

RFP 2021-03 School Zone Safety Account Projects

Frequently Asked Questions

April 21, 2021

- **Question:** The City of Yakima will be submitting a project funding request for RRFB crossings at two locations. The locations are approximately 8 blocks apart for elementary schools, where children cross arterials. The City plans to submit one funding request inclusive of both locations, for a total estimated cost of \$45,000. If funded, the RRFBs will be purchased and installed within the 11-month timeframe. Please let us know if you have any concerns with this approach.

Response: We cannot comment at this time on the merits of your potential application. But the description sounds consistent with other applications from past years that have been submitted in response to similar RFPs.

Please note that installing the lights is not the only objective for this funding. In addition to the lights, it will likely be important for you to include the following in your application:

- 1) Communications and public outreach effort – It will likely be necessary to provide information about the new lights to the general public, especially to those individuals who have low literacy levels with reading English and those individuals who live in areas where there are multiple languages spoken other than English.
- 2) Choose sites intentionally - The application is set up to support programming that will benefit individuals and neighborhoods that have historically low investment in infrastructure. In Washington State, those areas tend to be lower income, have lower levels of literacy in reading English, and be in areas where there are more languages than English spoken. You will need to provide information about these equity and disparity measures for all sites that you intend to serve.

April 21, 2021

- **Question:** Pre-Proposal Conference Does an 11% match score the same additional 5 points as a 15% or 20% match?

Response: Yes. Any amount of cash match over 10 percent qualifies for the additional five points for the scoring.

- **Question:** Pre-Proposal Conference An example project like flashing yellow beacons may only require a couple of months, but if the applicant selects a 23-month duration, the award limits double. Are "programs" meant for the 11 vs 23-month duration and not projects? It seems a project should select 23-month duration to increase its possible award amount. Can you speak to this?

Response: The amounts listed in the RFP as maximum and minimum awards are just that. If there was a project that featured installation of, for instance, two Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFB), that work could be done within an 11- month contract period and the budget would be developed specifically for the cost of the RRFB work – not the maximum amount available. It could be possible that in a 23-month project, there would be two RRFBs installed the first year and two in the second year. Again, the budget would reflect the specific costs for the RRFBs, not the maximum amount available.

- Question:** From Pre-Proposal Conference If the applicant is a City government, which owns the roads and the police department, who is a support letter going to be from? Would the City require a letter of support from the school district?

Response: If the application comes from a city government, you will need to have a letter of support from the city, as well as from the city's police department, and the school district where the services from the award will be provided.
- Question:** From Pre-Proposal Conference Should the Letter of Support be addressed to the applicant or to WTSC?

Response: Letters of Support should be addressed to the applicant as the writers are in essence telling the applicant that they support their project.
- Question:** From Pre-Proposal Conference If the Letter of Support does not include a match commitment, does that need to be expressly stated in the letter?

Response: Yes. Reviewers will be looking for the three required letters of support – city, law enforcement, schools – and you do not want to confuse the reviewers by making it difficult for them to see whether those three letters are included in the application. This applies as well to the letter required from the WSDOT Regional Office if the proposed project will involve construction on or near a state highway.
- Question:** City of Tukwila Can an application ask for multiple flashing lights in multiple locations in a school district?

Response: The RFP is set up to focus programming on discreet geographic areas. But applying for resources to serve multiple sites is not prohibited. But the equity questions must be answered for each of the sites. And, in the case of free and reduced lunches, the percentages from each site will be averaged and that may mean fewer points than if the application had come in for a single school zone improvement.
- Question:** City of Tukwila Can staff time be counted as cash match?

Response: To be counted as match, the cost of the staff time needs to already be budgeted for and then that staff person is assigned to work on a project funded through this RFP. For instance, if the project was installing yellow flashing lights the cost of city crews doing the installation during their regular work would count as cash match.

April 20, 2021

- Question:** Is sidewalk infill in and/or near school zones an eligible expense for the WTSC grant?

Response: Sidewalk construction – even infill - is not an eligible expense with these grant funds. The only sidewalk work that could be authorized is if a section of sidewalk needed to be broken up to install a device like a warning beacon. In that case, the broken sidewalk could be replaced.
- Question:** I have one question that I did not see addressed in the FAQ's and that is the students from Uniontown go to school in Colton and our issue is our street crossings to the bus stop and then the illegal passing of the school busses. Can we apply even though we do not technically have a school zone but a school bus crossing and loading zone?

Response: One of the funding possibilities in this RFP is cameras for school buses. The cameras take pictures of license plates on vehicles that are passing the buses illegally. The

owner of the vehicle is then sent a citation for the behavior. Given your description, it seems you might be eligible to apply for funds for the bus camera intervention.

- **Question:** I am confused about the *Contractor Certification for Executive Order 18-03 form*. Is it for the city or a potential vendor to fill out if we are to obtain goods from them? Any additional explanation of the form will be greatly appreciated.

Response: Executive Order 18-03 applies to the applicant agency. 18-03 seeks to reward agencies/companies that do not require mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers. In the case of this RFP, the applicant agency gets five points if it does not require mandatory individual arbitration clauses or class or collective action waivers. And the applicant agency will get zero points if it does have these requirements.

April 16, 2021

- **Question:** Are walk/bike audit projects only allowed in relation to elementary schools, or are middle schools applicable as well?

Response: With this funding source, there is a strong preference for elementary schools because RCW [28A.160.160](#) requires that, "Each elementary school shall identify walk routes within the walk area." The purpose of these School Zone Safety Account funds is to improve safety for students however they make their way to school. The primary application of an audit would be to identify of specific routes that the school could recommend for walking and/or rolling to school. There is no authority in state law for requiring walk routes to be developed for middle schools.

April 14, 2021

- **Question:** Just a quick question on this grant. Can the project be as simple as painting new crosswalks and purchasing safety equipment and flags for student crossing guards?

Response: Yes, although there is a minimum grant amount for applications of \$30,000.00 for an 11-month grant period. Starting up – or re-supplying – a student crossing guard program is an eligible expense through this RFP. Part of that project could be painting the crosswalks that they will be working in and around. But to have a more comprehensive approach, it may be helpful to also plan for telling the community about the changes the grant would bring (if successful) and to work with parents/guardians to encourage them to allow their young students to walk and/or bicycle to school.

- **Question:** For the school zone safety grant I'm curious if the minimum and maximum grant amounts listed in the RFP (e.g., \$30,000 minimum) include the match requirements or if they should be added? For example, if we request \$30,000, the project cost should be at least \$33,000 to account for a minimum 10% match; or we request \$30,000 and the grant award will actually be \$27,000? I've seen grant matches for both of these scenarios and want to make sure I understand before applying.

Response: The minimum grant (\$30,000.00) refers to the amount requested in response to the RFP. The 10 percent cash match (\$3,000.00) will be in addition to the request, making the total project cost for a minimum grant \$33,000.00.

April 12, 2021

- **Question:** Can you provide some context on how well a proposal needs to score in order to be competitive? I see there are 300 total points available, but how high of a score does a project typically need to be funded?

Response: Every year is different, so it is difficult to answer the question the way you have asked. There are always multiple applications for the available funds each year.

2020 is not a good year for comparison. The due date for the applications coincided almost exactly with the start of Washington’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We extended the due date by a month but still only received four applications total and funded each of them. But that was an anomalous year.

Here is the experience during the two previous grant funding periods:

Application Year	# of Applications	# of Applications Funded
2018-19	24	10
2019-20	13	5

If you are interested in the RFP, it would be a good idea for you, or someone from your city, to participate in a recording of the 4/7/2021 Pre-Proposal Conference available at <https://wtsc.wa.gov/grants/school-zone-grants/>...then scroll to the middle of the page to School Walk Improvement Project Grants.

April 8, 2021

- **Question:** On page 14, it says a complete proposal packet is required for each separate project - Can you clarify what separate projects mean in this context? For instance, since Feet First works statewide, if we were to partner with two or more communities to implement the same pedestrian safety audit project, would that require separate proposals? Furthermore, walking audit projects, particularly in school zone areas, are easily accompanied by encouragement efforts to increase walking/biking participation in students to school - are those then considered two separate projects under this RFP?

Response: A certain amount of “audit” work is associated with designing and/or updating school walk areas and walk routes to identify areas that are either unsafe or are particularly good routes. So, it is assumed that a certain amount of that work is going to happen. But pedestrian and bicycle safety audits are pretty involved, and it would not be acceptable to incorporate both a full “audit” approach and school walk area/walk route work into a single project.

- **Question:** My other question is about the Letters of Support: on Page 9 it sounds like they're only required if the application itself is coming from a city, law enforcement agency, or school (i.e. not a non-profit), but on Page 28 it sounds like every application is required to have letters from all three of the listed agencies. Can you clarify that as well?

Response: The letters of support are required in all applications. In a multi-site application, it will be necessary to get letters of support from each jurisdiction. For example, if work is being done in a single school district that crosses over two cities, it will be necessary to get letters of support from the school district, but also both cities and both law enforcement agencies.

April 7, 2021 Pre-proposal conference

- **Question:** If an organization wants to do the same kind of ped/bike audit in two school communities, would that be considered one or two project proposals? Same project idea, just with multiple partners.

Response: This would be possible if there are two communities in a single identified school district. In that case, the application would need to provide data regarding the inequity and disparity questions for specific geographic focus areas in each community. The free and reduced lunch rate would be established by averaging the rates from schools in the geographic focus areas. An organization would not be able to use a single application to apply for funding for a community that is not within the identified school district boundaries.

- **Question:** A question about creating a sidewalk plan for school age children. Is that covered?

Response: There is an eligible project called Preliminary Engineering Design which could be used to provide preliminary surveys of areas needing walkway improvements to enable children to get to and from school safely. This project could also support preliminary measurements, information-gathering efforts with stakeholders, etc. A final plan would need to involve a formal development and approval process, likely involving a consulting engineer. But that final plan could include the information developed through the preliminary engineering design.

- **Question:** Could these funds be used to purchase radar message trailers that could be moved to different school zones to research best times/locations for officer to be out doing speed enforcement?

Response: The intent of the RFP is to focus these resources on geographic areas that may have had historic under-investment or disinvestment. The questions regarding inequities and disparities is intended to identify those areas. If a radar feedback sign was moved around to different sites in a city or town, each of those sites would need to be separately described in the project narrative questions dealing with inequities and disparities. There would be no restrictions, however, associated with moving the speed feedback sign to multiple locations within a reasonable distance from a single identified school or geographic area.

- **Question:** RFPB's may require electrical underground unless they are solar. Does the grant cover the installation of electrical?

Response: Yes. But we prefer to fund solar-powered equipment. Given the heavy tree cover in much of the state, operation of equipment using solar power may not be possible. So, in that case, for instance, a good argument could be made for hard wiring the devices and the costs of doing that would then be proposed as part of the project cost. Or, if the work to install the hard-wiring was donated, those expenses could be used as match. There have been concerns in the past about batteries failing in solar-powered equipment. But the technology for the solar batteries has been significantly improved and there are now vendors to buy replacement batteries from, in the unlikely event that a battery fails.

- **Question:** Is a school district allowed to submit two separate applications for projects at different schools & municipalities?

Response: This would be possible if there are two communities in the same school district. In that case, the application would need to provide data regarding the inequity and disparity questions for specific geographic focus areas in each community. The free and reduced lunch rate would be established by averaging the rates from schools in the geographic focus areas. A single school district would not be able to apply for funding for a community that is not within its boundaries.

- **Question:** If an application for RFPBs is in addition to an active project being constructed at the same time, will the project be more competitive?

Response: Supplementing existing projects or planned projects would likely result in increased points for local collaboration provided that funds from this project were not being used to reduce the cost of the other project. There are also likely scenarios in which a planned project could actually be looked at for cash match possibilities.

- **Question:** Is this grant offered yearly?

Response: Historically, that has been the case. This is the first year that we are offering the possibility of 23-month projects. So, there would not be another opportunity to apply for these funds until 2023 if all the available funding is allocated to a combination of 11-month and 23-month projects this year.

- **Question:** Are maps or photos counted towards the Narrative page limit?

Response: They are if they included as part of the project narrative. For instance, someone could include a map in the project narrative to show the geographic area to be served. However, maps, plans, charts, and reports, etc. that are submitted as supplemental information after the required narrative, timeline, and budget sections do not count toward the narrative page total. However, grant reviewers are instructed that they alone make the choice about whether to use that supplemental materials in their review and scoring processes. Large amounts of supplemental materials tend to not get used by reviewers so is likely wise to be very selective about the supplemental information included with the application.

- **Question:** Is using an excerpt to prove something better than a link?

Response: Similar to the question above, reviewers are instructed that they alone make the choice about whether to access links that are provided in an application. To increase the likelihood that the point you are trying to make is received by the reviewers, it is generally recommended to provide an excerpt or summary of the information found at the linked site, and then provide the link for those reviewers that want to find out more.

- **Question:** Can contracts be signed prior to Aug. 1?

Response: Yes. But the projects cannot officially start until August 1, 2021.

April 2, 2021

- **Question:** Gray and Osborne Engineers, Yakima Can RRFs be installed in a downtown area that is not a school zone? Students walk through the downtown area on the way to the elementary school.
Response: [The downtown sites would only qualify if they are in a school zone.](#)
- **Question:** Mike Dingle <miked@ncesd.org> Can an ESD do submissions on behalf of a school district(s)?
Response: [An ESD can apply on behalf of districts but would need to meet all of the requirements as if the districts were applying for themselves.](#)
- **Question:** Mike Dingle <miked@ncesd.org> Would school bus (red light) runner cameras be an acceptable item under this grant? If so, are there any legal issues to work with/through with local prosecutors?
Response: [Cameras on school buses is one intervention that can be supported with these funds. Getting prosecutors to actually push cases tends to be the issue. There is a detailed description of school bus cameras in the project description document \(below\).](#)

April 1, 2021

- **Question:** Assistant Planner <assistantplanner@townofcoupeville.org> We are considering safety improvements for an area where three school zones converge and where there is frequent, heavy and sometimes rushed traffic due to the nearby WA State Ferry landing at Fort Casey. Upon reviewing the eligible and ineligible expenses, and comparing it to the list of funding opportunities under this grant, we are wondering if the specific improvements we are looking at: Yellow flashing warning lights and other signage improvements such as pedestrian actuated beacons, would be counted as eligible expenses if they were to be placed permanently?
Response: [The yellow flashing lights and signage improvements are presumed to be permanent installations. The permanent improvements that are non-allowable in the grant are things like building sidewalks or trails. In the past, we've gotten inquiries about whether permanent structures to direct vehicles could be covered. And that's a no. But that same end result can be accomplished through some of the Quick Build strategies that are available.](#)
- **Question:** Jack Denison <jdenison@tonasket.wednet.edu> Could install camera systems on my buses that would capture school bus stop paddle violations using this funding opportunity?
Response: [Cameras on school buses is one intervention that can be supported with these funds. Please see the detailed explanation of projects in the RFP:](#)
- **Question:** Burnett, Julie <julie.burnett@quinault.org> Can you please send me the official RFP for the School Zone Safety? Thank you.
Response: [The RFP is available at School Safety Zone Account Projects RFP 2021-03](#)
There are also several other resources available at www.wtsc.wa.gov/grants/school-zone-grants that may be helpful to you:

[RFP response forms](#) (in Word)

[School Zone Safety Account project descriptions](#)

[RFP 2021-03 School Zone Safety Account Projects Frequently Asked Questions](#) (PDF)

[Recording of April 7, 2021 Pre-proposal Conference](#) (MP4)

[PowerPoint Slides from April 7, 2021 Pre-Proposal Conference](#) (PDF)

- **Question:** Jay Hunziker <jhunziker@ci.goldendale.wa.us> We need to replace our old flashing amber school zone signs that continue to fail when programmed and are outdated. Can these funds be used for that purpose?

Response: Yellow flashing lights and warning signals and signs can be paid for with these funds. This is a competitive process. So, to be eligible for funding, a response would need to be submitted that addresses all of the components of the application. If you are interested in submitting a response the RFP, I would strongly encourage you to participate in one of the scheduled Pre-proposal Overview presentations.

- **Question:** Gerald Grubbs <ggrubbs@starbuck.k12.wa.us> Is this an I Grants thing or will there be information on how to access these grants at the listed April meetings?

Response: This is not an I grant through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). You can access the RFP at [School Safety Zone Account Projects RFP 2021-03](#) (PDF).