects**

Ineligible projects are those that:

- Do not provide public benefits, for instance, a project that is not open to the public for use.
- Involve law enforcement activities.
- Significantly degrade or destroy valuable natural resources or alter cultural or historic nature of the area.
- Construct or renovate principal structures not expected to last at least 20 years.
- Perform maintenance dredging.
- Have dredging costs in excess of 10 percent of the total BIG project cost.
- Fund operations or routine, custodial, and janitorial maintenance of the facility.

- Construct, renovate, or maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities for the following:
  - Tie-up slips available for occupancy for more than 10 consecutive days by a single party;
  - Dryland storage;
  - Haul-out features; and
  - Boating features for trailerable or “car-top” boats (boats less than 26 feet in length), such as launch ramps and carry-down walkways.
- Develop a state program plan to construct, renovate, and maintain boating infrastructure tie-up facilities.
- Conduct surveys to determine boating access needs.
- Purchase real property or interests in real property, including riparian rights.

### Requirements and Other Things to Know

#### Proration of BIG Eligible Activities

If boats other than transient, non-trailerable recreational boats will use or benefit from an eligible BIG project, grant applicants must prorate the costs according to federal cost principles. Costs must be prorated based upon an estimated percentage of eligible use, and documentation to validate your prorating percentage must be included in your application. Applications will not be considered for funding if costs are not prorated appropriately.

To prorate features that will be used by or benefit all boats, such as fuel docks or breakwaters, grant applicants should identify the percentage of boat slips/tie ups for transient, non-trailerable recreation vessels in the marina or the immediate project location. Do not use the percentage of such boats in the area.

For example, if the grant applicant proposes to construct a wave attenuator that will benefit transient as well as non-transient recreational vessels, with 70 percent of the vessels being transient, non-trailerable, recreational vessels 26 feet in length or longer (based on the percentage of slips in the marina), the grant application may include only the 70 percent of eligible project costs. Applicants should include an explanation of prorating in the project Narrative as well as data to validate their methods.

## **Guest Moorage Fees**

Sponsors may charge the public reasonable fees for use of guest recreational moorage and tie-up facilities developed, renovated, or replaced with BIG. The fees must be based on the prevailing rate for the area and may not pose an unfair competitive amount, based on other publically and privately owned tie-up facilities in the area.<sup>4</sup> RCO must approve any changes in the fee structure for 20 years from project completion.

## **Universal, Barrier-free Access**

Sponsors must ensure that all facilities paid for with Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants meet current barrier-free standards. Several laws and codes provide construction designs that meet these standards. Facilities not covered by these laws and codes are not exempt from barrier-free access. Sponsors must, to the highest degree reasonable, make project elements accessible. See the universal, barrier-free access section in [Manual 4, Development Projects](#) and the RCO Web site.

Plans, project applications, cost estimates, and construction drawings must reflect compliance with facility access and signing requirements.

## **Sustainability**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board encourages greater use of sustainable design, practices, and elements in grant-funded projects. To the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board, "sustainability" means to help fund a recreation or conservation project that minimizes impact to the natural environment while maximizing the project's service life.

Sponsors are encouraged to incorporate sustainable design, practices, and elements into the scope of a project. Examples may include use of recycled materials; native plants in landscaping; pervious surfacing material for pathways, trails, and parking areas; energy efficient fixtures; onsite recycling stations; and composting.

## **Environmental Requirements**

Once projects have been selected for funding, compliance with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies, including environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act, and applicable executive orders must be satisfied before U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service can approve a grant and make funding available.

---

<sup>4</sup> 50 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 86.31 at [www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse)

Supplemental information, such as the National Environmental Policy Act checklist, may be required pending U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service review.

### **Project Agreement and Conversions**

Once a successful applicant has received a fully executed Recreation and Conservation Funding Board's project agreement, that applicant becomes a sponsor eligible to be reimbursed for approved project expenses.

### **Annual Billing to RCO**

Sponsors must submit a reimbursement request at least once a year during the state's fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for all eligible expenses incurred during that time.

### **Progress Reporting**

RCO requires all project sponsors to report on project progress periodically. The date when progress reports are due is stated in the milestones of the project agreement and sponsors will receive electronic notice when reports are due. Progress reports are entered and submitted through the PRISM database system.

### **Final Performance Report**

At project completion, all sponsors will submit final reports detailing the objectives and work performed through these projects, project changes, estimated versus actual costs expended, etc. Final performance reports are required before RCO will release final retainage payments.

### **Project Area Stewardship and Ongoing Obligations**

An RCO grant comes with long-term obligations to maintain and protect the project area after a project is complete. The long-term obligations for this grant program are in 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 86, Boating Infrastructure Grant Program: Final Rule, the project agreement, and [Manual 7, Long-Term Obligations](#). A template of the project agreement can be found on RCO's Web site at [www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/SampleProjAgreement.pdf](http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/manuals&forms/SampleProjAgreement.pdf).

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 grant recipients 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 , for as long as defined in the project

agreement. For acquisition projects, the period is determined by the rights that are acquired. For development and restoration projects, the period is determined by the type of control and tenure provided for the project.

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

# Section 3: Money Matters

---

## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ Matching resources
- ✓ Match requirements
- ✓ Types of match
- ✓ Grant limits
- ✓ Records and reimbursements

## Matching Resources

Most Recreation and Conservation Funding Board programs require sponsors to match grants to foster and demonstrate a local commitment to the project and to make funds available to a greater number of projects.<sup>5</sup>

### Eligible Match

A sponsor's matching share may include one or a combination of the following:

- Appropriations and cash
- Bonds – council or voter
- Corrections labor
- Donations – the value of using cash, equipment use, labor, materials, or services (see note below)

---

<sup>5</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-045

- Force account<sup>6</sup> – the value of using sponsor’s equipment, labor, or materials (see note below)
- Grants –state, local and private (see notes below)
- Local impact and mitigation fees (see note below)
- Proceeds of a letter of credit or binding loan commitment
- Other Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grants that meet the requirements outlined below.

### **Not Allowed as Match**

- Existing sponsor assets such as real property or developments.
- Costs that are double counted. (A cost incurred by a sponsor in a project that has been reimbursed by RCO shall not be used as a match on another RCO project.)
- Cost that are not eligible for grant assistance.
- Cost that are not an integral part of the project scope.
- Cost 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.),
- Cost incurred before a project agreement is executed, except for pre-agreement costs approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### **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 the existing funding that would have been used for a project without grant funding.

All matching resources must be:

- An integral and necessary part of the approved project,

---

<sup>6</sup> “Force account” means to use the applicant agency’s or organization’s employees or resources as opposed to, for example, a contractor’s staff, volunteers, or others.

- Part of the work identified in the application and project agreement,
- For eligible work types or elements, and
- Committed to the project.

Rules governing projects apply to the grant applicant's match. For example if a grant applicant uses donated land as a match, RCO rules requiring the land to remain in public recreation use forever apply to the donated land 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 your project.

Except for grant applications submitted within the same biennium, matching resources or board grant funds, committed in one board-funded project must not be used as match in another board funded project.

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's "out-of-pocket" costs.

### **Match Requirements**

Applicants must provide a minimum match of 25 percent for each Boating Infrastructure Grant. Projects with a match higher than 25 percent will receive additional points under a question included in the evaluation criteria.

Except for state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost must be provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

### **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 director approves funding. All applicants are required to sign and submit a certification of match form to ensure their project is included in the funding recommendation. Applicants are advised to plan ahead for projects whose match depends on citizen votes or passage of ballot measure. This certification is due at least

30 days before the director takes action<sup>7</sup>. The forms and deadlines for certifying match are on the RCO Web site.

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

When another Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant is used as match, the "certification of match" will be 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 and Force Account

Donations are eligible only as matching funds and are not reimbursable. This means RCO will not pay more than the sponsor's out of pocket expenses. Valuing donations of equipment, labor (including inmate or community service labor), and material is discussed in [Manual 8, Reimbursements](#). RCO strongly encourages applicants to secure written confirmation of all donations you plan to use as match and attach the donation letters to your PRISM Online application.

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

### Other Grants

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

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

---

<sup>7</sup> Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(3)

## RCO Grants as Match

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

- The grants are not from the same Recreation and Conservation Funding Board grant program,
- Only elements eligible in both grant programs are counted as the match,
- Each grant is evaluated independently and on its own merits, as if the match were coming from elsewhere, and
- Except for state agencies and Native American tribes, at least 10 percent of the total project cost is provided in the form of a non-state, non-federal contribution.

## 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.

## Grant Limits

There are two funding categories for the BIG program: Tier 1 and Tier 2. The primary differences in the categories are grant limits and evaluations. This summary is provided to help explain the similarities and differences in these categories.

- Tier 1, Basic: Requests must be from \$5,000 to \$95,000 per project.
- Tier 2, Competitive:
  - Applicants must request a minimum of \$100,001 per project.
  - Maximum request of \$1,455,000
  - Applications are reviewed by RCO staff for eligibility and then forwarded, without state evaluation, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program office for national competition.

The sponsor is responsible for project cost overruns. Also, the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board will not reimburse more than the sponsor's actual expenditures.

### **All Projects: Administration, Architecture, Engineering**

Architecture and engineering costs for development and renovation projects is limited to 20 percent of the total development project cost.

Additional information about eligibility and reimbursement maximums is contained in [Manual 4, Development Projects](#) (architectural and engineering costs).

### **Records and Reimbursements**

Applicants must keep detailed records of all funded project costs including force account values and donated contributions. Refer to [Manual 8, Reimbursements](#) for details and instructions regarding audits, record retention, and documents required for reimbursement.

# Section 4: Project Selection

---

## In this section, you'll learn about:

- ✓ How projects are selected
- ✓ Evaluation materials
- ✓ Evaluation criteria

## How Projects are Selected

### Boating Programs Advisory Committee

RCO manages the BIG program with the assistance of a standing advisory committee. The advisory committee's role is to recommend policies and procedures to RCO for administering grant funds and to review, evaluate, and score grant applications. The resulting ranked lists are the basis for funding recommendations to RCO.

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 and boating in Washington.

Check RCO's Web site for membership and other details at [www.rco.wa.gov/grants/advisory\\_cmte.shtml](http://www.rco.wa.gov/grants/advisory_cmte.shtml).

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

### Evaluation Process

The advisory committee will rank project proposals using the criteria established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Tier 1 – RCO’s Boating Programs Advisory Committee will review and evaluate projects to provide a ranked list for consideration. RCO’s director will approve the final list of projects to be sent to the federal government for funding consideration.
- Tier 2 – RCO’s director will approve the list of Tier 2 proposals to be sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service without state evaluation. Once the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s regional office accepts an application, it is sent to the National Review Panel. The panel scores and ranks projects and submits a funding recommendation to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service director, who makes the final funding decision.

### **Do Not Fund Recommendation**

Occasionally during evaluations for Tier 1 projects or following review of Tier 2 projects, the advisory committee may express significant concerns about a project, such that it would like to discuss a “Do Not Fund” recommendation. If this occurs, the advisory committee may discuss its concerns at the post-evaluation meeting, which takes place after application scores are tabulated. For Tier 2 projects, RCO staff will notify applicants of the proposed “Do Not Fund” recommendation, before projects are due to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the national competition.

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

RCO staff will forward to the director a summary of the “Do Not Fund” recommendation, any committee member comments, and the applicant’s response. The director will consider the advisory committee’s recommendation before the ranked list is approved. The director retains discretion in awarding all grant funds.

## **Evaluation Materials**

### **Tier 1**

As an attachment to the PRISM application, applicants must provide written responses to the evaluation criteria outlined in this section and the latest federal Request for Applications. Applicants may provide a maximum of four, single-sided pages for evaluation criteria responses using 8.5” x 11” paper with 1” margins and a 12-point font.

The evaluation team reviews the responses along with the project statement, maps, plans, graphics, and summary application information entered in PRISM to score and rank projects.

Scoring is by secret ballot. Scoring instructions are contained in the individual evaluation instruments. All scores are sent to RCO where they are tabulated and compiled to establish a ranked list of projects. The ranked list is the basis for funding recommendations to RCO's director.

### **Tier 2**

For projects to be evaluated, scored, and ranked for funding consideration, applicants must follow the requirements in the latest federal Request for Applications. The Request for Applications outlines the required documents and specifies the format and page limits for each. These documents generally include a project statement, responses to evaluation criteria, drawings, maps, photographs, letters of commitment, and other supporting documents.

NOTE: The Request for Applications often is not available until after RCO begins accepting grant applications, and each year the page limits, questions, and other requirements may change. Applicants must work with their RCO grants manager and check the RCO Web site to make sure they have the latest requirements.

Once the director approves the Tier 2 projects, RCO will forward the application materials, including any required federal forms, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for funding consideration.

**Evaluation Criteria**

The questions listed below will be used to evaluate and rank all Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects. Applicants must address in writing (maximum of five, single-sided pages) each criterion for each project application.

Question	Subject	Maximum Points
1	Partnerships	15
2	Innovative techniques	15
3	Non-federal match	15
4	Cost efficiency	10
5	Link to prominent destination	10
6	Opportunities of national, regional, or local significance	15
7	Economic impacts to a community	5
8	Multi-state efforts	5
<b>Total possible points</b>		<b>90</b>

1. Provide for public/private and public/public partnership efforts to develop, renovate, and maintain BIG facilities. These partners must be other than the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and RCO.

To receive points for this criterion, applicants must document partner contributions with a signed letter of commitment from an authorized representative of the match provider/partner and such costs must be necessary and reasonable to accomplishing the proposed project objectives. An agency that contributes only because of mandatory duties, such as issuing a permit, is not a partner.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

5 points      One partner

10 points     Two partners

15 points     Three partners

2. Use innovative techniques to increase the availability of BIG facilities for transient, non-trailerable recreational vessels (includes education/information).

To receive points, applicants must detail how or why the proposed techniques or education/information materials are innovative, unique, forward thinking, serves a special purpose, or adds to the project in a special way that other marinas do not, and how they increase the availability of facilities.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

3. Include private, local, or state funds above the required non-federal match. If so, identify the percentage of non-federal match.

Note: Non-federal match contributions must be reasonable and necessary to accomplishing the proposed project objectives. Do not include items or costs that are not part of the BIG project.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

5 points	26-35 percent
10 points	36-49 percent
15 points	50 percent and above

4. Be cost efficient. Projects are cost efficient when the BIG facility or access site features add a high value of economic return and/or public use compared with the proposed funding.

For example, an application that proposes to construct a small feature such as a transient mooring dock using BIG funds, within an existing facility with existing features (restrooms, utilities, etc.), adds higher value and opportunity than an application that proposes to install all of those features (restrooms, utilities, etc.)

- A. Applications may receive between 0-5 points for an application based on whether the proposed project is an enhancement to an existing facility, or additional services, or if the application is for the development of entirely new supporting infrastructure for the proposed project (e.g., new marina development). Applications to increase the transient space at an existing marina or services will receive a higher score (3-5 points) compared to projects that propose the development of a brand new marina or supporting infrastructure (0-2 points).

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

- B. To demonstrate cost efficiency, applicants should include the number of boat slips for transient, non-trailerable recreational vessels that your project proposes to construct or renovate. This information helps the review panel determine a federal cost share per slip estimate, which accounts for half of the points for this criterion. Points will not be awarded for this part of the cost efficiency ranking criterion unless projects include construction or renovation of slips for transient, non-trailerable recreational vessels (e.g., 0 points to build a fuel dock only). The point breakdown follows:

▲ Point Range: 0-5 points

5 points	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is < \$12,500
4 points	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is \$12,501-\$24,999
3 points	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is \$25,000-\$54,999
2 points	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is \$55,000-\$79,999
1 point	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is \$80,000-\$104,999
0 points	If the federal cost share per new or renovated slip is > \$104,999, or if no slip construction or renovation is proposed in your project.

Points from 4a and 4b are added together for a possible total of 10 points.

5. Provide a significant link to prominent destination way points such as those near metropolitan population centers, cultural or natural areas, or that provide safe harbors.

Note: Applications that propose to construct or renovate facilities that do not include boat slips or tie-ups will receive 0 points for this ranking criterion, e.g., fuel dock only.

▲ Point Range: 0 or 10 points

6. Provide access to recreational, historic, cultural, natural, or scenic opportunities of national, regional, or local significance. Projects that provide access to opportunities of national, regional, or local significance receive 5 points for each, for a maximum of 15 points.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggests that applicants list examples of opportunities, the type of opportunity (i.e., nationally, regionally, or locally significant), and the time and distance to access such opportunities by boat, car, and bicycle from the project site (if appropriate). To receive points, access to the opportunity of significance must be within a reasonable distance of the project location.

Note: Applications receive 5 points for providing access to at least one nationally significant opportunity, 5 points for providing access to at least one regionally

significant opportunity, and 5 points for providing access to at least one locally significant opportunity. Applicants will not receive more than 5 points for having multiple significant opportunities in any of the above categories.

▲ Point Range: 0-15 points

7. Provide positive economic impacts to a community. For example, a project that costs \$100,000 and attracts a number of boaters who altogether spend \$1 million a year in the community would be providing significant positive economic impact to a community. (1-5 points)

Applications that do not address or inadequately address the economic benefits of a project will receive the minimum score (1).

To receive higher scores (2-5) an application must address the potential economic impacts to the local community. Applicants may use a variety of sources to estimate the economic impacts of a project, including previously completed studies from the local or surrounding area. Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognizes the importance of boating in general to state and regional economies, the application must address the specific potential economic impact of the project on the local area to receive 2-5 points for this criterion.

▲ Point Range: 1-5 points

8. Include multi-state efforts that result in coordinating location of tie-up and other facilities. To receive points for this criterion, an application must include formal documentation of multi-state efforts (e.g., signed memorandum of agreement, signed letter, etc.)

▲ Point Range: 0 or 5 points