



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

1300 S. Evergreen Park Dr. S.W., P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

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July 27, 2017

**RE: NOTICE OF AVAILABLE FUNDS FOR RAIL SAFETY PROJECTS**

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (commission) is seeking applications to fund projects that will eliminate or mitigate public safety hazards at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way in Washington State. The commission administers the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) to provide grants to railroad companies, local governments and other agencies that propose to make safety improvements at a railroad crossing or along a railroad right-of-way. Funding is also available for safety improvements at passively-protected public and private railroad crossings. Applications will be accepted until January 2019 or until funding is depleted.

The commission will consider and select projects for funding based on the relative severity of the hazard being addressed, the safety benefits resulting from a project, the costs of implementing a project, geographic diversity, and available funds.

To apply for funding, applicants can select one of three categories described below. Applications are available on our website at [www.utc.wa.gov/publicsafety/railsafety](http://www.utc.wa.gov/publicsafety/railsafety).

**1. Safety Improvements at Passive Crossings**

Projects in this category include installing yield, stop, and emergency notification signs at passively-protected public railroad crossings and in Washington. Applicants may also apply for funding to replace or install crossbucks, posts, and retroreflective tape. The cost per crossing may not exceed \$250. The commission will not pay administrative or labor costs if administration or labor is provided by the applicant with current staff, but may pay for contracted administration or labor. Upon completion of the project, the applicant will be required to submit photographs of each crossing and complete and sign an affidavit of project completion.

## 2. Open Call for Projects

In the open call for projects, an applicant may request GCPF funding for any project that will eliminate or mitigate public safety hazards at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way in Washington. Generally, applications submitted should be related to one of the following three categories:

- **Trespass prevention projects.** Examples of projects in this category include fencing or other physical barriers that prevent trespassing on railroad rights-of-way, pedestrian warning devices, channelization devices, media or public relations campaigns, and enforcement-related activities. Note for fencing projects: Fences must meet Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) fencing standards and may not include decorative features such as vinyl-coated, slatted chain link or wood fences unless the applicant directly pays for the decorative features.
- **Private grade crossing safety improvements.** Examples of projects in this category include installation of crossing-specific warning devices such nighttime or off-hours locked gates or improvements to existing warning devices.
- **Miscellaneous safety projects.** Examples of projects in this category include improvements to motorists' ability to see approaching trains, such as the removal of physical obstructions, participation in roadway improvements at or approaching grade crossings, and mitigation of crossing closures.

The commission may limit the amount of funding per project so that an optimal number of projects may be funded with regard to available funding, relative safety benefits and project costs. The commission generally approves proposals for no more than \$20,000 for projects that do not have a cost-share or matching requirement.

In exceptional circumstances, the commission may approve an amount in excess of \$20,000 to address an immediate or significant safety problem. If the applicant requests more than \$20,000, he or she must provide sufficient justification. For example, if the amount requested represents a partial payment for a much larger project or if the applicant is providing matching or shared costs, the applicant must describe the larger project, including cost projections that describe which parties are expected to pay which portion of projected costs.

The commission will not pay administrative costs or labor costs if administration or labor is provided by the applicant with current staff, but may pay for contracted administration or labor.

The commission makes payment only on a reimbursement basis, and will not approve advance payments for any project costs.

### **3. Improvements to Active Warning Devices at Public Grade Crossings**

Improvements to active warning devices at public grade crossings follow the commission's petition process (RCW 81.53.261) and may be submitted for consideration at any time.

The GCPF rules are found in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-62-400 through 420, and are available at the commission's website.

If you are interested in applying for GCPF funding, please complete an application and send it to the commission. If funding is approved, the commission will issue an Order and a Project Agreement which must be signed by the grant recipient and returned.

For more information, please contact Betty Young at (360) 664-1202 or [byoung@utc.wa.gov](mailto:byoung@utc.wa.gov) or Lori Halstead at (360) 664-1262 or [lhalstea@utc.wa.gov](mailto:lhalstea@utc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Steven V. King  
Executive Director and Secretary