



STATE OF WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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

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

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July 3, 2023

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)¹ to provide grants to railroad companies, local governments, and other entities 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 2025 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, public equity, 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 signs, stop signs, and Emergency Notification System 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 funding per crossing is generally limited to \$600. Upon

¹ The GCPF laws and rules are available at the UTC's website.

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: fencing should generally conform to Washington State Department of Transportation fencing standard plans (available at wsdot.wa.gov) and may not include decorative 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 \$25,000 for projects that do not have a cost-share or matching requirement.

In exceptional circumstances, the UTC may approve an amount in excess of \$25,000 to address an immediate or significant safety issue. If the applicant requests more than \$25,000, 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 and contributions by involved parties.

For all GCPF grants, the UTC 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. **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 submit an application. 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, or Tyler Whitcomb (564) 669-0943, tyler.whitcomb@utc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amanda Maxwell
Executive Director and Secretary