

FY2027

# BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM (BIG)

## Request for Applications & Guide for Applicants



---

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Applicants are responsible for referring to the applicable Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for [Tier 1](#) and [Tier 2](#) projects, as well as the [BIG Final Rule Title 50, Part 86 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#), for complete program requirements and guidance. This document is intended to serve as a resource and should not be considered an all-inclusive representation of the requirements of the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program. DCM advises applicants to read this guide in its entirety before applying for a grant.

## Table of Contents

BIG PROGRAM CONTACTS .....	3
PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....	4
Purpose of the BIG program .....	4
Program Administration.....	4
North Carolina-Specific Administrative Requirements and Program Policies .....	5
Applications .....	5
Tier 1 – State Competition .....	6
Tier 2– National Competition .....	6
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	7
Matching .....	7
Eligible Participants .....	7
Eligible Projects .....	7
Ineligible Projects .....	8
Eligible Costs .....	9
Required Operational & Design Features.....	9
Signage .....	11
PROPOSAL .....	12
Format Requirements.....	12
Title Page .....	12
Project Summary .....	13
Project Narrative.....	13
Useful Life .....	15
Geographic Location/Drawings/Maps/Photographs .....	15
Budget Narrative.....	16
Budget Table.....	17
Supporting Documents & Additional Information.....	18
Ranking Criteria .....	19
Ranking Criteria for Points .....	20
PROJECT LIFECYCLE .....	24
Pre-Award Phase.....	26
Pre-Award Costs.....	26
Award.....	27

Compliance Documentation.....	27
Obligation .....	28
Subrecipient Agreement .....	28
Project Amendments .....	29
Extension Requests .....	29
Procurement & Contracting .....	29
Project Management .....	30
Reporting Requirements.....	30
Inspections .....	30
Project Reimbursement & Closeout.....	30
Cost Overruns.....	31
LONG-TERM COMPLIANCE.....	32
Useful Life Requirements .....	32
Maintenance Responsibility .....	32
Public Access Requirements .....	33
Monitoring & Inspections.....	33
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....	33

# BIG PROGRAM CONTACTS

**Kasen Wally**, BIG Program Coordinator  
NC Division of Coastal Management  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Office: (252) 515-5424  
[Kasen.Wally@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Kasen.Wally@deq.nc.gov)

**Rachel Love-Adrick**, Planning & Resilience Section Chief  
NC Division of Coastal Management  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Office: (252) 515-5403  
[Rachel.Love-Adrick@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Rachel.Love-Adrick@deq.nc.gov)

NC BIG Program Email: [NCBIG@deq.nc.gov](mailto:NCBIG@deq.nc.gov)

North Carolina BIG Program [Website](#)

Sign up for the [BIG Interested Parties Email List](#)

**NOTE:** For questions about BIG awards prior to 2025, contact:

**Paula Farnell**, Program Specialist  
NC Division of Marine Fisheries  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Office: (252) 515-5464  
[Paula.Farnell@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Paula.Farnell@deq.nc.gov)

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## Purpose of the BIG program

The Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program was established in 1998 using funds from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The Trust Fund consists of collected excise taxes on fishing equipment and electric motors, motorboat and small engine fuels, and import duties on pleasure boats, making this a "user pay - user benefit" program.

The BIG Program provides funding to the 50 states, as well as the territories and commonwealths of the United States, for the construction, renovation, or maintenance of boating infrastructure for transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that are operated, leased, rented, or chartered primarily for pleasure. For the purposes of the BIG Program, transient recreational vessels are defined as vessels using a facility for 15 days or less.

The BIG Program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through grants to states under its Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR). The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Division of Coastal Management (DCM), is the designated State Administrative Agency for the BIG Program in North Carolina.

## Program Administration

The BIG Program in North Carolina was administered by the [Division of Marine Fisheries](#) (DMF) from 2002 to 2024. Administration of the program has since transitioned to the Division of Coastal Management (DCM), which has been awarded federal funding to further develop and implement the program in North Carolina.

The Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program is governed by Federal regulations contained in the [BIG Final Rule Title 50, Part 86 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#) and the annual Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Division of Coastal Management (DCM) administers the BIG Program in North Carolina and is responsible for the application, review, and subaward process.

This Guide is intended to assist applicants in understanding and navigating Federal program requirements within the context of North Carolina's administration of the BIG Program. While DCM has established additional administrative requirements, program policies, and application procedures specific to North Carolina's administration of the BIG Program, applicants remain responsible for complying with all applicable Federal requirements.

Applicants are responsible for reviewing the most current [Tier 1](#) and/or [Tier 2](#) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Final Rule (otherwise known as 50 CFR Part 86) for complete program requirements, eligibility criteria, and application guidance.

Because this Request for Applications and Guide for Applicants may be released before the applicable Federal FY 2027 NOFO is published, applicants should prepare their proposals using the most recent applicable NOFOs referenced throughout this Guide, which reflect the most recent Federal guidance available at the time of publication. If the final FY 2027 Tier 1 or Tier 2 NOFOs include changes to

program requirements, priorities, or application materials, DCM may request additional information, documentation, or revisions from selected applicants as necessary to ensure compliance with the final Federal requirements and 50 CFR Part 86.

## North Carolina-Specific Administrative Requirements and Program Policies

In addition to the Federal requirements established by the applicable Tier 1 and Tier 2 NOFOs and 50 CFR Part 86, the following administrative requirements and program policies apply to applications submitted through DCM.

- **Non-Federal Cash Match Requirement**  
Applicants must provide the required non-Federal match as a cash contribution. In-kind contributions, including donated labor, materials, equipment use, professional services, or other non-cash contributions, may not be used to satisfy the required non-Federal match requirement.
- **Dredging Ineligibility**  
To maximize the long-term public benefit of available funding, dredging activities are not eligible for funding under this program. The Division has determined that limited grant funds should be used for the construction and improvement of durable transient boating infrastructure and public access amenities.
- **Accessibility and User Access**  
Applicants should incorporate accessibility considerations into project planning and design, where applicable. Applications should clearly describe how accessibility requirements, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have been or will be incorporated into the proposed project. Applicants should provide supporting documentation demonstrating that applicable accessibility requirements have been met or can be met during project implementation.
- **Ranking Criteria**  
Although the Federal ranking criteria are published only in the Tier 2 NOFO, DCM will use these criteria to evaluate and rank both Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications. Additional points will be awarded to applications that provide a non-Federal cash match exceeding the required minimum 25%, and to applicants that participate in the NC Clean Marina Program.
- **Project Readiness**  
DCM may consider project readiness, including the status of design, permitting, and environmental review, and the applicant's ability to complete the project within required timeframes, when determining which applications to submit to USFWS.

## Applications

All applications **must** be submitted directly to DCM in response to this document, which serves as the Division's Request for Applications (RFA).

Applicants may submit multiple applications to DCM for consideration during a funding cycle under [Tier 1](#) or [Tier 2](#). Applicants submitting more than one application to a single tier (e.g., two Tier 1 applications) must rank their projects in order of priority. Project priority rankings will be considered by DCM during the evaluation and funding recommendation process; however, DCM will recommend projects based on the ranking criteria, available funding, project readiness, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) program requirements.

Applicants should select the funding tier that best aligns with the scope, scale, and funding needs of their proposed project.

### Tier 1 – State Competition

- Requests may not exceed \$300,000 in federal funding per project.
- A minimum 25% non-federal cash match is required.
- Applicants compete against other North Carolina Tier I applications.
- DCM may submit multiple Tier I applications to USFWS; however, the combined federal funding request for all Tier I applications may not exceed \$300,000.

### Tier 2– National Competition

- Requests may not exceed \$1,500,000 in federal funding per project.
- A minimum 25% non-federal cash match is required.
- Applicants compete against other Tier II applications nationwide.
- DCM may submit only one Tier II application to USFWS each funding cycle.
  - DCM will submit the highest-ranked eligible application for national competition.

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

## Matching

The applicant must provide a minimum 25% non-Federal cash match. Applicants are encouraged to provide a cash match beyond the required minimum to maximize the amount of grant funding available and improve the competitiveness of their application.

**The required non-federal match must be provided as a cash contribution.** In-kind contributions, including volunteer labor, donated materials, donated equipment use, donated professional services, and other non-cash contributions, are not eligible to satisfy the match requirement.

All matching funds must:

- Be necessary and reasonable for achieving the project objectives;
- Be used for eligible project activities or costs;
- Be provided from a non-Federal source, unless the use of federal funds as a match is specifically authorized by Federal statute.
- Not be used to satisfy the match requirements of another State or Federal award.

## Eligible Participants

Eligible applicants include private marina owners/operators, local governments, state agencies, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other entities that own or operate eligible facilities. Facilities eligible for the BIG Program are limited to publicly and privately-owned marinas that are open to the public and located within North Carolina's 20 coastal counties.

The applicant must own or have legal rights to operate the BIG-funded facility, or the applicant must demonstrate in the proposal that the owner of the facility will use the BIG-funded facility for its authorized purpose for its useful life, the period during which a BIG-funded capital improvement is capable of fulfilling its intended purpose with adequate routine care and maintenance.

Selected applicants must meet all Federal requirements as detailed in the [Tier 1](#) or [Tier 2](#) NOFO, and [Title 50, Part 86 of the Code of Federal Regulations \(CFR\)](#); and further agree to abide by all of North Carolina State rules, policies, and procedures, as well as all local and Federal rules that may apply.

## Eligible Projects

Funding is only available for the construction, renovation, or maintenance of boating infrastructure for transient recreational vessels (those using a facility for 15 days or less, including single-day use) that are at least 26 feet in length. Projects completed using BIG funds must provide public access but may be publicly or privately owned.

Boating infrastructure comprises the structures, equipment, accessories, and services necessary or desirable for a facility to accommodate eligible vessels. Some examples of potentially eligible activities include, but are not limited to the following:

- Planning, permitting, engineering, cultural, historic, and environmental studies or assessments necessary to construct boating infrastructure.

- Transient slips. Slips that boaters with eligible recreational vessels occupy for no more than 15 consecutive days.
- Day-docks. Facilities that do not allow overnight use.
- Floating docks, fixed piers, and gangways.
- Dinghy docks. Fixed or floating structures that provide temporary access for boaters using dinghies, tenders, or other small boats to travel between eligible recreational vessels and shore-based facilities.
- Mooring buoys. Permanently anchored floats designed for use by eligible recreational vessels.
- Fuel stations, restrooms, showers, dockside utilities, laundry facilities, and similar amenities.
- Lighting, communications, buoys, beacons, signals, markers, signs, security features.
- Floating or fixed breakwaters, wave attenuators, and other improvements that provide a harbor of safe refuge (facilities protected from waves, wind, tides, current, etc., that provide a temporary safe anchorage point or harbor of refuge during storms).
- Equipment and structures for collecting, disposing of, or recycling liquid or solid waste from eligible vessels or for eligible users.
- Bulkheads, retaining walls, living shorelines, and similar shoreline stabilization measures that support eligible boating infrastructure.
- Debris deflection structures or water hazard removal.
- Maintenance of facilities. See [50 CFR 86.14](#).
- Informational and educational materials specific to BIG or a BIG-funded project and that credit BIG as a source of funding when appropriate. See [50 CFR 86.11\(5\)](#) for examples of eligible actions.
- Recording Federal interest in BIG-funded real property.
- Repair or restoration of roads, parking lots, walkways, or other surface areas damaged as a direct result of BIG-funded construction.

## Ineligible Projects

- **Dredging:** Although dredging may be eligible under [50 CFR §86.15](#), DCM has determined that dredging activities **are not eligible** for funding under North Carolina's BIG Program. To maximize the long-term public benefit of available funding, limited grant funds should instead be used to construct and improve durable transient boating infrastructure and public access amenities.
- Facility operations and administration, including salaries, utilities, rent, taxes, insurance, and janitorial services.
- Acquisition of land or interests in land.
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of roads and parking lots, except for limited repair or restoration directly resulting from BIG-funded construction.
- Construction, renovation, or maintenance of shops, stores, food service facilities, lodging, marina offices, or other facility administration buildings.
- Dry storage facilities, haul-out facilities, boat maintenance facilities, and repair shops.
- Purchase or operation of service boats used to transport boaters to and from mooring areas.
- General marina marketing, advertising, promotional giveaways, trade show exhibits, and similar marketing activities.
- Supplies and expendable personal property not directly related to achieving project objectives.

- Any activity that does not serve eligible transient recreational vessels, does not provide public access, or does not meet applicable BIG Program requirements.

## Eligible Costs

BIG funds may only be used for costs that are necessary, reasonable, and directly related to accomplishing the approved project objectives. Costs must directly benefit eligible transient recreational vessels and users.

If a proposed project is expected to benefit both eligible and ineligible users, project costs must be prorated based on the anticipated benefit provided to each user group. Applicants must identify the basis or method used to allocate costs between eligible and ineligible users and explain why that method reasonably reflects anticipated use and benefits. Examples may include equipment usage records, linear footage of available dock space, and the number of slips. Other allocation methods may be acceptable if adequately supported and justified.

For example, if a project includes the construction of a marina with 200 slips, but only 35 are dedicated to eligible transient recreational vessels, project costs must be proportionally allocated based on the percentage of eligible use. In this example, 17.5%  $[(35 \div 200) \times 100]$  of the project costs would be eligible for reimbursement under the BIG Program.

Table 1 illustrates how project costs would be prorated and reimbursed under this scenario:

*Table 1. Example Cost Share*

<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>Eligible BIG Cost (17.5%)</b>	<b>Applicant Match (25%)</b>	<b>Federal Share (75%)</b>
\$1,000,000	\$175,000	\$43,750	\$131,250

Costs associated with facilities, amenities, or infrastructure dedicated exclusively to transient recreational users may be considered 100% eligible. For example, if a project includes a restroom facility accessible only to transient boaters via an access code, the costs associated with that facility may be fully eligible for reimbursement under the BIG Program.

## Required Operational & Design Features

A BIG-funded facility is required to:

1. Be designed for temporary use by eligible transient recreational vessels, meaning recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that use the facility for 15 days or less, including single-day use.
2. Be designed and constructed to provide long-term service throughout its approved useful life.
  - a. **Useful Life:** The period during which a BIG-funded facility can fulfill its intended purpose with adequate care and maintenance. The subrecipient is responsible for the costs of operating and maintaining the BIG-funded facility for its useful life. Useful life is established in the grant proposal as an informed estimate, supported by documentation and justification that describe how useful life was determined.
  - b. To estimate the useful life of a facility, refer to [50 CFR 86.74](#).

- c. The Subrecipient is responsible for all costs associated with the ordinary and routine operation and maintenance of the facility, including personnel, equipment, services, and supplies.
3. Meet environmental compliance requirements (see [Compliance Documentation](#)).
4. Be designed and built to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance standards, if applicable (see [ADA Checklist for Recreational Boating Facilities](#)).
5. Be located on navigable waters, meaning waters capable of supporting navigation by watercraft in their natural condition, and accessible to eligible transient recreational vessels. Facilities must be open and available for public use.
6. Have docking or mooring sites with water access at least 6 feet deep at the lowest tide or other measure of lowest fluctuation, unless the applicant demonstrates that a lesser depth is adequate to accommodate the eligible vessels expected to use the facility at that location.
7. Allow public access. BIG-funded facilities must allow public access that does not interfere with the purpose of the BIG-funded project as described in [50 CFR 86.92](#). Access may be temporarily limited in cases of emergency, repairs, construction, or as a safety precaution, or when the facility is seasonally closed for business.
8. Charge reasonable fees. Fees may be charged to boaters for transient facilities constructed under BIG. Any user fees charged shall be reasonable, consistent with, and comparable to fees charged by other facilities for similar use at equivalent facilities ([50 CFR §86.90](#)).
  - a. Revenues generated from user fees should be used to support the operation and maintenance of the facility throughout its useful life.
  - b. Subrecipients must state proposed fees and the basis for the fees in the grant application.
  - c. If a Subrecipient generates revenue from a BIG-funded facility during the grant period of performance, such revenue will constitute program income and must be deducted from the total allowable costs of the Federal award in accordance with [2 CFR §200.307](#).
9. Be open to eligible users and operated and maintained for its intended purpose in accordance with the Subrecipient Agreement (contract) for its approved useful life.
10. Include signage informing boaters that the project was funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund and is restricted to transient boater usage only.
  - a. Clear information must be given using signs or other methods that direct eligible users to BIG-funded facilities and inform users of restrictions and operating periods (see [50 CFR 86.94](#)).
  - b. Credit must also be given to the Sport Fish Restoration Program through the use of the program logo and language at BIG-funded facilities and within educational/informational materials that are produced (see [50 CFR 86.75](#)).
11. Offer security, safety, and service for eligible users and vessels.

12. Allow overnight use. You may prohibit overnight use at a BIG-funded facility if you state in the approved grant application that the facility is for day-use only. After funds are awarded, subrecipients may expand the facility's use to allow for overnight use. However, if you state in your proposal that the BIG-funded facility will allow overnight use, you shall not change the purpose to allow day use only without receiving prior approval from DCM and USFWS. A reduction in the use or a change in services to be provided after grant funds are awarded may result in penalties. See [50 CFR 86.93](#) and [Subpart H](#) for additional information.
13. Provide access to a sanitary waste pump-out system if you allow overnight use and existing service is not available within two nautical miles of the facility or as required by State or local laws.
  - a. Though BIG funds may be used for a sewage pump-out station, as a first option, DCM recommends applicants apply for an [NC Marine Sewage Pump-out Grant](#) concurrently with this request.
  - b. The pumpout requirement may be waived if the applicant can demonstrate an inability to install a pumpout. If the requirement is waived, the applicant must inform boaters how to properly dispose of septic waste and where to find information directing them to nearby pumpout stations (see [50 CFR 86.13\(b\)](#) for waiver requirements).
14. Include a Notice of Grant Agreement on the property deed declaring federal interest. Awarded subrecipients must record a Notice of Federal Participation for the Federal interest in the BIG-funded real property (see [50 CFR 86.18](#)).
15. Subrecipients must not alter the ownership, purpose, or use of the BIG-funded facility as described in the project statement without the approval of DCM and the USFWS WSFR Regional Office (see [50 CFR 86.18](#)).

## Signage

The Subrecipient must install and maintain at least one acknowledgment sign identifying the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Sport Fish Restoration Fund, the Division of Coastal Management (DCM), the Subrecipient, and any other primary funding partners. The sign must be easily visible to boaters, display the logo of each primary funding partner, and measure no less than 9 inches by 12 inches.

The Subrecipient is responsible for providing and installing the sign(s) as part of the project. Costs associated with the sign(s) are eligible for reimbursement under the BIG Program, provided they are included in the approved project budget.

DCM will provide the required U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Fund and DCM logos. During project implementation, DCM will work with the Subrecipient to develop the appropriate acknowledgment language and ensure the sign meets applicable program requirements.

# PROPOSAL

Applicants must submit proposals in electronic format as one file no later than **August 28, 2026, by 5:00 pm EST**. Proposals less than 20 MB should be emailed to [NCBIG@deq.nc.gov](mailto:NCBIG@deq.nc.gov). Applicants must take appropriate steps to reduce image and/or file sizes before emailing to ensure the entire proposal, including all sections, is submitted as a single document. Each section in the proposal must be clearly labeled with pages numbered and submitted in the order as requested below. The Division of Coastal Management is unable to assemble proposals for applicants.

Proposals greater than 20 MB may be uploaded to DCM's [ShareFile](#) and **MUST** be accompanied by an email notification to DCM that an application package has been uploaded, including the time and date of submission. Please note that all proposals, regardless of the delivery method, must be received by DCM by the submission deadline to be considered.

## Format Requirements

The paper size requirement is 8.5" x 11" with 1" margins all around. Pages should be numbered, with the page number at the bottom of each page.

Proposals for both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 opportunities must include all components as listed below. Additionally, the State requires additional information to review your proposal, as detailed below. DCM requires that applicants label all sections as listed and arrange their application in this order:

1. Title Page (1-Page limit)
2. Project Summary (Attached "Project Summary Worksheet" Form)
3. Project Narrative (10-page limit)
4. Geographic Location/Drawings/Maps/Photographs (20-page limit)
5. Budget Narrative (No page limit)
6. Additional Information and Supporting Documents (20-page limit)

## Title Page

### (1-page limit)

The title page text shall be centered and include the following:

- Project Title: Give a descriptive title for the project that includes the name of the waterbody and/or project area
- Funding Opportunity Title
  - Funding Opportunity Number
  - Funding Tier
  - Assistance Listing Number (ALN): 15.622
- Facility Name
- Facility Street Address or Location

- If a street address does not exist for the site, please give a description that will allow us to drive to the location.
- Property Owner(s)
  - Mailing address, phone number, and email
  - Signature
- If different from Property Owner, list the Project Manager (the person who will manage the project).
  - Mailing address, phone number, and email
  - Signature
- If different from the Property Owner/Project Manager, list the Authorized Representative (an individual authorized to enter a contract on behalf of the applicant).
  - Mailing address, phone number, and email
  - Signature
- Date submitted to DCM

## Project Summary

### **(Attached Form)**

Applicants must complete and attach the 4-page Project Summary Worksheet provided by DCM to the application package.

## Project Narrative

### **(10-page limit)**

The Project Narrative must include all the following elements. These elements should follow the guidance provided in the relevant Tier 1 or Tier 2 NOFO. Applicants should use the Ranking Criteria to ensure a complete Project Narrative.

1. Explain why the project is necessary and how it fulfills the purpose of BIG
  - a. Describe existing facilities available for eligible vessels at your location and near the proposed project;
  - b. Describe and provide justification for how the proposed project fills a need or offers a benefit not offered by existing facilities; and
  - c. Give information to support the number of transient boats expected to use the facilities in the proposed project area and demonstrate why existing facilities are insufficient to meet demand.
2. State the ultimate purpose for the proposed project and link the purpose to the demonstrated need.
3. State desired outcomes that are specific and quantifiable.
  - a. Write in the active tense using action verbs such as construct, survey, train, research, establish, repair, conduct, provide, restore, acquire, etc.

- b. Identify specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound ([SMART](#)) objectives to be accomplished during the project period.
  - c. Note what benchmarks must be achieved to meet the need.
4. Describe the expected results or benefits
- a. Describe each capital improvement, service, or product that will result from the project.
  - b. Describe and provide data on how structures, services, or other products will address the need and benefit transient boaters.
  - c. If applicable, describe the facility's participation in the North Carolina Clean Marina Program and explain how participation benefits transient recreational boaters and supports the long-term operation of the facility.
5. Describe the approach to be used in meeting the project objectives
- a. Describe the methods, designs, and/or procedures to be used to achieve the objectives. Include information on the status of required permits or other compliance requirements (National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act).
  - b. Describe how the project meets or will incorporate ADA compliance.
  - c. Identify the primary **applicant contact(s)** and the **state agency contact** for the proposed project.
    - i. For each applicant contact, provide the individual's name, title, organization, phone number, email address, relevant qualifications or experience, and indicate whether the individual has signatory authority to commit the applicant to actions under the grant.
    - ii. The North Carolina BIG Program Coordinator serves as the State Agency contact for the proposed project. Contact information for the BIG Program Coordinator is provided in the [BIG Program Contacts](#) section of this Guide and should be included in the application.
  - d. Identify any known concessioners or subrecipients that will participate in the proposed project. For each, provide the name, contact information, qualifications, and role in the project.
  - e. Applicant shall explain how they will operate, maintain, administer, and manage the proposed project to ensure the BIG-funded facility continues to achieve its authorized purpose during the useful life of the facility, including maintaining access to the facility over time.
  - f. Provide a timeline of activities. Include permitting, design, engineering, other regulatory clearances, bidding, material fabrication, construction, etc.
6. Describe any relationship between the proposed project and other related work funded by Federal grants that are planned, anticipated, or underway.

7. Describe any proposed fees, the basis for the fees, and whether fees will be charged during the period of performance of this grant.
8. Include an estimate of the useful life of the project as described below.

## Useful Life

Applicants must estimate the useful life in years of each proposed project element. For capital improvements, this typically includes a structure that costs at least \$25,000 to build, or a repair or renovation of a structure costing at least \$25,000 that increases the structure's useful life by ten years or more. Applicants may be required to revise or adjust useful life estimates during the approval process. Although project elements that do not meet the capital improvement threshold are not considered capital improvements under the BIG program, applicants are still expected to provide an estimated useful life for those elements as part of the application.

For each capital improvement and other applicable project element, applicants should provide:

- The estimated useful life (years);
- The basis used to determine the estimate; and
- Any supporting documentation used to justify the estimate.

Useful life means the period during which a BIG-funded capital improvement can fulfill its intended purpose with adequate routine care and maintenance. Applicants should refer to [50 CFR §§86.73–86.74](#) when estimating useful life. For project elements that are not capital improvements, applicants should use the same principles, as applicable, to develop a reasonable estimate of expected service life.

## Geographic Location/Drawings/Maps/Photographs

### **(20-page limit)**

Proposals will be reviewed, in part, based on the quality of access provided to eligible vessels to significant destinations, services, and other amenities. In addition to addressing the project location generally in the Project Narrative, please provide additional context by visually depicting the following:

- A small State map showing the general location of the project;
- A local map showing the facility location and the nearest community, public road, and navigable water body;
- The location of the project site using Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in the following format: degrees:minutes:seconds;
- All existing structures, facilities, and amenities;
- All proposed project components;
- Clearly marked areas that are for (1) eligible transient recreational vessels, (2) others, and (3) shared use;

- Water depths;
- Measurements for all docks, bulkheads, breakwaters, and other features where boats will be accommodated;
- Maps or images showing proximity or distances to significant destinations, services that support eligible users, terrain considerations, access, or other information applicable to the project;
- Any other map, image, or graphic that supports the information provided in the Project Narrative;
- Any other information that will assist reviewers in identifying project components, evaluating eligibility, determining prorated costs or benefits, or assessing ranking criteria.

## Budget Narrative

### (No Page Limit)

This section should clearly explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. There must be a clear connection between the costs and the proposed project activities.

The budget narrative shall include:

- Explanation and description of the resources used to develop cost estimates for the project.
- Any federally funded equipment, if applicable, including the funding source.
  - Equipment includes tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. A list of equipment to be purchased with BIG funds must be provided in the budget.
- Acknowledgment signage must be included in the project budget.
  - Costs associated with fabricating and installing the required acknowledgment sign(s) are eligible for reimbursement under the BIG Program and should be included in the project budget.
- Contingency costs, if applicable, as a separate budget line item.
  - If included, contingency costs must be necessary and reasonable for the proper and efficient completion of the project or program objectives.
  - Costs must be verifiable from the applicant's financial records.
  - Applicants must describe how contingency costs were calculated and why they are necessary to improve the precision of budget estimates.
- Anticipated program income, if applicable, as a separate budget line item.
  - Program income is gross income earned that is directly generated by a grant-supported activity or earned as a result of the grant during the period of performance. Applicants must identify any anticipated program income in the project budget. Program income earned before grant closeout must be deducted from the Federal share of project costs.
- Match and other partner contributions must be clearly identified in the project budget.
  - Applicants are required to provide at least 25% of the total allowable project costs.
  - All cash matching funds must come from non-Federal sources.
  - Describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefit completion of the project.
- Prorated costs, if applicable, must be clearly identified in the project budget.

- Costs for facilities that will benefit operators of boats other than eligible transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that share landside facilities shall be prorated.
  - Examples include fuel docks, restrooms, showers, pump-out stations, and other facilities that serve both eligible and ineligible users.
  - Costs associated with facilities, amenities, or infrastructure that are dedicated exclusively to eligible transient recreational users may not require proration, as determined by DCM and USFWS based on the scope of the project.
- Applicants must clearly state:
  - The basis or method used to allocate costs between eligible and ineligible users.
  - The reasoning and evidence supporting the use of this method.
  - Why prorating is not necessary, if applicable.

**NOTE:** The budget must account for the Buy American Provision for Infrastructure and describe how this requirement will be met (see [FY 2026 NOFO, Page 21 - Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#)).

## Budget Table

In addition to the Budget Narrative, applicants must provide the project's estimated budget in a table, rounding costs to the nearest dollar. The Budget Table shall identify each major project component and its estimated cost using reasonable, supportable cost estimates. The table shall reflect the total project cost and, if applicable, the eligible prorated cost, and shall provide a breakdown of requested Federal funds and matching funds by major project component.

When project costs are prorated, applicants must calculate the eligible percentage to four decimal places and apply it consistently throughout the budget. All budgeted costs should be rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

Table 2 provides an example budget for a mixed-use facility that benefits only a portion of eligible transient recreational vessels. In this example, costs are prorated using a transient-use percentage calculated to four decimal places, followed by application of the required minimum 25% non-Federal cash match to determine the Federal funding request. Applicants proposing a non-Federal match greater than the required minimum must calculate and report the actual match percentage to four decimal places.

### Example Proration Calculation:

- Total dockage: **2,465 linear feet**
- Eligible transient dockage: **1,426 linear feet**
- Transient-use percentage:  **$1,426 \div 2,465 = 57.8499\%$**

Table 2. Example budget demonstrating the calculation of eligible project costs for a mixed-use facility based on a prorated transient-use percentage. Eligible project costs are calculated by applying the transient-use percentage to the total cost of each applicable project component. The minimum required non-Federal cash match is calculated as 25% of the eligible transient share, and the Federal funding request is calculated as the eligible transient share minus the required non-Federal cash match. Dollar amounts are rounded to the nearest whole dollar.

COMPONENT	TOTAL COST (\$)	ELIGIBLE TRANSIENT SHARE (\$)	NON-FEDERAL MATCH (\$)	FEDERAL REQUEST (\$)
Design	30,000	17,355	4,339	13,016
Pre-constructed Dock	300,000	173,550	43,388	130,162
Mobilization & Assembly	38,500	22,272	5,568	16,704
Dock Pilings	40,000	23,140	5,785	17,355
Tie Pilings	1,600	926	232	694
Gangway	5,000	2,892	723	2,169
Electric System	150,000	86,775	21,694	65,081
Water System	70,000	40,495	10,124	30,371
Signage	1,000	578	145	433
Contingency	55,140	31,898	7,975	23,923
<b>Total (\$):</b>	<b>691,240</b>	<b>399,881</b>	<b>99,973</b>	<b>299,908</b>
<b>Applicable Percentage:</b>		<b>57.8499% of Total Project Cost</b>	<b>25.0000% of Eligible Transient Share</b>	<b>75.0000% of Eligible Transient Share</b>

## Supporting Documents & Additional Information

### (20-Page Limit)

Applicants shall include supporting documentation necessary to substantiate information provided elsewhere in the proposal, including, but not limited to, the following:

- If applicable, the applicant must provide an adopted resolution by the Governing Body authorizing that a designated representative has the authority to apply for and administer the

grant on behalf of the applicant, and stating that the Governing Body is willing to enter into an agreement for the maintenance and operation of the project for its determined useful life.

- If applicable, the applicant must provide proof of existing ADA accessibility or clearly describe how the project will be designed to be fully ADA compliant.
- Applicants shall include any available permitting information relevant to the proposed project.
  - If applicable, applicants should describe any coordination that has occurred with Federal, State, or local permitting agencies.
  - If permits have already been obtained for the proposed project, copies should be included with the application.
  - DCM may consult with agency staff during application review to identify potential permitting concerns or regulatory constraints associated with the proposed project
- Documentation supporting the Useful Life Estimate provided by the applicant.
- Any additional supporting documents relevant to the proposal.

## Ranking Criteria

The criteria for evaluating and ranking proposals are established in [50 CFR Part 86 Subpart E](#). Applicants must address all applicable ranking criteria identified in the current Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). DCM will use these criteria to evaluate and rank both Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications, even though the Federal ranking criteria are provided only in the Tier 2 NOFO. Tier 1 and Tier 2 applications may receive additional points for providing a non-Federal cash match that exceeds the minimum required 25 percent.

Receiving a BIG award is a competitive process. Applications will be evaluated solely on the information provided in the submitted application package. To ensure fairness and consistency among applicants, DCM is not required to request clarification, additional information, or corrections after an application has been submitted. DCM cannot assist applicants in preparing proposals or reviewing draft applications prior to submission.

Applicants are not required to submit a separate response to the ranking criteria. Instead, applicants should ensure that the information provided throughout the application package adequately addresses each applicable ranking criterion and supports evaluation of the proposal. Information contained in the Project Narrative, Budget Narrative, maps, drawings, photographs, and supporting documentation will be used to evaluate and score applications. Applicants should provide sufficient detail throughout the application package to allow reviewers to assess each applicable criterion.

DCM will conduct an initial review of all applications to verify eligibility, completeness, and consistency with program requirements. Eligible and complete applications will then be evaluated and ranked according to the criteria established in the BIG regulations and the applicable NOFO. DCM will submit the highest-ranked eligible Tier 1 application(s) and the highest-ranked eligible Tier 2 application to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for consideration, subject to available funding and program requirements.

The following tables summarize the ranking criteria used to evaluate applications. Detailed descriptions of the Federal ranking criteria are provided in the applicable NOFO and 50 CFR Part 86. The tables also

identify North Carolina-specific evaluation criteria established by DCM. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that sufficient information is provided throughout the application package to allow reviewers to evaluate each applicable criterion. Applicants should also review the [North Carolina-specific administrative requirements](#), program policies, and application guidance described elsewhere in this Guide.

Table 3. Ranking Criteria Summary and CFR Reference List

RANKING CRITERION	REFERENCE	EVALUATION FOCUS
<b>Need for More or Improved Boating Infrastructure</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.52</a>	Demonstrates a need for additional or improved boating infrastructure for eligible transient recreational vessels.
<b>Benefits to Eligible Users Justify Project Cost</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.53</a>	Demonstrates that the benefits provided to eligible users justify the proposed project cost.
<b>Access to Significant Destinations and Services</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.54</a>	Provides access to destinations, amenities, services, or attractions that support transient boater travel.
<b>Additional Cash Match</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.56</a>	Provides cash match above the minimum required non-Federal share.
<b>Partner Contributions</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.57</a>	Includes meaningful contributions from project partners that directly support project implementation or project objectives.
<b>Improved User Access</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.58</a>	Includes physical components, technology, or techniques that improve access for eligible users.
<b>Innovation</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.59</a>	Incorporates innovative components, technology, or techniques that improve project performance, operation, maintenance, resilience, or user experience.
<b>Environmental Compliance, Sustainability, and Stewardship</b>	<a href="#">50 CFR §86.60</a>	Demonstrates environmental stewardship, sustainability, and commitment to environmental compliance.
<b>Clean Marina Designation</b>	<a href="#">NC-Specific Guidance</a>	Demonstrates a commitment to environmental stewardship through participation in the North Carolina Clean Marina Program.

## Ranking Criteria for Points

Table 4. Tier 1 and Tier 2 Ranking Criteria

RANKING CRITERIA	
<b>1. NEED, ACCESS, AND COST EFFICIENCY</b>	20 Total Possible Points
<a href="#">50 CFR § 86.52, § 86.53, § 86.54</a>	
<b>Need:</b> Will the proposed project meet a need for more or improved facilities? Is the need clearly identified in the proposal?	0 - 10

<p><i>For example, what will the proposed project provide that is not currently available at other local facilities? This may include transient dockage, restrooms, fuel, pumpout facilities, safe harbor, accessibility improvements, or other eligible boating infrastructure. If the project would increase transient dockage in the local area, applicants should provide data demonstrating the need for additional transient slips.</i></p>	
<p><b>Benefits:</b> Will eligible users receive benefits from the proposed project that justify the cost of the project?</p> <p><i>Applicants should describe the benefits provided to eligible transient recreational boaters and explain how those benefits justify the proposed project cost. Benefits should be clearly related to the identified need for the project.</i></p>	0 - 7
<p><b>Access:</b> Will the proposed project accommodate boater access to significant destinations and services that support transient boater travel?</p> <p><i>For example, does the project provide access to destinations, services, amenities, attractions, events, or other resources that support transient recreational boaters?</i></p>	0 - 3
<b>2. PARTNERSHIPS</b>	3 Total Possible Points
50 CFR § 86.57	
<p><b>Partnership Contributions:</b> Will the proposed project include contributions by public or private partners that directly support project implementation or achievement of project objectives?</p> <p><i>Examples may include financial contributions, technical expertise, planning assistance, permitting support, operation or maintenance commitments, or other actions that directly contribute to completion of the project. Applicants should clearly describe the role of each partner and how their contribution supports the proposed project.</i></p>	0 – 3
<b>3. INNOVATION</b>	6 Total Possible Points
50 CFR §86.58, §86.59, § 86.60	
<p><b>Environmental Stewardship:</b> Has the facility where the project is located demonstrated a</p>	0 - 1

<p>commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship and been officially recognized by an agency or organization?</p> <p><i>You must provide documentation supporting any recognition.</i></p>	
<p><b>Innovation:</b> Will the proposed project include innovative physical components, technology, or techniques that improve the BIG-funded project?</p> <p><i>Examples include physical components, technology, or techniques that extend the useful life of the BIG-funded project, reduce costs, improve operations, increase resilience, or reduce negative environmental impacts.</i></p>	0 - 2
<p><b>User Access:</b> Will the proposed project include physical components, technology, or techniques that improve eligible-user access?</p> <p><i>For example, improvements that enhance Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, or other physical components, technology, or techniques that improve access for eligible users. Applicants should describe the existing condition, the proposed improvement, and how the proposed project will improve access beyond existing conditions.</i></p>	0 - 3
<b>4. NC-SPECIFIC CRITERIA</b>	<b>3 Total Possible Points</b>
<u><a href="#">North Carolina-Specific Requirements</a></u>	
<p><b>Clean Marina:</b> Is the marina currently designated as a <a href="#">North Carolina Clean Marina</a>?</p> <p><i>For example, applicants may describe the Marina’s current Clean Marina status and should describe how the proposed project will complement or enhance existing environmental stewardship practices.</i></p>	0 - 3
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL MATCH</b>	
<u>50 CFR § 86.56</u>	
<p><b>Additional Cash Match:</b> Will the proposed project include private, local, or State funds greater than the required minimum non-Federal match?</p> <p><i>Proposals may receive up to seven additional points for providing a cash match above the</i></p>	0 – 7 (See cash match scoring table below)

<i>required minimum non-Federal match. These points are added to the 32 points from the previous ranking criteria, for a maximum possible score of 39.</i>	
<b>PERCENT NON-FEDERAL CASH MATCH (%)</b>	
0 – 25	0
26 – 30	1
31 – 35	2
36 – 40	3
41 – 45	4
46 – 50	5
51 – 80	6
81 OR HIGHER	7
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>	<b>39</b>

## PROJECT LIFECYCLE

This section provides a simplified overview of the key stages of a Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) project from award through long-term compliance. Applicants should use this timeline to understand when work may begin, when funds may be accessed, and when project requirements must be completed.

**(See timeline on the following page)**

# Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program Project Lifecycle

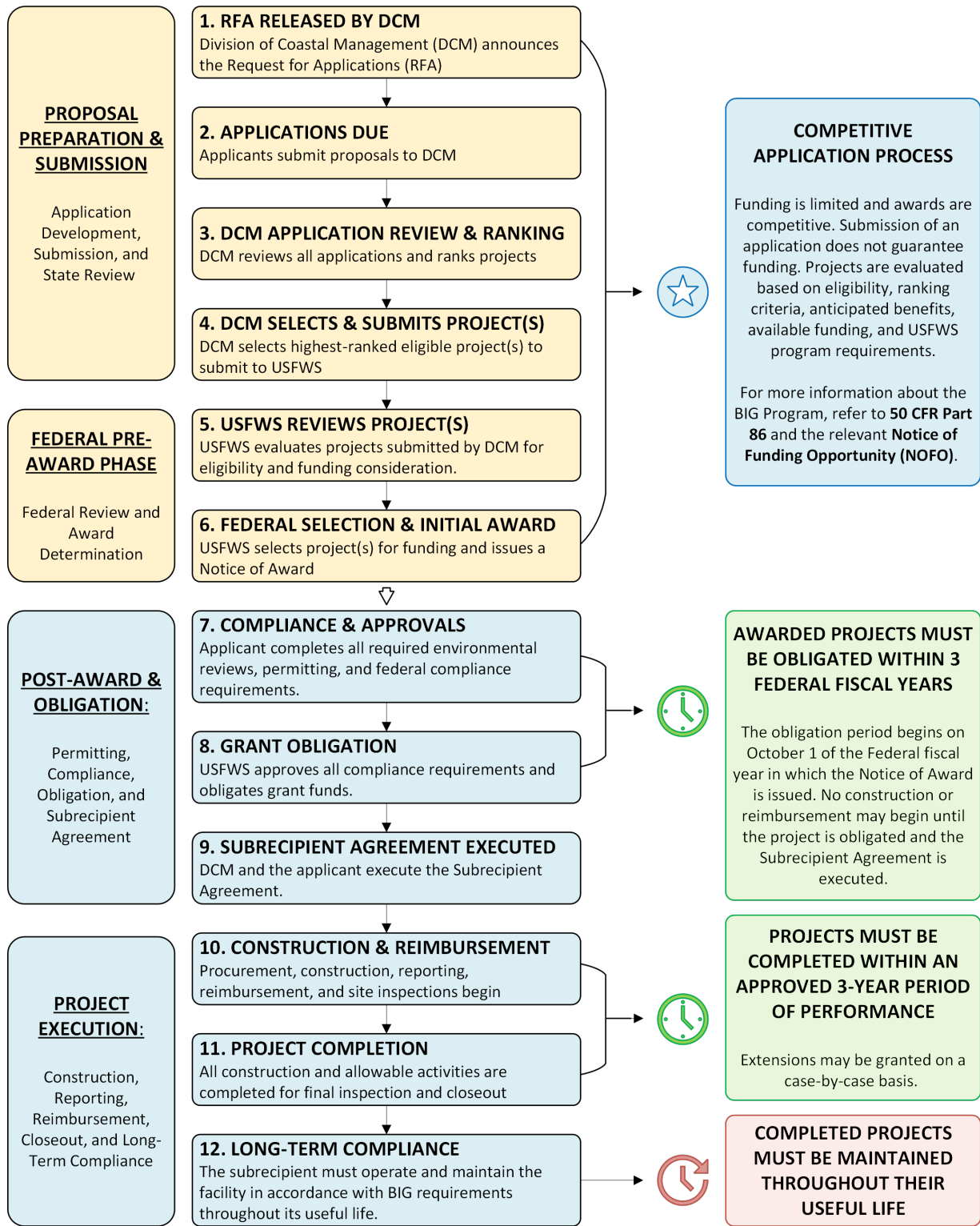


Figure 1. BIG Program Timeline Overview. General overview of the major phases and milestones associated with a Boating Infrastructure Grant project, from application development through long-term compliance.

## Pre-Award Phase

For purposes of this Guide, project development, application preparation, and submission to DCM occur prior to the Federal Pre-Award Phase. During this period, applicants are responsible for developing their proposed project, obtaining available supporting information, and submitting a complete application package to DCM in response to the Request for Applications (RFA). DCM will review submitted applications and select eligible projects for submission to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Therefore, the Pre-Award Phase refers to the period between DCM's submission of a selected application to USFWS and the Agency's selection of a project for award.

During this period, applicants may continue project planning and development activities. Selection for an award does not constitute authorization to begin project implementation. **Except for approved pre-award costs, no work associated with the proposed project may begin until DCM has executed a Subrecipient Agreement (contract) with the selected applicant.**

Applicants incur any pre-award costs at their own risk. Pre-award costs are reimbursable only if they are eligible under the BIG Program, approved by USFWS, and included in the Federal award. If the project is not selected for funding or the costs are not approved, the applicant is responsible for all expenses incurred.

## Pre-Award Costs

**Pre-award costs are incurred at the applicant's own risk.** Pre-award costs will be reimbursable only if they are explicitly identified and requested in the grant application. Eligible pre-award costs must be necessary and reasonable for completing the project and must receive prior written approval from DCM and USFWS before the activity begins. Costs incurred prior to written approval from DCM and USFWS are not eligible for reimbursement.

Approval of pre-award costs does not guarantee reimbursement, nor does it constitute approval of the proposed project or satisfaction of any compliance or permitting requirements. Reimbursement is contingent upon grant award, obligation of funds, and compliance with all applicable grant requirements. Construction activities and construction-related costs are not eligible as pre-award costs.

Examples of eligible pre-award costs may include:

- Conducting appraisals
- Administering environmental reviews and permitting
- Conducting technical feasibility studies, for example, studies about environmental, economic, and construction engineering concerns
- Carrying out site surveys and engaging in site planning
- Preparing cost estimates
- Preparing working drawings, construction plans, and specifications.

**Applicants must maintain documentation sufficient to support the necessity, reasonableness, and eligibility of all pre-award costs.**

## Award

Following review of submitted applications, USFWS will identify projects for funding and notify DCM of those selected for award. Selection of a project for award by USFWS is a preliminary funding determination and does not constitute an obligation of funds. Projects selected for award must complete all required environmental compliance reviews and permitting requirements before funds may be obligated and a Federal Notice of Award issued.

During this phase:

- USFWS notifies DCM that the applicant's project has been selected for funding.
- The project is not yet authorized for construction or reimbursement.
- Applicants may continue planning and completing pre-award activities, such as permitting, engineering, environmental review, and other approved project development activities.
- All work performed prior to obligation is at the applicant's own risk unless specifically approved as a pre-award cost.
- DCM and USFWS will work with the applicant to complete all required environmental compliance reviews and permitting requirements before the project may proceed to obligation.

## Compliance Documentation

Projects selected for funding must comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local environmental review, permitting, and regulatory requirements. Applicants are encouraged to begin obtaining permits and supporting documentation during the pre-award phase to avoid project delays.

The permits, approvals, and consultations listed below represent the most common requirements for BIG-funded projects but may not be exhaustive. Depending on the nature and location of the proposed project, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), DCM, or other regulatory agencies may require additional permits, consultations, approvals, or supporting documentation before the project can be obligated or implemented.

The following permits, approvals, and consultations may be required depending on the nature and location of the project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
  - Federal permits or authorizations may be required for activities occurring in navigable waters, wetlands, or other regulated areas.
- NC Division of Water Resources (DWR)
  - State water quality consultations or other approvals may be required depending on project impacts.
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
  - Consultation may be required to evaluate potential impacts to federally listed species, designated critical habitat, Essential Fish Habitat, or other protected marine resources. Applicants may be required to provide information to support consultation efforts.
- NC Division of Coastal Management (DCM)
  - State and local permits may be required under the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA). Applicants may be required to provide information necessary to support permit review.

- Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973
  - USFWS will complete any required consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as part of the Federal grant review process. Applicants may be required to provide supporting information.
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
  - USFWS will complete any required environmental review under NEPA as part of the Federal grant review process. Applicants may be required to provide information, studies, plans, or other documentation necessary to support that review.
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
  - Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office may be required to evaluate potential impacts to historic properties, archaeological resources, or other cultural resources.
- Tribal Consultation
  - USFWS will conduct any required Tribal consultation as part of the Federal environmental review process. Applicants may be asked to provide information needed to support consultation efforts.

## Obligation

Following completion of all required environmental compliance reviews, permitting requirements, and supporting documentation, USFWS may obligate funds for the project and issue a Federal Notice of Award to DCM. The obligation of funds represents the federal commitment to funding the approved project.

During this phase:

- Obligation occurs after all required federal environmental reviews, permits, and compliance requirements are completed and approved by USFWS.
- No construction or reimbursement may begin until the project is obligated and the Subrecipient Agreement is executed between the subrecipient and the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).
- Projects must be obligated within three (3) years of the federal award date.
  - Delays in completing required environmental compliance, permitting, consultation, or other pre-obligation requirements may place the award at risk of withdrawal.

## Subrecipient Agreement

Once the grant has been obligated, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issues a Notice of Award; only then can the Subrecipient Agreement (contract) between the subrecipient and the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) be issued.

The Subrecipient Agreement establishes the terms and conditions of the grant. Construction activities may not begin until the grant has been obligated and the Subrecipient Agreement has been fully executed (signed by both the subrecipient and DEQ).

Applicants must complete the project within the period of performance unless they ask for and receive a grant extension. The period of performance for a given project shall not exceed three (3) years.

## Project Amendments

Once the Subrecipient Agreement is fully executed, any change to the agreement will require authorization from DCM and USFWS.

Examples of project amendments may include:

- Changes to the approved scope of work or project design;
- Addition, removal, or modification of project components;
- Changes to the project schedule or period of performance;
- Reallocation of funds between major budget categories;
- Changes affecting environmental compliance, permitting, or other regulatory approvals;
- Changes to the ownership, operation, or management of the BIG-funded facility; or
- Any other substantive change that affects the approved project.

## Extension Requests

Projects must be completed within the approved period of performance identified in the Subrecipient Agreement. If a project cannot be completed within the approved period of performance, the Subrecipient should notify DCM in writing as soon as reasonably practicable and may request an extension.

Extension requests must be submitted in writing to DCM before the end of the current period of performance and must include:

- A description of the work completed to date;
- A description of the remaining work to be completed;
- An explanation of the reason(s) for the delay;
- The current status of the project, including the budget; and
- Assurance that all other applicable grant requirements have been or will be met.

Extension requests are considered project amendments and require approval by DCM and USFWS. Approval is not automatic and will be evaluated based on project progress, the reason for the delay, and the Subrecipient's ability to successfully complete the project.

Additional extensions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests for additional extensions must demonstrate that the delay was not the result of inaction, poor planning, or mismanagement and that project objectives can be achieved within the requested extension period.

## Procurement & Contracting

Subrecipients must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local procurement requirements when acquiring goods and services using BIG funds. Procurement records must be maintained and made available upon request. Failure to comply with procurement requirements may result in disallowed costs and repayment of grant funds.

## Project Management

It is the Subrecipient's responsibility to contract, manage, and inspect all aspects of grant projects, including the construction contract, materials purchases, engineering, master planning, and labor performed at any project site. Any project deficiencies shall be corrected by the Subrecipient prior to final project close-out and payment. DCM may restrict the payment of all or part of the grant funds pending correction of such deficiencies.

## Reporting Requirements

During the grant period, the Subrecipient must:

- Submit quarterly progress reports
- Notify DCM of project delays or issues
- Report periods of inactivity, and
- Request approval before making changes to the approved project.
  - Changes to the approved project may require a project amendment.

## Inspections

DCM staff may inspect all grant project site work prior to, during, and upon completion to ensure compliance with the contract between DEQ and the Subrecipient.

## Project Reimbursement & Closeout

BIG grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. Subrecipients are responsible for paying project costs and then requesting reimbursement from DCM. Grant funds will be reimbursed to the Subrecipient for eligible expenditures as requested or upon final completion of the project. DCM may conduct site inspections to verify completed work before approving reimbursement requests.

Requests for payment must include all necessary forms and documentation (detailed invoices, copies of all receipts and original invoices received from contractors approved for payment, and the accompanying pay statements to receive payments). Payment will only be made for documented and verified costs.

**DCM will reimburse only after the grantee's required local cash match has been met.** No grant funds may be disbursed until a grantee meets its local cash match. DCM will not pre-approve or disburse program funds in advance under any circumstances.

Additionally, DCM will authorize no more than 90% of the total anticipated project cost prior to completion. The final 10% will be withheld until a final inspection of the work is completed and all required deliverables have been received.

Upon project completion, the Subrecipient shall notify the Program Administrator and arrange an on-site project inspection. Upon approval and/or correction of any identified defects, the Subrecipient may submit the Closeout Package that includes all necessary forms and documentation (detailed invoices, copies of all receipts and original invoices received from contractors approved for payment, and the accompanying pay statements to receive payments).

In order to receive payment, subrecipients will need to register with the State of North Carolina's eProcurement system using the following website: <https://eprocurement.nc.gov/training/vendor-training/registering-evp>

## Cost Overruns

The Subrecipient shall make every effort to avoid cost overruns on the project. If the total project cost exceeds the grant amount and match, the Subrecipient assumes responsibility for any additional costs.

## LONG-TERM COMPLIANCE

BIG-funded facilities are subject to long-term compliance requirements for the duration of their approved useful life. Following project completion, the Subrecipient is responsible for operating, maintaining, and managing the facility in accordance with the Federal award, the Subrecipient Agreement, and all applicable BIG Program requirements. The facility must continue to serve its authorized purpose and remain available to eligible transient recreational boaters throughout its useful life.

### Useful Life Requirements

The Subrecipient is responsible for ensuring that the BIG-funded facility complies with all requirements of the Subrecipient Agreement throughout the approved useful life of the project.

For purposes of the BIG Program, useful life means the period during which a BIG-funded capital improvement can fulfill its intended purpose with adequate routine care and maintenance. A capital improvement is generally a structure costing at least \$25,000 to construct, or a repair or renovation costing at least \$25,000 that extends the structure's useful life by 10 years or more. Although project elements that do not meet the capital improvement threshold are not considered capital improvements under the BIG Program, applicants are still expected to provide an estimated useful life for those elements as part of the application.

The Subrecipient must operate the facility for the purpose authorized under the BIG award and ensure that the facility remains open, operational, and accessible to eligible transient recreational boaters throughout the approved useful life.

The Subrecipient must not alter the ownership, purpose, or use of the BIG-funded facility, as described in the approved project statement, without prior written approval from DCM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR). This includes the removal, conversion to another use, or substantial alteration of the facility. The Subrecipient shall notify DCM prior to any proposed sale, transfer, lease, or change in ownership, operation, or control of the BIG-funded facility during the approved useful life.

Awarded Subrecipients must also record a Notice of Federal Participation in the appropriate real property records for all BIG-funded real property in accordance with [50 CFR 86.18](#). The Notice of Federal Participation documents the Federal interest in the property for the duration of the approved useful life of the project.

### Maintenance Responsibility

The Subrecipient is responsible for operating and maintaining the BIG-funded facility throughout its useful life. All BIG-funded infrastructure must be maintained in a safe, functional, and serviceable condition for the use and enjoyment of the public.

The Subrecipient is responsible for all costs associated with the operation, maintenance, repair, and management of the BIG-funded facility during the useful life period.

Any significant event affecting the facility's operation or condition, including vandalism, flooding, fire, hurricane damage, or other events requiring corrective action, must be promptly reported to DCM. Repair and restoration of the facility are the responsibility of the Subrecipient.

Any temporary closure, restriction of access, or interruption of services that affects the availability of the BIG-funded facility to transient recreational boaters should be reported to DCM.

## Public Access Requirements

The Subrecipient must provide public access to all BIG-funded facilities throughout the useful life of the project in accordance with [50 CFR §86.92](#).

For purposes of the BIG Program, public access means access by eligible users for eligible activities, or by other users for activities that support or do not interfere with the purpose of the BIG-funded project.

The Subrecipient must:

- Allow public access to all BIG-funded facilities during their useful life;
- Provide reasonable public access to other portions of the facility that would normally be open to the public;
- Ensure access is not restricted in a manner that discriminates against any member of the public, including maintaining ADA accessibility;
- Maintain the facility in a location that is accessible to the public; and
- Keep the facility open for reasonable periods of time.

Public access may be temporarily restricted due to emergencies, repairs, construction activities, safety concerns, or seasonal closures consistent with normal business operations. Any extended closure or restriction affecting the availability of the BIG-funded facility should be reported to DCM.

## Monitoring & Inspections

DCM may monitor BIG-funded facilities throughout their useful life to ensure continued compliance with applicable program requirements.

The Subrecipient shall allow DEQ/DCM authorized representatives reasonable access to the facility during the useful life of the facility for the purpose of conducting site visits, inspections, and compliance reviews.

As part of these reviews, DCM may request maintenance records, facility-use information, photographs, or other documentation necessary to verify that the facility is properly maintained, remains operational, and continues to serve eligible transient recreational boaters.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Because this is the first year the Division of Coastal Management (DCM) is accepting applications to the North Carolina Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program, DCM is developing a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to address common applicant questions. The FAQ will be updated periodically and posted on the [NC BIG Program website](#).

In the meantime, applicants should refer to the applicable U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), this Guide, and the applicable Federal regulations in 50 CFR Part 86 for program requirements and guidance. Applicants are also encouraged to contact the North Carolina BIG Program Coordinator with questions:

- **Kasen Wally**, BIG Program Coordinator  
NC Division of Coastal Management  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Office: (252) 515-5424  
[Kasen.Wally@deq.nc.gov](mailto:Kasen.Wally@deq.nc.gov)
- North Carolina BIG Program Email: [NCBIG@deq.nc.gov](mailto:NCBIG@deq.nc.gov)