



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

621 Woodland Square Loop S.E. • Lacey, Washington 98503

P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY 1-800-833-6384 or 711

July 30, 2021

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

The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) is seeking applications to fund projects that will eliminate or reduce public safety hazards at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way in Washington State. The UTC administers the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF)<sup>1</sup> 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 March 2023 or until funding is depleted.

The UTC will consider and select projects for funding based on the relative severity of the hazard being addressed, the public safety benefits resulting from a project, the costs of implementing a project, geographic diversity, and available funds. The UTC does not fund improvements for quiet zones.

To apply for funding, applicants can select one of three categories described below. Applications are available on our website at

<https://www.utc.wa.gov/publicSafety/railSafety/Pages/gradeCrossingProtectionFundGrants.aspx>.

**1. Safety Improvements at Passive Crossings**

Projects in this category include installing yield, stop, and emergency notification signs at passively-protected railroad crossings in Washington. Applicants may also apply for funding to replace or install crossbucks, private crossing signs, posts, and retroreflective tape. The cost per crossing is generally limited to \$600. Upon completion of the project, the applicant

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<sup>1</sup> The GCPF laws and rules are available at the UTC's website.

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: Fencing should generally meet Washington State Department of Transportation fencing standards and may not include features such as vinyl-coated, slatted chain link or wood fences unless the applicant directly pays for those features.
- **Private grade crossing safety improvements.** Examples of projects in this category include installation of crossing-specific warning devices such as 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.

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

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

For projects in Category 2 or 3, the UTC may limit the amount of funding per project so that an optimal number of projects may be funded. The UTC 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 UTC may approve an amount in excess of \$20,000 to address an immediate or significant safety issue. If the applicant requests more than \$20,000, they 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.

For all GCPF grants, the UTC 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 UTC makes payment of grant funds only on a reimbursement basis, and will not approve advance payments for any project costs.**

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

For more information, please contact Mike Turcott (360) 664-1119, [mike.turcott@utc.wa.gov](mailto:mike.turcott@utc.wa.gov), or Betty Young at (360) 292-5470, [betty.young@utc.wa.gov](mailto:betty.young@utc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark L. Johnson".

Mark L. Johnson  
Executive Director and Secretary