



Florida Fish  
and Wildlife  
Conservation  
Commission

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Division of Law  
Enforcement

Boating and  
Waterways Section

Boating Safety  
Program

620 South Meridian  
Street  
Tallahassee, FL  
32399-1600

Tel: (850) 488-5600  
Fax: (850) 488-9284

# Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program

## Guidelines

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## SECTION I – PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

### 1.1 Purpose

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Commission) pursuant to Sections 206.606 and 327.47, F.S., is charged with providing funding through competitive grants for projects designed to serve the needs of boaters and boating-related activities on coastal and/or inland waters within the State. General provisions, requirements, and information stated herein, together with attachments, and applicable laws and rules, incorporated herein by reference, constitute the policies and guidelines of the Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program.

### 1.2 Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program

The Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program is established in accordance with ss. 20.331(7)(e)1 and 327.47. This grant program is administered by the Commission and provides competitive grant funding assistance to local, regional and/or statewide projects targeting improved boating safety education among Florida's boating public. Priority consideration will be given to projects designed to both complement and reinforce the Commission's critical boating safety messaging based on the analysis of Florida's annual boating accident statistics.

## SECTION II– DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided for further explanation of terms stated herein and shall have the meanings indicated which are applicable to both the singular and plural thereof:

**AGREEMENT:** Written document under which the Recipient and Commission mutually agree to carry out respective responsibilities for a fixed period, unless amended by mutual consent.

**AGREEMENT PERIOD:** Number of days or the dates stated in the Agreement to complete the Project.

**APPLICANT:** Eligible participant that submits an Application for Program Funds to the Commission during an announced Application Submission Period.

**APPLICATION:** A formal request for Program funds by an Applicant on the form approved by the Commission and with required documentation.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION PERIOD:** The formally announced period of time provided by the Commission for the submission of Applications by eligible participants for Program Funds.

**COMMISSION:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

**MARINA:** Licensed commercial facility which provides secured public moorings or dry storage for vessels on a leased basis.

**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR:** The Commission's staff member designated by the Director, Division of Law Enforcement, to manage the Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program.

**PROGRAM FUNDS:** Funds appropriated for the Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program as specified in Sections 206.606 and 370.0603, Florida Statutes.

**PROJECT:** Initiatives, educational products, and information delivery components designed to provide boat owners, operators and passengers with enhanced awareness of safe boating practices.

**PROJECT COMPLETION CERTIFICATION:** Form completed by the Recipient certifying that the Project is completed in accordance with the Agreement.

**RECIPIENT:** The Applicant that has been awarded Program funds and party responsible for completing the project and reporting outcomes to the Commission.

## **SECTION III– ELIGIBILITY**

### **3.1 Eligible Participants**

Eligible participants shall include county governments and municipalities of the State of Florida and registered 501-C3 Not-For-Profit organizations that have a proven record of direct involvement in boating safety education initiatives in Florida.

## **SECTION IV– USE OF GRANT FUNDS**

### **4.1 Eligible Uses of Grant Funds**

Boating Safety and Education Grant Program funds are only to be used for the development and implementation of local, regional and/or statewide projects targeting improved boater awareness of safe boating practices among Florida's boating public. Innovative projects are encouraged, especially those that complement and reinforce the Commission's critical boating safety messaging based on the analysis of Florida's annual boating accident statistics and include a system of measuring project effectiveness. Funding assistance must enhance recreational boating safety through projects including, but not limited to:

- Radio, television, Internet and print media outreach to recreational boaters
- Local area boating guides with primary emphasis on critical boating safety topics

- Efforts aimed at enrolling boaters in boating safety education courses approved by both the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the State of Florida. May also include enhancing the delivery of boating safety courses to improve quality controls.
- Construction of boating safety informational kiosks at recreational boating access locations
- Research relating to improving boat operator awareness of safe boating practices
- Initiatives to promote voluntary wearing of life jackets, including expanded boater knowledge and use of inflatable life jackets while boating

#### **4.2 Ineligible Uses of Program Funds**

Program funds will not be awarded for projects that do not directly relate to the enhancement of boating safety within the state. Costs listed below are **not** eligible for reimbursement under this Program:

- Costs for the construction or repair of any facilities related to boating access (other than kiosks as stated above).
- Application preparation costs. This includes overhead, payroll, salaries or accounting costs.
- Costs related to the acquisition of real property.
- Costs for any legal fees.
- Costs associated with ordinary operation, maintenance or routine minor repairs of the proposed project. This includes costs to provide utilities or services to any facility.
- Costs associated with the acquisition or use of any type of equipment such as computers, projectors, vehicles or other capital equipment.
- Costs associated or directly related to a component of a project that would create or increase a boating safety hazard.
- Costs for any type of general business or promotional plans.

#### **4.3 Matching Fund Requirements: Cash Funds**

Applicants do not have to provide cash matching funds to the project. However, the Commission encourages Applicants to provide the highest amount of cash matching funds to reduce the total amount of grant funds requested.

Cash matching funds may be in the form of the following:

- Services paid for by the Applicant for consultant services.

- Other expenditures paid by the Applicant directly related to boating safety education and not listed as ineligible costs.

Applicants are encouraged to seek other sources of cash matching funds from other local, state or federal grants to help leverage the maximum amount of grant funds available.

#### **4.4 Matching Fund Requirements: Non-Cash Funds (In-kind Service)**

Applicants must identify and agree to furnish some form of in-kind matching funds to the project.

Non-cash matching funds include the cost of administrative/contract management, engineering/construction management, labor, materials, and equipment provided through in-house resources of the Applicant.

Applicants may not provide more than 5% of the total project cost for project administration and 15% of the total project cost for project design and management.

#### **4.5 Advanced Funds**

The Commission will not approve a request for any advance in Program Funds. The Recipient must have the financial capability to process invoices and make timely payments to contractors, vendors, etc. pending receipt of Program funds for reimbursement of project expenses.

#### **4.6 Pre-Award Costs**

Project costs will not be approved for any portion of a project initiated or completed prior to the award of the Agreement, unless specifically requested by the Applicant and pre-approved by the Commission and a provision included in the Agreement. Preliminary costs may include any of the following activities completed before signing the Agreement: feasibility studies, site surveys and site planning, cost estimates, drafts of proposed publications and working drawings/specifications.

#### **4.7 Phased Projects**

Applications for large projects may be submitted in phases, over several years, to maximize funding; however, funding for an initial phase does not guarantee funding for subsequent phases.

#### **4.8 Appropriation**

The Commission's performance and obligation to award program grants is contingent upon an annual appropriation by the Florida Legislature.

## 4.9 Distribution of Funds

Pursuant to Legislative appropriation each fiscal year, funds will be distributed in a manner to maximize the overall benefit to the state's recreational boating safety program. The Commission will make every effort to maximize funding through possible redistribution, the use of additional funding sources, and advising Applicants on methods to submit large projects in phases to better leverage available funding.

## SECTION V- APPLICATION PROCESS

### 5.1 Submission Period

Pursuant to annual Legislative appropriation, the Commission will formally announce the application submission period in the "Florida Administrative Weekly" and will notify all eligible participants who have contacted the Commission. The deadline for applications to be submitted is 45 days following the announcement. Applications will be accepted on the following work day if the deadline falls on a weekend or holiday. The Commission will post the application period on the Boating and Waterways Section's portion of the FWC website at <http://myfwc.com/boating/grants>. The Commission may announce additional Application Submission Periods if funds become available after the initial submission period, and will return applications submitted after the deadline.

### 5.2 Submission Address

Applications must be delivered on or before the last day of the announced submission period(s), no later than the close of business to the following address:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
Division of Law Enforcement  
Boating and Waterways Section  
620 South Meridian Street, Room 235  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600

### 5.3 Application Form and Instructions

All Application Forms and Instructions are incorporated herein as Attachment I.

Instructions will include how to access the application, how to complete each section, and the correct format for submission in order for the Application to be considered complete. The Applicant shall submit both a hard (paper) copy and an electronic version saved to compact disk (CD). The correct number of copies, as indicated on the Application Form and Instructions, must be submitted or the Application will be rejected.

All sections of the Application and required attachments and/or documentation must be completed. Information not included in the application may result in the application being rejected.

#### **5.4 Cover Letter**

Applications are to be transmitted with a cover letter addressed to the Program Administrator requesting consideration of the project(s), identifying the priority of multiple projects (if applying for more than one project per application period) and any other pertinent information.

#### **5.5 Delegation of Authority**

Applications must submit formal documentation to show that the person signing the application has authority to apply for, administer and commit the governing body or not-for-profit organization to the grant project on behalf of the applicant.

#### **5.6 Application Number**

Upon closing of the application submission period, Commission staff will assign a Grant Application Number and outline the review process in an acceptance letter back to each Applicant. Grantees will use this Grant Application Number for all future correspondence regarding that Application and/or Project.

#### **5.7 Incomplete Applications**

Applications must include, at a minimum, the required attachments as indicated in the application checklist (Section VIII of the application package). Applications will be reviewed for completeness and compliance to the Policies and Guidelines and all applicable statutes and rules. The applicant will be notified by email of any portion that is considered by the Commission to be in noncompliance and given an opportunity within a specified time period to provide the necessary information or documentation. Failure to provide the requested information or documentation within this time period will result in the application being rejected.

#### **5.8 Resubmissions**

If a project is not selected for funding in a given fiscal year, a new application must be submitted for the project to be considered during a later submission period.

Approved projects with unexpended funds during the Agreement period cannot be resubmitted until a new submission period is announced.

## **5.9 Evaluation Criteria**

An eligible Application will be evaluated according to the Evaluation Criteria, incorporated herein as Attachment II. The maximum score for each factor and element is indicated in parenthesis ( ). An Evaluation Committee will assign a total point score for each Application.

## **5.10 Evaluation Committee**

The Evaluation Committee shall be comprised of the Program Administrator and no more than six (6) evaluators, appointed by the Director of the Division of Law Enforcement.

The evaluators will review and assign a score to each Application based on the Evaluation Criteria found in Attachment II. The scores assigned by individual evaluators will be used to calculate the average score, which will serve as the final score for the project. The Program Administrator will serve as chair of the Committee but will not assign a score to Applications.

## **5.11 Minimum Score**

An application must receive a minimum of 60 points (60 percent of the total possible score) to be eligible for funding.

## **5.12 Grant Awards**

Complete Applications that meet the minimum required score will be ranked on a list in descending order according to total assigned points. Grants will be awarded to the highest ranking Applications until all available funds have been awarded.

The minimum grant award will be \$10,000, and award values will normally be \$10,000 and \$25,000 per grant project.

# **SECTION VI- AGREEMENT**

## **6.1 Grant Agreement**

Upon approval of a project for funding, the Recipient and the Commission shall enter into a Grant Agreement. This Grant Agreement will describe the responsibilities of both parties, terms and conditions particular to each project, and incorporate applicable statutes, rules, and policies. Unless otherwise specified herein or in the Agreement, a project may not commence until the Grant Agreement is fully executed by all parties.

## **6.2 Term of Agreement**

The Agreement, unless modified by mutual consent of both parties, shall bind the parties as stipulated in the Agreement. Grant projects must be completed during the state fiscal year during which the grant is awarded. All grant-related requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the Commission for processing and payment in accordance with state fiscal year payment deadlines, which generally require all invoices to be submitted for payment on or before June 15.

## **6.3 Execution of Agreement**

Upon receipt of the Agreement from the Commission, the Recipient must sign the Agreement and return it to the Commission **within 90 days**. Failure to execute the Agreement within the 90-day period will render the grant null and void.

## **6.4 Agreement Funding**

The Agreement will specify which funding source will be used to fund the project and will clearly state all applicable requirements.

# **SECTION VII - COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

- 7.1** The recipient must agree to comply with all local, state, and federal regulations.
- 7.2** Failure to complete the project and make final payment request to the Commission within the stipulated period will result in project termination and possible loss of Program funds.
- 7.3** The Recipient shall inform the Commission staff of any changes or time delays incurred with the project and will provide at least 60 days notice if delays may require an amendment to the Agreement.
- 7.4** The Recipient must agree to provide, for the period of the Agreement, any and all costs for ordinary and routine operations and maintenance of the facilities that were funded in whole or in part through this Program, including equipment or service, and supplies costs.
- 7.5** The Recipient shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that programs funded, in whole or in part by Program funds, are made available to the general boating public without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.
- 7.6** Public information produced with assistance from this Program shall not be copyrighted and shall be provided free of cost, except for the cost of reproduction, to the public.
- 7.7** All plans, products, and/or deliverables associated with a grant project must be reviewed and approved by the Commission's Boating and Waterways Section prior to commencement of work. Grant-related products not receiving prior approval by the Commission will be subject to loss of Program funding.

- 7.8** Work shall begin or the project initiated within 90 days of execution of the Agreement, unless delay is of no fault of the Recipient, or the Agreement shall be cancelled.
- 7.9** The Recipient shall make every effort to avoid cost overruns on a project. If the total cost of the project exceeds the grant amount and match, the Recipient shall assume liability for any additional cost.
- 7.10** The Recipient, at its expense, shall use some manner of acknowledgement, approved by the Commission, identifying the Florida Boating Safety and Education Grant Program as a funding source for the Project.
- 7.11** A Grant Agreement may be terminated and Program Funds returned to the Commission for non-compliance with any of the terms of the Agreement or the rule and corresponding guidelines.