

# Division of Boating and Waterways



## **Boating Facilities Development and Financing Local Assistance Grant and Loan Application Overview and Instructions**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Background**

The Department of Navigation and Ocean Development was established in 1957 with the enactment of legislation supported by the boating community. After several state government reorganizations, this boating-focused entity exists today as the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) within the Department of Parks and Recreation. The same legislation that created DBW also created a special fund, the Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund (HWRF) to fund DBW's activities, including its grant programs. HWRF resources come from revenue generated by vessel registration fees, repayments of DBW loans provided to public and private marinas, and vessel fuel tax.

## **Mission**

DBW's Mission is: To provide safe and convenient public access to California's waterways and leadership in promoting safe, enjoyable and environmentally sound recreational boating. DBW fulfills this mission by bringing together a body of knowledge as the state's expert in recreational boating-related matters, including public access, safety, education, marine law enforcement, and consumer and environmental protection and through its local assistance grant and loan programs. Some of these programs assist cities, counties, districts, other governmental agencies, marinas, and port districts in the development and improvement of boat launching facilities and marinas.

## **Statutory Authorization For Boat Launching Facility Grants**

Section 72.5 of the Harbors and Navigation Code (HNC), authorizes the Boat Launching Facilities (BLF) program to provide local assistance grant funding to public agencies for the construction or improvement of boat launching facilities. BLF grants can also fund engineering, construction inspection, permits from regulatory agencies, special studies, and other project related costs.

## **GRANT PROGRAMS**

The Boat Launching Facilities Program administers four grant types: Boat Launching Facilities (BLF) which focuses on developing facilities that can serve boaters with recreational motorized vessels, Non-Motorized Boat Launching Facilities (NMBLF) focuses on serving recreational vessels that do not have motors, such as kayaks, stand up paddle boards, etc., Ramp Repair and Modification (RR&M) which can restore BLF's that have previously been funded by DBW that have been damaged or are no longer in service due to drought, unexpected lake drawdowns resulting from dam repairs, dam seismic safety concerns, or greater water releases to protect fish habitat, etc., and the Sign Grant Program which assists in replacing outdated or unreadable monument signage at facilities previously funded by DBW.

### **Boat Launching Facilities (BLF) Grant**

BLF grants are for the engineering, construction, or improvement of boat launching ramps, restrooms, boarding floats, shore protection, parking for vehicles and boat trailers, utilities, and ancillary items. The purpose of the program is to provide and improve access to California's waterways for the recreational boating public that use trailer-able motorized watercraft.

Grant amounts vary by project. There is no minimum or maximum grant award but amounts typically range from \$300,000 to \$6,000,000. Grant awards are determined by the specific scope of the proposed BLF project in combination with the usage and benefits that can be economically justified and funding availability.

### Non-Motorized Boat Launching Facilities (NMBLF) Grant

NMBLF grants are for the construction or improvement of public non-motorized boating access facilities. Typical grant-funded items include the engineering and construction of small hand-launch boat ramps, low freeboard boarding floats, small parking lots, and restrooms.

Grant amounts vary by project. There is no minimum or maximum award, but amounts typically range from \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on the project scope and funding availability.

### Ramp Repair and Modification (RR&M) Grant

RR&M grants provide funding to qualifying public agencies to restore recreational boating access; address issues or conditions at boat launching facilities caused by unexpected events; and that may not be covered by an agency's insurance such as storms, floods, droughts, forest fires, or water drawdowns resulting from dam repairs, dam seismic safety concerns, or water releases to protect fish habitat, etc. These projects must have previously been improved using DBW funding. Typical projects include ramp extensions, ramp widenings, construction of low water and second stage parking areas, and the repair of launching ramps, boarding floats, restrooms, and parking areas. Projects are typically limited in scope and are funded only to the level necessary to restore boating access, relieve overcapacity, address health or safety issues, and restore functionality.

Grant amounts vary by project. There is no minimum or maximum grant award, but awards typically range from \$10,000 to \$750,000 depending upon the severity, magnitude, and urgency of the problem being addressed and funding availability.

### Sign Grant Program

The Sign Grant Program provides grant funding to install and replace signs for previously funded DBW projects when the signs are obsolete, incorrect, badly worn or damaged, missing, are needed for safety, or are required as a condition of receiving federal funds.

Grant amounts vary by project. There is no minimum or maximum grant award but amounts typically range from \$1,000 to \$7,000 depending on the size, material, and installation of the sign purchased and funding availability.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible Applicants**

BLF & NMBLF - public agencies including cities, counties, federal government entities, and special districts,

RR&M & Signs – facilities previously funded by DBW.

## **Eligible Uses of Grant Funds**

### **Boat Launching Facilities (BLF) Grant**

Construction of:

- Boat launch ramp
- Parking area development/expansion/improvement
- Restrooms (including potable water and sewer if accessible)
- Path of travel (to meet accessibility requirements between BLF components)
- Boarding floats
- Gangways
- Breakwater protection
- Security lighting
- Slope protection
- Dredging (if needed to develop a new ramp or improve an existing ramp)
- Accessibility improvements
- Landscaping (as required by permitting agencies)
- Fish cleaning station
- Pay kiosk/station
- Message board and signage, including signage for non-English speakers
- Facility entrance/exit adjustments to improve traffic/pedestrian safety
- Boating safety improvements
- Boat wash-down station
- Security gate
- Solar panels/wind turbines (to power BLF components)
- Vehicle charging station

Technical services for project development:

- Develop engineering plans, specifications, and cost estimates
- Professional inspection of facility construction (includes construction management)
- Project permitting
- Mitigation (as required by permitting agencies and as permit funding allows)

### **Non-Motorized Boat Launching Facilities (NMBLF) Grant**

Construction of:

- Boat launch ramp
- Parking area development/expansion/improvement
- Restrooms (including potable water and sewer if accessible)
- Path of travel (to meet accessibility requirements between BLF components)
- Low freeboard boarding float
- Gangway
- Breakwater protection
- Security lighting
- Slope protection
- Dredging (if needed to develop a new ramp or improve an existing ramp)
- Accessibility improvements

- Landscaping (as required by permitting agencies)
- Fish cleaning station
- Pay kiosk/station
- Message board and signage, including signage for non-English speakers
- Facility entrance/exit adjustments to improve traffic/pedestrian safety
- Boating safety improvements
- Staging area
- Security gate
- Solar panels or wind turbines (to power BLF components)
- Vehicle charging station
- ADA-compliant kayak assist

Technical services for project development:

- Develop engineering plans, specifications, and cost estimates
- Professional inspection the facility construction (includes construction management)
- Project permitting
- Mitigation (as required by permitting agencies and as permit funding allows)

### Ramp Repair and Modification (RR&M) Grant

Construction of:

- Boat launch ramp restoration and/or extensions for low water boating access
- Parking area restoration
- Restroom repair/replacement
- Path of travel (restoration to meet accessibility requirements between BLF components)
- Boarding float repair/replacement
- Gangway repair/replacement
- Security lighting repair/replacement
- Slope protection repair/replacement
- Dredging (to repair/replace an existing ramp)
- Accessibility restoration
- Fish cleaning station repair/replacement
- Pay kiosk/station repair/replacement
- Message board and signage restoration, including signage for non-English speakers
- Boat wash-down station restoration
- Boat staging area restoration
- Restoration of existing solar panels or wind turbines

Technical services for project development:

- Develop engineering plans, specifications, and cost estimates
- Professional inspection of the facility construction (includes construction management)
- Project permitting
- Mitigation (as required by permitting agencies and as permit funding allows)

## Sign Grant Program

Construction and installation of:

- Project credit signs
- Directional signage
- Information kiosks
- Language access expansion (translation & printing)

## **Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

### Motorized and Non-Motorized (BLF & NMBLF) Grants

- Major landscaping and picnicking amenities to serve non-boating day-users
- Environmental impact reports/CEQA/NEPA
- Recreation shade structures (except in counties with average summer high temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater)
- Maintenance dredging
- Improvements that would restrict public access or only benefit certain user groups. (e.g. storage for security for kayak or SUP)
- Project management
- Construction management exceeding the inspection budget
- Improvements to benefit private businesses, clubs, or specially designated areas where use by the public would be restricted
- Improvements to adjacent structures or properties not directly related to the BLF
- Improvements where usage would benefit profit-making industries, or clubs requiring membership for use
- Parking or amenities for adjacent non-BLF facilities

## **FUNDING CRITERIA**

### **BLF, NMBLF, and RR&M**

- The proposed project shall be open and accessible to all public boaters.
- \$13 fee limitation: grantee is required by the grant provisions to limit the combination of entrance, parking, launching, and day use of the facility fees to no more than \$13 upon construction completion. The fee can increase with the consumer price index annually thereafter.
- The property shall be owned or leased by a qualifying public agency for a term of at least 20 years from the proposed project construction completion date.
- The applicant must be able to complete the project or the requested phase of the project within three years due to state funding availability.
- The local agency has dedicated staff with construction or environmental expertise to manage the proposed launching facility improvement project.
- The proposed project is consistent with the local General Development Plan or Coastal Plan, if applicable.
- Upon approval of a DBW grant, the applicant will have all other necessary funds in place for the project to be fully funded.
- Improvements cannot benefit private businesses/entities or restricted use areas.



- Applicant has the cash flow to withstand a 90-120 day reimbursement cycle.
- Applicant can provide the staff for project management and administration.

### **BLF & NMBLF Specific Funding Criteria**

- The applicant has the financial resources to operate and maintain the facility and proposed improvements for 20 years at no cost to the state.

### **RR&M Specific Funding Criteria**

- The project area was improved in the past by a DBW grant.
- The applicant has the financial resources to operate and maintain the facility and proposed improvements for 10 years at no cost to the state.

### **Sign Grant Program Funding Criteria**

- Previously funded DBW projects.

## **GRANT APPLICATION PROCEDURES**

The following information is provided as a general outline of the process leading to a boat launching facility development or rehabilitation project and to assist the applicant in identifying the documentation that will be required for submitting a complete application.

### **Preliminary Steps**

There are three preliminary steps that a prospective applicant should take prior to completing an application.

#### **Step One: Evaluate the Project Area**

The first preliminary step in the grant application process is to survey the proposed project area and determine the following:

- Can my agency meet the requirements listed in the Funding Criteria section on Page 7?
- Is there a true need for DBW assistance?
- What financial commitment will be needed from the applying agency (cost of staffing/CEQA/environmental expertise/administrative/project management)?
- What is the project scope?
- What is the anticipated usage? Is there demonstrated demand for these improvements?
- Is the current site ADA compliant or will ADA improvements be needed?
- What are the public and economic benefits of improving this site?

You may contact DBW representatives for assistance with these initial questions.

#### **Step Two: Recreational Boating Need**

The second preliminary step in the grant application process is to evaluate the recreational boating need of the proposed project area and determine the following:

- Is this location suitable for a recreational boating access point?

- Is it safe for water entry?
- Will an improvement be sustainable, or will it be susceptible to high flows and high sediment deposits that could damage infrastructure?
- Will a shoreline change in that area cause harm down river, down coast, or negatively affect the hydrology?
- Is there a boating access need to this water body or the need to make an existing area safer?

### Step Three: Readiness Determination

The third preliminary step in the grant application process is for the applicant to consider project readiness and determine:

- Has a feasibility study been conducted?
- Is the project well-defined in terms of scope and cost?
- Is the CEQA compliance process started or completed?
- Does the applying agency have the funding and expertise to complete CEQA with its own funds?
- Federal projects require NEPA compliance. A project is subject to NEPA if it requires a federal permit, entitlement, or authorization; will utilize federal funding; will occur on federal land; or is jointly carried out by a federal agency. Does the applying agency have the funding and expertise to complete NEPA with its own funds?
- Have regulatory permit applications been submitted?
- Are the cost estimates credible and defensible?
- Can the project be constructed with a reasonable amount of expense in relation to expected usage?
- Will the project meet the needs for water rescue by law enforcement? Consider consulting local law enforcement to identify safety issues.

If the applicant is unable answer these questions, DBW recommends the agency initially apply for planning funds to complete designs, acquire permits, and establish an engineer's cost estimate. It is the same application and process. The agency could then apply for a construction grant in the future as a subsequent phase of the project.

## **Application Process**

Once the preliminary steps have been conducted, the next step is to complete an application. This section contains information about the application and data that will be required when completing it.

## **Application Period**

DBW accepts applications year-round but February 1 is the cut-off date for consideration for the following state budget cycle (e.g., applications received February 1, 2025 would be considered for funding in the state's fiscal year 2026-2027 budget).

## **Application Submittal**

Applications are accepted through DBW's Online Grant Application System (OLGA). Applicants will need to create a profile in OLGA to complete the application. Instructions for using OLGA

are provided in a 45-minute webinar located here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-gZals-wiY&feature=youtu.be>. A sample application can be downloaded here: [https://dbw.parks.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/facilityg&l\\_boatlaunchgrantapplication.pdf](https://dbw.parks.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/facilityg&l_boatlaunchgrantapplication.pdf).

## Required Documents

The following sections describe the information and documents required to be submitted with the application.

### Application

The application provides DBW with relevant data regarding the applicant, project facility, need, and benefit to be realized with the requested state investment.

### Resolution

The resolution is a formal authorization from the applicant's official governing body authorizing the applicant to apply for and receive a state grant or loan. A sample resolution is available in the link for reference. [http://dbw.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/facilityg&l\\_resolutioninstructions.pdf](http://dbw.ca.gov/pages/28702/files/facilityg&l_resolutioninstructions.pdf)

For federal projects, include a letter from the agency's authorized leader requesting DBW's participation in a joint project with the federal agency.

## Environmental Compliance

### California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

All construction projects using state funds require CEQA compliance. DBW does not fund CEQA which must be completed at the applicant's expense. The applicant is required to meet both the local and state filing requirements at no cost to the state. To document compliance for the purposes of the grant application, the applicant must submit the documents noted below. The documents required vary based on whether CEQA is complete or incomplete at the time of application.

1. If CEQA compliance is complete at the time of application:
  - Provide the CEQA Compliance Certification Form
  - Provide a copy of the Notice of Exemption, the Notice of Determination, **or**
  - If a Notice of Exemption or a Notice of Determination was not completed, provide a letter from the lead agency that:
    - Explains why neither document was completed
    - Certifies that the project is CEQA compliant
    - Notes the date the project was approved by the lead agency
2. If CEQA compliance is **not** complete at the time of application:
  - Provide a letter detailing the applicant's plan for CEQA compliance, which must include the following:
    - Description of documentation being prepared: Initial Study, Notice of Exemption, Negative Declaration, Environmental Impact Report, etc.
    - Description of the current status of CEQA compliance
    - Timeline for CEQA compliance showing estimated dates for completion of each step of the CEQA compliance process

- Total estimated cost for CEQA compliance, including any mitigation costs, if applicable
- Explanation of any obstacles that may delay CEQA compliance

## National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

Federal projects require NEPA compliance. DBW does not fund NEPA which must be completed at the applicant's expense. A project is subject to NEPA if it requires a federal permit, entitlement or authorization, receives federal funding, will occur on federal land, or is jointly carried out by a federal agency.

## **Key Officers and Oversight Bodies**

Provide an organization chart showing the names, titles, duties, and reporting relationships of all key persons involved in the operation of the boat launching facility.

Provide the names of any oversight bodies, members, contact information, and include their website address.

## **Public Support/Opposition**

Describe any public support or opposition for the proposed project. If public meetings have been held, provide notices, agendas, and minutes. If public meetings are scheduled, provide the schedules and agendas, if available. Attach any letters/notes/emails of support and opposition.

## **Permits**

Proposed projects usually require the review and approval of numerous regulatory agencies. Obtaining permission to construct projects from these agencies in the form of permits, letters of permission, waivers, and certifications is likely to incur costs such as fees and expended staff time. Receiving these approvals may also require that various studies be completed, and each will have a different timeline for obtaining the approval.

The most commonly required permits are:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit
- California Department of Fish and Game 1600 permit
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board certification
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service approval
- California Coastal Commission or the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission approval

It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain all required permits, certifications, and compliance approvals. Include a list detailing which of these will be required for the proposed project with the application. Costs for permits obtained prior to receipt of a fully executed grant/loan agreement are not reimbursable.

## **Benefit/Cost Analysis Worksheet**

DBW staff will complete a benefit/cost analysis worksheet using the data collected from the grant application. DBW's analysis will need to establish that the benefit to recreational boaters of funding the project exceeds the cost to construct or renovate the facility.

## **Feasibility Report**

The applicant is responsible for including a feasibility report that demonstrates the project is needed for the recreational boating public, is economically justified, and is feasible from both an engineering and a financial standpoint. The feasibility report must include the following information:

### Proposed Project

Identify what improvements are requested to be made with grant funding. List the items that will be constructed or renovated with the grant, for example:

1. Concrete ramp, number of lanes and overall dimensions
2. Asphalt/concrete parking with number of vehicle/trailer, single car, and accessible spaces
3. Restroom type and number of stalls
4. Utilities, e.g., drainage, gas, power, sewer, telephone, water
5. Rock slope protection
6. Fish cleaning station
7. Landscaping (if required by permits)
8. Lighting

### Location/Access to Project

Provide detailed directions to the proposed project site from nearby population centers or major highways, and the distance of this facility from major population centers. Supply a location map showing where the project is located within a broad area, and a map showing the location in relation to the entire site. All major highways, waterways, etc. should be clearly identified. Describe the distance and location of other boat launching facilities in the area and identify them on a map.

### Existing Site

Describe the age and condition of the existing site and project components and provide a brief history of any previous site improvements.

### Previous DBW Commission Action and Funding

Detail the dates, dollar amounts, scope, year of funding, and completion dates of prior DBW funding at the site.

### Description of Area and Proposed Project Site

Provide general information of the area including:

1. Population center nearby
2. Description of the body of water where project is located
3. Size of the water body and water levels
4. Description and history of the water body
5. Description and history of the facility
6. Describe the recreational activities typically engaged in at the project site, (e.g. skiing, fishing, sailing, etc.)
7. Dates of boating season in that area
8. Other boat launching facilities on the body of water and within 20 miles

## Engineering Feasibility

An engineering analysis shall be conducted to determine engineering feasibility and approximate construction costs. If the project concept hasn't been developed to that level and your organization is applying for grant funding to assist with getting this completed, make your best estimate and be clear that the estimate was not provided by an engineering professional. Sketches and Google maps/Google Earth overlays are acceptable if the project is at the initial concept stage. DBW and its engineers can assist with the initial concept. In all cases, the engineering analysis will be for planning and budgeting purposes; it should include enough detail to determine preliminary feasibility and construction costs. The full plans and specifications for construction should be prepared after the grant/loan is approved and funds become available.

Include with this section:

- Topographic maps of the launching ramp land and water area, availability of water lines, electrical lines, sewer lines, access roads
- Seasonal water fluctuation (water elevation levels) data to determine the length of the ramp needed to accommodate boat launching

## Cost Estimate

Provide a detailed engineering cost estimate if available, or your own estimate if an engineer has not been assigned. Identify any items the applicant will be funding in full or proposing to cost share with DBW.

Costs should generally be itemized as follows:

1. Boat launching ramp (width, length, slope)
2. Courtesy boarding float(s) (width, length)
3. Parking (number of vehicle/trailers spaces and single spaces)
4. Restroom (type, and number of stalls)
5. Dump station (if applicable)
6. Utilities (drainage, gas, power, sewer, telephone, water)
7. Fish-cleaning station
8. Lighting
9. Landscaping and irrigation (as required by permits)
10. Clearing and grubbing
11. Excavation (cut and fill)
12. Dredging

13. Rock slope protection
14. Signage

Non-Construction Cost Estimate (generally determined by the construction subtotal)

1. Engineering (up to 12 percent of construction items subtotal). Note: small projects may have a higher percentage of costs but for larger projects the percentage should be lowered
2. Contingency (10 percent of construction items subtotal)
3. Inspection (up to 5 percent of construction items subtotal, include construction management)
4. Escalation (5 percent of construction items subtotal, varies each year based on estimated project construction timeline)
5. Permits (up to 3 percent of construction items subtotal)

The applicant should recognize that actual construction may not take place for three or four years due to the state's budgeting cycles, unforeseeable budgeting factors, receipt of permits, preparation of plans and specifications, seasonal considerations, and other factors. An ideal project development schedule should be submitted with the application.

### Usage

Provide a breakdown of motorized versus non-motorized launches at the site. Note any outside agency usage, both public and private (e.g. law enforcement, refineries, commercial amphibious vehicles/vessels, charters).

Describe activities or events held at the proposed project site and indicate whether boaters will be engaged in these activities at or near the new or improved launching facility. Provide a list of the activities at the site which will impede boater usage.

If the site does not currently support any boating: identify why a boating facility is desired, what types of boating and usage are expected and why, and what would be the benefit to recreational boaters to construct a facility there.

### Restricted Use

Provide a list of any restrictions that apply to the water body and the reason for the restrictions. Examples of restrictions may include size or type limits on motors, a fishing only lake, no body contact with water, no personal watercraft allowed, etc.

### Legal Description

Provide a legal description of the boat launching facility with a map of the project area.

### Fiscal Year and Cut-Off Dates

The state's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. Provide the applicant's fiscal year and any specific hard cut-off dates, such as final billing, final receipt dates, etc., or any other dates that would affect the applicant's financial reports and status. (Applies to marina loan applicants).

## Economic Justification

Identify how the project will impact the economics of the local region.

## Additional Site Drawings/Photographs

A project site layout drawing should be submitted. This drawing is to be presentation quality. The drawing should identify the project features and location of each, such as the boat launching ramp, boarding floats, parking area, restroom, etc. Pictures of the project site should be submitted and include general pictures of the site, existing facility, and area where the proposed facility will be constructed. Include aerials that can be incorporated into DBW's final feasibility report. Pictures must clearly demonstrate existing conditions to justify the need for funding.

## **Operation and Maintenance**

A grant or loan recipient is required to operate and maintain the improved facility for the life of the grant (20 years after project completion) or the amortization period of the loan (30 years, or until repaid in full). Discuss how the applicant will operate and maintain the facility for this period; include staffing and funding resources to repair damage due to wear, weather, age, etc.

## **Certification**

The application should contain a certification of the following by a person with authority to make this certification:

1. Staffing and expertise for project construction is available and dedicated toward this project.
2. The applicant understands project management, administration, and overhead are not reimbursable expenses.
3. Sufficient funding is available to operate and maintain the facility for its useful life.
4. This grant would be funded on a reimbursement basis. No funding advances will be approved.
5. Sufficient cash flow exists for at least a 90-day reimbursement cycle.
6. Applicant agrees to charge recreational boaters no more than \$13 to enter, park, and launch their personal recreational vessels.

## **LOCAL ASSISTANCE LOANS**

Local assistance loan applications must include financial documents to establish the applicant's ability to repay the loan. Please include with the application the following for review:

Public Agencies: Three most recent years of audited financial statements or online link to Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFRs). These financials must include the detailed marina enterprise fund financial statements or the fund holding revenues generated from the project area.

Privately Owned Marina: Three most recent years of federal income tax returns, balance, income, and cash flow statements.



### Repayment and Collateral

- Identify revenue source(s) dedicated for loan repayment.
- Identify proposed collateral available to be pledged for loan security.