



Boldly Grown Farm, Skagit County

Progress Report – Ombuds Working Group

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Background

The Washington State Conservation Commission (SCC) Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual (Grants Manual) outlines information and requirements on program policy and procedure for requesting reimbursements from SCC. In consultation with program guidelines, it serves as a guide for conservation districts to determine what is eligible for reimbursement.

In early 2025, the Ombuds Working Group (working group) was launched in response to stakeholder requests for a more transparent, participatory, and comprehensive revision process of the Grants Manual. The working group membership is comprised of conservation district staff throughout the state with SCC staff supporting meeting logistics, project progress, engagement efforts, and feasibility reviews.

The working group has been addressing feedback received through a robust engagement effort on a variety of topics by providing recommendations to SCC staff. The goal is to have a Grants Manual update that reflects the collaborative effort, is clear, helpful, and strengthens the overall grants administration process.

Timeline



Approach

Through multiple feedback channels including surveys, online comments, and broad engagement, SCC staff collected more than 500 comments in 2025 on the Grants Manual. To effectively manage the breadth of input, comments were categorized into 39 topic areas. Five Tiger Teams, comprised of Ombuds Working Group members, were formed to analyze feedback and develop recommendations that considered legal and administrative requirements. Twenty-eight topic areas were assigned to Tiger Teams, nine are being addressed by the entire working group, and two were resolved prior to the working group.

Tiger Team members and contact information can be found in Appendix A.

Decision-making relationship

The [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#) is a framework that uses five levels of involvement to define decision-making roles and relationships with stakeholders. The working group's relationship with the Grants Manual update is classified at the collaboration level, meaning that their recommendations will be implemented to the fullest extent possible.

As implementation progresses, SCC staff may need to diverge from specific recommendations if new information becomes available and will keep the community informed if that need arises.

Reviewing all feedback comments

The goal of this collaborative effort is to address all comments received. Some comments were resolved prior to the working group as part of the 2025 Grants Manual revision. The working group is reviewing and considering all other comments received and addressing most with recommendations. However, after consideration, the working group identified a small number of comments that would or could not be addressed with a recommendation.

The list of all comments received for fully-addressed topics areas can be found in Appendix B.

Recommendations

What is a recommendation?

This process has centered on engaging key stakeholders to address every comment received and identify preferred solutions in the form of recommendations.

A recommendation is a proposed action developed in response to stakeholder feedback and working group review. Recommendations may correspond to specific stakeholder comments or address broader themes identified across multiple comments. Feedback may be addressed through recommendations that advance different approaches than those suggested by individual commenters. Overall, recommendations represent the working group's considered response to comments with the information available.

The recommendations developed by the working group are advisory. During implementation, they may be refined, combined, deferred, superseded, or discontinued following additional review, stakeholder engagement, operational planning, legal review, technology considerations, resource availability, or Commission decision making.

Topic area status

Each of the 39 topic areas are assigned a status to track progress. Status categories and definitions are:

- **Addressed:** Topic areas that have a full comment review and an approved set of recommendations from a Tiger Team or the entire Ombuds working group.
- **In-progress:** Topic areas that the Tiger Teams and Ombuds working group are still working to review and address through recommendations.

Topic area status as of September 28, 2026	
Addressed	32
In progress	7

Tiger Team	Topic Area	Status as of August 27, 2026
Cost Share & District-Implemented Project (DIP)	BMP splitting vs. lumping	Addressed (new)
	Cost share	In progress
	DIP	Addressed (new)
	Labor rates	Addressed
Fruit Basket	Benefits	Addressed
	Capital assets	Addressed (new)
	Clothing / Apparel / PPE	Addressed
	Construction	Addressed (new)
	Mortgage	Addressed
	Overhead / Indirect	Addressed
	Overtime	Addressed
	Training / Tuition / Education	In progress
Policy	Advances	Addressed (new)
	Approvals / Exceptions	Addressed
	Authorized signatures	Addressed
	Award start dates	Addressed (new)
	Biennium hard stop	Addressed (new)
	Timing of expenditure / vouchering	In progress
Process & Help	Additional support	Addressed (new)
	CAPP	Addressed (new)
	Debarment	Addressed
	Individual grant programs	Addressed
	Taxes	Addressed (new)

	Vouchering – process and documents	Addressed (new)
Travel	Honoraria, stipends, and speaker fees	Addressed (new)
	Meals	In progress
	Peer-to-peer rentals	Addressed (new)
	Travel	Addressed (new)
Unassigned / Entire Ombuds Working Group	Audience	Addressed (new)
	Cultural resources	Addressed (new)
	Editing and organization	Addressed (new)
	Electronic signatures	Addressed
	Foreign transaction fees	Addressed
	Philosophical approach	In progress
	Presentation of policies and procedures	In progress
	Shared staff and ILAs between conservation districts	In progress
	Vocabulary	Addressed
	SCC – conservation district interactions	Addressed (new)
	Other	Addressed

All recommendations and implementation leads for the 32 fully addressed topic areas can be found in Appendix C.

Next Steps

The Ombuds Working Group recommendations are advanced to designated Implementation Leads. These Implementation Leads are identified alongside recommendations in Appendix C.

Tiger Teams will continue to develop recommendations through November 2026. Progress reports will be published monthly, shared via email and online, with fatal flaw feedback opportunities available through an online form and discussions.

After that, staff will incorporate recommendations to the fullest extent possible into a revised Grants Manual draft for Commissioners to review, potentially modify, and approve for public comment. This progress report will also be updated to a final version at that time.

Appendix A

Ombuds Working Group members, Tiger Teams,
and topic areas

Ombuds Working Group

Cost Share & DIP Tiger Team	
<i>Members</i> • Lora Liegel, SCC Regional Manager, lliegel@scc.wa.gov • Loren Meagher, Central CD, District Executive, lorenm@centralcd.org • Megan Stewart, Asotin CD, District Executive, megan@asotincd.org	<i>Topics</i> • BMPs - Splitting vs. Lumping • Cost Share • DIP • Labor Rates
Fruit Basket Tiger Team	
<i>Members</i> • Josh Giuntoli, SCC Regional Manager, jgiuntoli@scc.wa.gov • Rhonda Nydegger, Mason CD, District Finance, rnnydegger@masoncd.org • Ryan Williams, Cascadia CD, District Executive, RyanW@cascadiacd.org	<i>Topics</i> • Employee Benefits • Capital Assets • Clothing / Apparel / PPE • Construction • Mortgage • Overhead / Indirect • Overtime • Training, Tuition, Education
Policy Tiger Team	
<i>Members</i> • Mike Baden, Spokane CD, District Staff, mike-baden@spokanecd.org • Jennifer Boie, Palouse CD, District Executive, jenniferb@palousecd.org • Scott Noble, SCC Regional Manager, snoble@scc.wa.gov • Zorah Oppenheimer, Clark CD, District Executive, zoppenheimer@clarkcd.org • Heather Wendt, WACD, hwendt@wadistricts.org	<i>Topics</i> • Advances • Approvals / Exceptions • Authorized Signatures • Award Start Dates • Biennium Hard Stop • Timing of Expenditures / Vouchering
Process & Help Tiger Team	
<i>Members</i> • Jennifer Berry, Snohomish CD, District Finance, jberry@snohomishcd.org • Sarah Jones, Snohomish CD, District Finance, sjones@snohomishcd.org • Krystal Sadler, Foster Creek CD, District Finance, financials@fostercreekcd.org • Tami Stubbs, SCC Regional Manager, TStubbs@scc.wa.gov	<i>Topics</i> • Additional Support • CAPP • Debarment • Individual Grant Programs • Taxes • Vouchering - Processes and Docs
Travel Tiger Team	
<i>Members</i> • Allisa Carlson, SCC Regional Manager, ACarlson@scc.wa.gov • Brandy Reed, Whatcom CD, District Executive, b.reed@whatcomcd.org • Cori Turntine, Spokane CD, District Finance, cori-turntine@sccd.org	<i>Topics</i> • Honoraria, Stipends, and Speaker Fees • Meals • Peer-to-Peer Rentals • Travel
SCC Team: Sarah Groth (sgroth@scc.wa.gov), Tara Long (tlong@scc.wa.gov), Jessica Wilson (jwilson@scc.wa.gov), Courtney Woods (cwoods@scc.wa.gov)	
Workgroup-Wide Topics	
• Audience • Cultural Resources • Editing / Organization / Vocabulary • Electronic Signatures	• Philosophical Approach • Presentation of Policies & Procedures • Shared Staff and ILAs between CDs • WSCC - CD Interactions
Topics with no pending feedback: Foreign Transaction Fees, Other	

Appendix B

Comments received for completed topic areas

Additional Support

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F176	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> All Q/A sections should be linked in the manual, but not actually housed within the manual. Then staff can update and provide guidance regularly without having to change the manual.
F207	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Cost Share Q&A: Is this best in the manual or as a separate section on the website that is referenced? Would be easier to add Q&As generated throughout the year to the list if it wasn't required to go through the Commission board for approval
F217	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Perhaps links to completed vouchers and cost-share contracts so new CD staff can see examples of a "good one." ;)
F258	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Would be good to have regular training on this or a frequently asked question section so that people new to the grants and contracts roles at their respective CDs can get up to speed faster.
F296	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> It should reference materials or training support for new CD employees.
F350	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Also recommend reviewing the District Digest Q&As as well as any records of procedural questions to incorporate
F368	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Same comment as Cost Share Q&A, move it to a spot on the website as reference so we can add more info as we go.
F495	<i>Grant Manual Comments 1/25</i> - Frequently asked questions need to be removed from the manual. They can be linked in the manual, but they aren't policy, and having them in the manual means staff can't edit them without going to the Commission and a 45-day comment period.
F496	<i>Grant Manual Comments (Split 1 of 2)</i> Cost sharing questions/answers we would recommend these be removed from the manual so staff can edit/add to them... Also restating that all FAQ/Q&As should be linked in the manual but housed elsewhere so they can be edited.
F571	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> (Split 2 of 2) I've asked clarifying questions to finance staff via email but haven't receive responses.
F583	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (Split 2 of 2) There could be a bit more specificity about allowable expenses in some of the sections.
F623	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 8 of 8) - Support: Ability to submit specific questions

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F537	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 3 of 7) Visuals: checklists, flowcharts, timelines for essential processes in order to visualize and demonstrate roles and flow of information in each significant process	Preferred alternative	Rather than identifying specific visuals to create and include at this time, the Working Group advanced recommendations to implement mechanisms to collect, prioritize, and respond to requests for specific guidance. Focusing on creating a system provides greater long-term value than attempting to identify all possible enhancements during this manual revision cycle.
F559	12/25 - 1/26 <i>Comment Period</i> Also on the Commission webpage, under Conservation District Resources can the manual be added to the drop down Tab "Resources", Currently it's listed under the drop down Tab "Grants and Funding " and than "Grants, Contracts and Finance". This doesn't seem intuitive, as I view the manual as an important resource	Elected not to advance	The Working Group did not choose to recommend a specific relocation of the manual at this time. Broader website reorganization work is underway as a separate process, through which we expect the location of the manual will be considered.
F592	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 7 of 7) Chatbot: Implement an online chatbot which can provide Q&A support of the manual	Elected not to advance	Current technology, governance, records retention, maintenance, and implementation costs outweigh the expected benefits. The Working Group believes limited resources should first be invested in foundational improvements to documentation, searchability, and knowledge management.

Advances

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: SCC Policy

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F200	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Given our expanded projects, it would be helpful to allow for cash advances on a case-by-case basis outside of the traditional cost share/DIP process. For example, our septic reimbursements under our RCPP don't follow the typical process but are implemented on the ground.
F253	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> We had some issues with our RCPP advance request and the limitations the Commission had on their end with how RCPP was structured (TA vs Cost Share). Should this be mentioned in the manual or the online form? Also, the advance form asks for total value of projects under contract. If someone is entered into CPDS, does that constitute being under contract?
F318	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Updates to the advance payment policy for large equipment purchases and other types of advances outside of cost share/DIP
F369	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Is it possible to add large equipment purchases to the advance policy? If the CD uses program funding to purchase an expensive piece of equipment, having an advance would help with cash flow or eliminate the need for a line of credit.
F442	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Form for advance payment references "projects currently under contract" but manual references the cost share or DIP allocation. Are these describing the same thing? Does "under contract" reference the contract between SCC and the CD or the CD and the cooperator? *
F451	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Given our expanded projects, it would be helpful to allow for cash advances on a case-by-case basis outside of the traditional cost share/DIP process. For example, our septic reimbursements under our RCPP don't follow the typical process but are implemented on the ground.
F475	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Advance payments: I recommend SCC look at the RCO advance payment policies to help guide this. Their policy is located in Manual 8 pages 25-28. Their policy allows for short-term advances (3 months of coverage) that have to be reconciled within 120 days. This covers short-term issues and doesn't allow for advances to sit for long periods of time. Currently we can request a cash advance and hold it for a year or more creating issues with reconciliation over long periods of time.
F562	<i>12/25 - 1/26 Comment Period</i> Regarding Item 451: Clarify this process and why some exceptions to the 50% advance cap are approved when others are not.

Approvals / Exceptions

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: SCC Policy

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F337	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Equipment purchase (pg 35) -> "allowable expense if included in the scope of work OR have prior written authorization from the financial staff OR program manager for all equipment purchases totaling over \$2000". I like it this way, provides flexibility and shows trust for how we spend money.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F150	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> Manual is solid, but I would like to request a policy change - that ~10% of total grant budget amount can be shifted to another line item without WSCC pre-approval - which is the case with many federal/state grants.
F170	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (split 3 of 4) Bottom line, I would like us to be able to ... have assurances that we don't have to ask for permission to do everything we already included in grant agreements
F185	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Compensation for subcontracted personnel services... it's unclear if this is for any subcontract or just subcontracts for administrative work relating to staff. Regardless, having the contract be included in the addendum is a bit extra, and I don't think is actually enforced. Project plans change and it's not feasible to have all subcontracting outlined in the addendum.
F186	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Compensation for subcontracted personnel services: need to remove the requirement of it being within the grant addendum or contract. There is currently no way to accurately indicate this in the addendum form. In addition, this creates a huge administrative burden to WSCC to micromanage project implementation, specifically with DIP projects. Districts need the flexibility to make a decision whether staff time or contracted services is the appropriate/most efficient use of funds. A prime example is losing a staff member that was going to do the implementation but there is not enough time to complete the project with a new hire, so the decision is made to contract it out in the short term to complete the project. If it is a matter of cash vs payroll in your own system, that is not part of the addendum, but could be added with an added budget amendment component. Typical practice is up to 10% of total grant award can be shifted before a formal amendment is required.
F244	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 1 of 2) Make sure... there is a system for exemptions clearly visible.
F257	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Policy change ~10% of total grant budget amount can be shifted to another existing line item without WSCC pre-approval

F264	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> (Split 1 of 2) It's not so much about the manual. It's about day to day practices and restrictions implemented by SCC finance staff. Our addendums include equipment, trainings, travel that are approved. The additional requirements for approval, that include more and more information and justifications has become so burdensome and time consuming. We have not been under this much scrutiny in previous years or by other state agencies. It's become untenable.
F265	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> The current system of review and approval is very labor intensive that concentrates it all onto one or two people. That was fine in the past when Districts were less active. This paradigm needs to shift. There needs to be more reliance on clear grant applications and approved expenses to allow Districts to operate within the confines of those criteria to reduce the number of day to day management questions that Fiscal and Program staff have to engage on. Their time should be reserved to unique situations that require judgement and interpretation.
F449	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Pg 53 - "subcontracts and interlocal agreements must be included when vouchering for reimbursement for the first time" Which subcontracts and interlocal agreements? Do you want every agreement the CD is a party to or just the one's related to this particular voucher? Please clarify.
F476	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> AND Mechanisms to empower Districts to make informed decisions about conditionally allowable expenses and reduce the amount of approvals necessary by program and financial staff. The goal of any administrative rule should be to maximize good use of funds while minimizing administrative costs for both the grantor and grantee. Many of the changes in this manual are to tighten down requirements and push CDs to ask for permission from SCC staff more often. The manual should be clear enough that a District can make an appropriate decision without SCC staff input.
F492	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Allowable Reimbursable Expenditures: 1/25 - Compensation for subcontracted personnel services... it's unclear if this is for any subcontract or just subcontracts for administrative work relating to staff. Regardless, having the contract be included in the addendum is a bit extra, and I don't think is actually enforced. Project plans change, and it's not feasible to have all subcontracting outlined in the addendum.
F527	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Timing of Expenditures -> Exceptions are mentioned, but they refer to expenses the open period (i.e. fiscal years) not the calendar month. What about the "one-time exceptions" given from SCC staff under varying circumstances. We understand that this was born out of the SCC's audit recommendations, but the manual doesn't explain what it means and how it may affect the district.
F530	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> (split 2 of 2) Where there is room for an exception, it should be clearly stated in the description of the policy, not in the FAQs, for example, the cost share cap exception.
F584	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Please add language either here or in it's own section about the process to request an exception.
F626	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Training and Education: Long-term we need to move towards a less micromanaged approach to training. I suggest shifting the burden of this approval process to the application/addendum phase. Have Districts provide a training budget and have them operate freely within it (assuming it is appropriate to the grant). We would need to update the forms to reflect that and process to accommodate that change. It would reduce the number of unique requests to financial staff.

Audience

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Ombuds Workgroup as a whole

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F143	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (split 4 of 6) In places it is confusing due to: - not always clear the audience (role) sections are written for
F429	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> QUESTION - sixth question - Who is the audience for this? Some of this makes it sound like it is intended for the cooperator. And the SCC doesn't set cost-share rates or amounts, just the per landowner/cooperator maximum per year.
F437	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> There are many sections in here that only apply to CDs and would not apply to any of the other types of groups that utilize commission funds. In a future update I suggest reworking this manual to make it entity neutral. This should be focused on how recipient of WSCC funding should manage their contract, not their organization. For most CDs, WSCC is not the only funding source and we are subject to many laws and are consistently audited on them that make the guidance in this document unnecessary.
F498	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Is this manual used for contractors too? If so, suggest making sure the "Districts and Counties Must Pay First" title is generalized to something like "entities" to make it neutral to type.
F547	<i>Email comment</i> Make the manual specific to conservation districts and take advantage of the good governance CDs have and SCC to CD relationship through 89.08. This can reduce administrative burden and oversight by empowering the local CD board to be the governance structure it was meant to be. Counties and other entities can be handled through a modified or supplemental grants manual.
F594	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Allowable expenses: Suggest creating a table/section that is CD only so that other entities can ignore the section.

Authorized Signatures

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: SCC Policy

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F439	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> QUESTION - regarding wet signature, does the form with wet signatures get sent to the SCC or retained at the district (or other entity) office? This sections needs clarification	The text on page 44 was edited in the July '25 manual update to clarify that the District retains the version of the Authorized Signature form with wet signatures while the scanned copy gets emailed to SCC.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F625	12/25 - 1/26 Comment Period (Split 2 of 2) This has nothing to do with Comment 101, but your form would not allow me to add something new. There are about 10 comments expressing confusion about authorized signatures. This form is inefficient. Every time a staff member changes, a board member changes, or we simply forget to add someone to the form, we must route a new form around and have many people sign it. Yes, one could argue that we are not required to have so many different people sign it. That is true—and if that is the argument, I would use it as further evidence that the Commission continues to enact policies that make conservation districts inefficient. I am not signing every employee's timesheet, yet to be reimbursed by the Commission, every supervisor who signs a timesheet that includes WRG CC funding must have their signature on this form. If we limit the number of people on the signature form, then we must wait for that person to return from vacation, illness, or another absence, thereby impeding our ability to effectively put projects on the ground. Finally, by requiring all of these supervisory employees to sign the form, they are now given authority to sign a variety of other documents in situations where they were never intended to be authorized signers. This significantly increases the opportunity for fraud or other deleterious activities and could substantially increase liability for both the district and the Commission. Having this form creates opportunities for such problems.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F561	<i>12/25 - 1/26 Comment Period</i> (Split 1 of 2) This has nothing to do with Comment 101, but your form would not allow me to add something new. There are about 10 comments expressing confusion about authorized signatures. My comment is simply to remove/delete/eliminate the authorized signature form entirely. No other entity requires anything even remotely similar to this form. It is not legally required, it is bad practice, it is inefficient, and the form inappropriately authorizes individuals to have permissions they should not have. There are no legal requirements for such a form. If there were a legal requirement, I am sure Ecology, RCO, DNR, and others would have similar forms. They do not, and they have never required any such document in my 30 years of conservation district work. Please remove the requirement for this form and policy. It is old, outdated, unnecessary, cumbersome, and inefficient.	Elected not to advance	This form and process are part of SCC's audit compliance and public funds safeguarding strategy. Separation of duties and internal controls are a best practice for all governments. Multiple state agencies require documentation identifying authorized representatives for grant administration. The Tiger Team did not recommend eliminating this process or advancing a recommendation to correct the misunderstanding about how standard this process is. Instead, recommendations focused on improving the efficiency and accuracy of the process and associated tools.

Award Start Dates

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: SCC Policy

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F311	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Start date of grants - all grants are amendments to our master contract. SCC should be able to set whatever start date, regardless of when we receive the specific award email from finance staff, to anytime within the effective dates of the master contract.	Financial Risk Management	Although the suggested approach was acknowledged as one that could eliminate funding gaps at the beginning of the biennium, SCC determined that it would create unacceptable risks to allow recipients to incur costs before SCC has determined that funding will be awarded, in what amount, and under what terms. Instead, the Workgroup advanced recommendations to decouple the effective date and administrative processing to allow award start dates to be based on the formal award decision date, and to improve program application and award timelines to target award decisions being made at or before the beginning of the biennium.

Benefits

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F201	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits There is some guidance listed is not commonly used by districts. Specially these two: • These funds should be set aside in a separate account. • Use the funds in the separate account to cover the costs of the employee's leave time when their time cannot be charged to a contract. This should be changed to "these funds should be tracked and set aside for these specific expenses". Most districts do not have a benefits bank account where they transfer money to and pay out of. This is an administrative headache and not utilized. Can also simplify the two lines about legal risks to one.
F430	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits - Addition of the word "must" to the following sentence: "These funds [should] must be set aside in a separate account." The way that benefit accruals are handled is a District policy, not dictated by a grantor. It is the District's responsibility to ensure that funds are available to pay their liabilities. However, it is well within SAO guidance to use a formula to set aside a percentage of liabilities, and having them in a separate account is well beyond the scope of a granting agency. Additionally, see the general comments section for comment about including district governance requirements in the grants manual.
F431	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits: My interpretation of this is that we will be required to hold a second account to house leave balances. This is not required by the state auditor and is not enforceable by the SCC. We are required to track leave balances and report them as liabilities and are expected to cover those liabilities when they are used but there are no requirements as to how we are supposed to manage those funds. Are SCC financial staff reviewing that all CDs, Counties and contractors adhere to this method? how are you going to enforce this on a contractor or a county?

Biennium Hard Stop

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: SCC Policy

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F266	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> There are many minor issues with the manual and a few big ones. A huge issue, however, is the lack of ability for grants to span beyond a biennium . This is a major flaw in the Commission's granting structure and hampers our work. Even with money from the same source given to two different agencies, the Commission can only allow 2-year funding while other state agencies can allow for 3-5+ year grants. Capital funds are typically reserved for construction projects, and I have no doubt that capital funds for large-scale construction projects do not have the same biennium cut off for expenses that WSCC funds have. Even our RCPP matching funds which roll over from one biennium to another and have big cost share projects, have to be wrapped up before the end of each biennium, causing major delays or scrambles in summer construction windows.
F277	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (The grants manual ...) It should include the allowance for multi-biennium contracting
F315	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> The way the manual is written, there is no way to implement multi-biennium contracts. Add something to allow for that when indicated by program guidelines.
F378	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> The changes identified in this update do not fully address the ongoing concerns that Districts were encountering in the last biennium. A few factors that are missing include: Mention of multi-biennium contracts that were proposed at the March 2025 commission meeting. I suggest adding a paragraph about this in section 2.
F379	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> The way the manual is written, there is no way to implement a trial for multi-biennium contracts (as suggested in the RGP guidelines). Suggest adding something to allow for that when indicated by program guidelines.
F380	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> The way the manual is written, there is no way to implement a trial for multi-biennium contracts (as suggested in the RGP guidelines). Suggest adding something to allow for that when indicated by program guidelines.

BMP splitting vs. lumping

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Cost Share and DIP

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F309	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Requiring that each BMP have a Appendix B and cost be broken out seperately. Problem is when a contractor completes jobs they don't break out or bill by BMP. Contractors bill by the project completed. BMPs work together to complete a project.
F364	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Don't split a single labor contract into multiple BMPS.
F365	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Consider flexibility in combining BMPs on an appendix B when the practices are so interwoven, it becomes difficult for a contractor to distinguish between activities. Forest Health practices (limb up, thin, and treat the material) are three separate codes, but a contractor does all the work at once and bounces between them. Or the pipeline, trough, heavy use area. Or work with district staff to use something other than an NRCS standard so that it covers all the work being accomplished, but doesn't split it up so detailed. The separation of BMPs in these examples is also difficult for budgeting. If the thinning goes "over budget" because the contractor allocated more time to thinning that pruning trees up, landowners miss opportunities for reimbursement because one BMP "went over" while another "went under", but it really is just the allocation of hours from the contractor.

Capital Assets

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F334	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Ineligible: depreciation of equipment (is this their way of nixing set rates from the district end?)	Depreciation is not an eligible expense on any SCC grant, but this is not related to the concept of funding recipients being allowed to establish equipment rates (which recipients are able to establish).	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F344	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Eligible: equipment rental (rental rates consistent with conservation district rates or market) - so we can use a rental rate, or we can only use a rental rate if we literally go and rent something?
F428	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> What about maintenance for these? (equipment and ATV/UTVs)
F545	<i>Email comment</i> Allow local governance by allowing local boards to manage purchasing decisions well over the \$2,000 threshold that is currently set by SCC staff.
F550	<i>Email comment</i> Allow CD's to charge a rental rate to grant programs for use of equipment owned by the CD to cover the cost of fuel, maintenance, wear items, insurance, and replacement costs. This is allowed for landowners in cost share and could easily be extended to DIPs. See Equipment Usage page 63.
F553	<i>Email comment</i> Disposition of tangible personal property (p77). This changes the past ownership structure of CD purchases with SCC funds. Items have always been purchased and owned by CDs. Why is SCC now retaining ownership through this new policy. Allow the local CD board to govern their own assets.
F574	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> A local CD should be able to prioritize and approve IM grant spending on capital acquisitions like equipment.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F304	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Please also remove any requirements for CDs to get pre-approval from Commission Staff for expenditures about a certain amount (i.e. \$2,000 for engineering equipment purchases).	Preferred alternative	Some Commission oversight of significant capital purchases remains appropriate and is consistent with practices used by comparable funding agencies. Increasing the approval threshold achieves most of the administrative benefit while retaining oversight.

CAPP

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F270	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (split 1 of 2) Throughout, there are references to overall District governance. Instead, reference the requirement to comply with CAPP guidelines to be eligible WSCC grants. District governance is outside of the scope of the Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual. Sections include but are not limited to: Guidance from the Washington State Auditor's Office; Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits; Federal Audit Requirements, State Auditor Requirements; Audit Findings or Management Letter; Records Retention.
F413	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Throughout, there are references to overall District governance. Instead, reference the requirement to comply with CAPP guidelines to be eligible WSCC grants. District governance is outside of the scope of the Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual. Sections include: Section 2: Grants and Contracts - Guidance from the Washington State Auditor's Office Section 4: Reimbursable Expenses - Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits, Section 10: Other Requirements - Federal Audit Requirements, State Auditor Requirements, Audit Findings or Management Letter, Records Retention.
F572	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> There are also elements within this manual that are better fit in a Conservation District Governance document such as a more detailed CAPP 1.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F181	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> CAPP: Can we include the CAPP 1 criteria in the manual? It is updated less frequently than the SCC grant manual so far.	Elected not to advance	CAPP addresses Conservation District accountability and governance, while the Grants Manual applies more broadly to all recipients of WSCC funding and focuses on funding administration. Incorporating detailed CAPP requirements would expand the Manual beyond its primary purpose and duplicate information maintained through CAPP

Clothing / Apparel / PPE

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F183	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Clothing/apparel: This needs to be updated to be allowable and not limited to "safety gear". Having a way to identify your staff in the field is extremely important for more than just safety. These expenses are fully allowable in the SAAM. I agree a policy should be required, similar to travel, light refreshments and cost share. Both Travel and Light Refreshments are in the fully allowable section but have a policy requirement before they can be used.
F184	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Clothing/apparel: This should be allowed for all grants when identifying staff or providing safety gear. The way it's written, it's unclear if clothing for safety is allowed on capital grants but conditionally allowed on operating grants. Or if it is only conditionally allowed on operating grants but not allowed on capital.
F287	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Clothing/Apparel - unclear if logo wear as PPE is allowable ONLY under operating grants.
F330	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Clothing/apparel: Can this be moved up to an allowable expense with a more comprehensive definition of "promotion purposes". My guess is that apparel cannot be purchased if we are giving it away at events. But if we purchase clothes for staff that will not be given away we should be able to make the purchase without additional approvals. What criteria would SCC staff utilize to deny this purchase? If the criteria is whether the grant program itself would allow it, there are many operation/IM only items that are in the allowable section that do not require pre-approval.
F331	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Conditionally eligible reimbursable expenses: 1/25 (clarified) Clothing/apparel: Clothing for the purpose of identification or safety should be allowed on all grants where staff are paid to be in the field. The way it's written, it's unclear whether clothing for safety is allowed on capital grants but conditionally allowed on operating grants. Or if it is only conditionally allowed on operating grants but not allowed on capital.
F332	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> QUESTION - related to district logo clothing. So it is eligible for identifying staff representing district but not for promotion of district?

Construction

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F106	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Construction costs: this one is very confusing. What does this mean? Is it referencing that cost share/DIP is not allowed unless it is specific approved in the scope? If so, the language about pre-approved and included in the scope of work/budget is not consistent with practice. IM grant does not have an application but projects can be funded within it. In many applications we are not required to name individual projects, typically the name of the project isn't even known by WSCC until the payment request.
F189	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Construction costs: this one is very confusing. What does this mean? Is it referencing that cost share/DIP is not allowed unless it is specific approved in the scope? If so, the language about pre-approved and included in the scope of work/budget is not consistent with practice. IM grant does not have an application but projects can be funded within it. In many applications we are not required to name individual projects, typically the name of the project isn't even known by WSCC until the payment request.
F394	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Conditionally eligible expenditures: Construction costs: This is a very confusing expenditure description. There are no construction costs listed as "allowable" or "ineligible". Stating "Construction costs not otherwise allowable" doesn't make sense. Are you referring to cost share? DIP funding? Building a building? Hard to provide a clear suggestion to improve this language when it isn't clear what this applies to.
F396	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> It would help to clarify what you mean by construction costs. For example, is construction under a DIP something different?

Cultural Resources

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Ombuds Workgroup as a whole

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F507	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cultural Resources: Suggest rewording the "Cultural Resources work must be done...." To "A review for cultural resources requirements must be completed before implementation may begin. For potentially ground disturbing activities (list can be found here), an archaeologist must be consulted and a cultural resource complied statement (and all of the required consultation) must be completed before implementation can begin." Not all work will require cultural resources "work" which I take to mean survey. I think it makes sense to outline the process required. Step 1 - review practice list to determine ground disturbing potential. Step 2 - if not disturbing, complete CR complied statement and move on. If it is ground disturbing, consult with an archaeologist to see if full consultation is necessary. Step 3 - start consultation process with first 30 days. Step 4 - IF necessary, complete survey and finish second 30 day consultation. Step 5 - completed CR complied statement.	Preferred alternative	Noting that SCC has extensive, detailed Cultural Resources guidance available on their website, the Working Group recommended clarifying and simplifying text within the manual and referring users to the website resources.
F508	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cultural Resources: Suggest rewording the "Cultural Resources work must be done...." To "A review for cultural resources requirements must be completed before implementation may begin. For potentially ground disturbing activities (list can be found here), an archaeologist must be consulted and a cultural resource complied statement (and all of the required consultation) must be completed before implementation can begin." Not all work will require cultural resources "work" which I take to mean survey. I think it makes sense to outline the process required. Step 1 - review practice list to determine ground disturbing potential. Step 2 - if not disturbing, complete CR complied statement and move on. If it is ground disturbing, consult with an archaeologist to see if full consultation is necessary. Step 3 - start consultation process with first 30 days. Step 4 - IF necessary, complete survey and finish second 30 day consultation. Step 5 - completed CR complied statement.	Preferred alternative	Noting that SCC has extensive, detailed Cultural Resources guidance available on their website, the Working Group recommended clarifying and simplifying text within the manual and referring users to the website resources.

Debarment

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F470	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Debarment and Suspension: "Must PRINT" please update to "maintain an electronic record". We do not print but we do PDF the results and save them in the electronic file. Print implies a paper copy.	July '25 manual version updated in one part to say: Debarment and Suspension: "Must PRINT or save electronic record".	2025
F478	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Same comment as an above section: Are we required to print the SAM report? Can we save it as a PDF and put it in our electronic files?	July '25 manual version updated in one part to say: Debarment and Suspension: "Must PRINT or save electronic record".	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F107	(5a) <i>Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Debarment: Manual says "any" contracts while District Operations Brief #9-2013 (and second paragraph) states contracts over \$25,000. Need to align the brief and the manual language.
F108	(5a) <i>Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Debarment: There is also a repeat of these requirements in the cost share section. Put this topic in 1 place and refer back to it to prevent inconsistency.
F196	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Debarment and Suspension: This is a repeat from earlier in the manual. Suggest simplifying it to reference the earlier section to prevent inconsistencies.
F197	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Debarment: Manual says "any" contracts while District Operations Brief #9-2013 (and second paragraph) states contracts over \$25,000. Need to align the brief and the manual language.
F566	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Re: Debarment: There is also a repeat of these requirements in the cost share section. Put this topic in 1 place and refer back to it to prevent inconsistency.

DIP

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Cost Share and DIP

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F127	(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand): DIP Vouchering	We believe this has been addressed with the addition of a new manual section as of July '25.	2025
F252	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> "Administrative hours, project oversight, and general staff time must be charged to the TA portion of the award, not the DIP allocation" pg 81. "for actual implementation of the BMP" How does this work for DIPs that are purely contracted out? Or in instances where the grant does not have an allocated TA bucket? Fine for WFF and NRI, but RGP set up had an application process where you applied for projects and each application became an outcome. In those latter cases, we've been charging staff time to implement the project by setting up the contractor, coordinating the engineer, which is also "implementation" just not directly of the BMP.	This feedback has been addressed through updates to the RGP application in 2025.	2025
F285	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Conservation District Staff Installing/Constructing Projects: The last bullet point, we don't understand this sentence: "All hours must be charged to the grant monthly." Do you mean that all hours worked under the grant must be vouchered on a monthly basis?	Yes, that is correct. This language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F361	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? Main comment is that we need to make sure it is consistent with the general rules that apply to cost share, or reference them appropriately.	We believe this has been addressed with the addition of a new manual section as of July '25.	2025
F433	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? There is now a DIP detail sheet that was created, it needs to be added in here.	We believe this has been addressed with the addition of a new manual section as of July '25.	2025
F500	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> after prevailing wage requirements, add and any other public works project compliance requirements.	The language on page 66 has been updated to include "and any other public works project compliance requirements" in the July '25 manual update.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F351	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? In the "what you will learn about" list it mentions partial payments as a topic but it is never covered.

F467	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Further detail or clarify the decision-making criteria used to determine eligible practices, specifically addressing urban conservation practices that are increasingly implemented by our district.
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Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F250	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> - Second half of second paragraph - Would another example be purchasing plants (from the PMC) and hiring the services of a WCC crew, but the cooperator installs the fence? One downside of DIPs is the bidding and public works requirements, but those wouldn't apply when purchasing through WACD and an agreement with Ecology for WCC crew work.	Elected not to advance	The Ombuds Group does not understand this comment. Because it was submitted anonymously, there is no mechanism to seek clarification from the original commenter. No further action can be recommended at this time. Commenter is encouraged to consult with their RM for guidance, or could contact the Ombuds Group to provide additional information.
F288	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 1 of 2) Cost Sharing and CPDS - Reduce the requirements for inputting cooperators into CPDS for DIPS. Particularly for grouped activities such as chipping. Perhaps set a threshold of \$2,000/property or less doesn't need to be in CPDS.	Required to fulfill OFM performance reporting requirements	SCC must collect metrics from each project to document public benefit, and is required to provide this reporting to OFM, the legislature, and other partners. For this reason, it is not an option to conduct DIP projects without this documentation. Instead, the workgroup recommends focusing on making the new CPDS more user friendly.
F438	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Reduce the requirements for inputting cooperators into CPDS for DIPS. Particularly for grouped activities such as chipping. Perhaps set a threshold of \$2,000/property or less doesn't need to be in CPDS.	Required to fulfill OFM performance reporting requirements	SCC must collect metrics from each project to document public benefit, and is required to provide this reporting to OFM, the legislature, and other partners. For this reason, it is not an option to conduct DIP projects without this documentation. Instead, the workgroup recommends focusing on making the new CPDS more user friendly.

Editing / Organization

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Ombuds Workgroup as a whole

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F103	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Audit Findings or Management Letter: The sentence on "monthly payment requests with all supporting documentation being required" is a redundant element. It is always required regardless of audit results. Is this supposed to mean something different?	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F112	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Table of Contents: There are broken links and missing items within the table of contents	These items were corrected/added in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F177	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Appeals: Pg 14 - "Please refer to the MRSC guidelines for bidding, etc...." These two sentences feel out of place in this section. Maybe a stand-alone "Bidding, Purchasing, and Contracting" or input in Section 10.	Manual edited to remove the "Please refer to the MRSC guidelines" text from the Appeals section, effective July '25.	2025
F180	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Audit Findings or Management Letter: The sentence on "monthly payment requests with all supporting documentation being required" is a redundant element. It is always required regardless of audit results. Is this supposed to mean something different?	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F182	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Can Remove the notes section in the manual	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F231	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Existing Policy: This section needs to be renamed. This doesn't really describe what is in the text underneath it. All of this is duplicative.	This language was updated in the July '25 manual.	2025
F247	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Audit Findings or Management Letter : I am not sure what this section is trying to communicate except that audit findings must be communicated with your regional manager. CDs are already sending all of their monthly payment requests with full backup to SCC, and according to record retention requirements they are required to keep the documentation for 6 years after the grant ends. By default SCC financial staff are always reviewing every month's payment requests. Is there a scenario where they aren't? Please clarify what SCC financial staff may do after an audit finding.	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F255	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Table of Contents: There are broken links and missing items within the table of contents	These items were corrected/added in the July '25 manual update.	2025

F267	13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual? There is an error in the Table of Contents for subcontracting (Error! Bookmark not defined.) which is a little distracting.	These items were corrected/added in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F335	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cost sharing with a public entity question, it says "except federal." Are we not allowed to cost share with a federal agency? It doesn't say that Federal agencies are not allowed above in the Publicly-Owned Property Eligibility section	Districts may partner with federal partners with no cost share cap other than the district's approved cost share reimbursement rate. We have edited the manual text to remove the "except federal" language. (p. 64)	2025
F343	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Utilities: Do we need to call out all specific utilities or can it be a more general definition with a "such as" using the examples in here.	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F352	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Federal Audit Requirements COMMENT - second paragraph "The major audit policy" - This wording is confusing. What major audit policy are you referring to?	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F353	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Grant and Compliance Oversight: SCC always requests all backup documentation for each billing. This paragraph is communicating that we don't have to send everything? What documents are you not requesting that this section would impact?	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F383	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 1 of 4) BARS manual is in the glossary twice You can remove the page that is meant for notes from the manual. I dont think it is used.	These changes were made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F384	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Composite Rate Forms - states it's necessary every January, but earlier in Section 4, the January requirement is crossed out.	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F385	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> COMMENT - referring to CREP, if it's only CREP, it's either on the website or it isn't. If this applies to more than one program, that would make sense. Spell out CREP. b. GRAMMATICAL - consider changing language to - Other special purpose grant programs may include their own unique cost sharing policies. An example of this is the CREP Program, which has policies spelled out in that program's programmatic guidelines, the contract, and often on SCC website. Contact SCC financial staff or the grant program manager for additional information on special grant programs.	These changes were made in the July '25 manual.	2025
F399	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cost Share for Conservation District Associate Supervisors and District Staff - the last paragraph is out of place ("SCC's Individual Contributed Services Form must be submitted to document donated labor time. If the volunteer's...")	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F404	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Grants and Contracts: Update the first sentence in section to remove "both". There are three items in that sentence.	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F405	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Scenarios - Travel Vouchers --> Must be vouchered after travel has commenced? Likely intend to use the word concluded?	Wording updated from "commenced" to "concluded" in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F407	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Payroll - Aren't we getting rid of the January 1 comp rate update requirement?	Thank you for pointing this out. We removed the January 1st reference effective July '25.	2025

F408	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> QUESTION - where do costs associated with website hosting and data archiving go and are they eligible?	Additional language was added to the communications section in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F410	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Task Order and Work Order: Suggest updating timelines to reflect that each task order has it's own deadlines for work completed.	Language was added in the July '25 manual update to clarify that each task order or work order has it own timeline.	2025
F434	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> State auditor requirements QUESTION - where it says expenses for an audit are grant reimbursement allowable expenses, We can use any grant to pay for an audit?	Language was added in the July '25 manual update to clarify that the only SCC grant that can be used to pay for audit expenses is the Implementation grant.	2025
F465	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Fuel Consumed: Does this definition include the cost of small engine fuel such as brushcutters, chainsaws, etc.?	Language was added in the July '25 manual update to clarify that these costs are allowable.	2025
F494	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Eligible: fuel for ATV/UTV as no mileage rate available	Language was added in the July '25 manual update to clarify that fuel for ATV/UTV usage is an allowable expense as no mileage rate is established for this type of equipment. "Fuel Consumed" has been added to the manual in the list of allowable reimbursable expenditures".	2025
F510	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> I like that I can understand the language and it's fairly easy to find the answers. Definitely easy to navigate.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F516	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> The hot links to supporting information are very helpful.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F517	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> Fairly straightforward to find the section you are looking for.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F518	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> The current manual is fairly easy to navigate and is simple in language and complexity. It also uses examples as good tools to use.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F520	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> The layout and search function from the table of contents.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F526	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> (split 1 of 3) The active links within the manual, as well as the ability to jump straight to the applicable section from the TOC.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F529	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> I don't dislike anything. Elements can always be clearer based on user input.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F558	12/25 - 1/26 Comment Period (Split 1 of 2) Could there be a definition of "Grant" "Cost Share" somewhere in the manual. Cost Share and Grant seem to be interchangeable and that is sometimes confusing. and perhaps at that location definition of a "DIP" can be included. As a new employee these terms were confusing, as to what constitutes which definition.	These terms and definitions added to Glossary in the July '25 manual update.	2025

F564	12/25 - 1/26 <i>Comment Period</i> On page 24 there is a link to the "Table of Common Expenditures", a separate document marked draft. The contents of this are in-line starting on page 42 of the Grants Manual, though appears to be a different version. Need to reconcile these two versions.	The external version of this table was updated in March 2026 and link in Manual corrected so that the table in the manual and the external version match.	Q1 2026
F586	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Navigation: - There is a section missing from the table of contents (Section 9), and I don't think the TOC was updated prior to going to print as there are headers present in the TOC that aren't present in the manual. The dates on the website and in the document aren't consistent (for example the website says the manual was updated in July 2023, the effective date on the cover of the manual is July 2024, the adopted date is May 2023, and the footer date is June 2023. - We dislike not knowing where we are in the manual other than a page number. There should be a header or footer stating which section each page is: every page of the Manual should have a header that lists the section # and title so that you can easily tell which section you're reviewing. (split 2 of 2)	These changes were made in the July '25 manual.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F116	(5a) <i>Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Topics are covered in several different areas, making it difficult to access the information easily and quickly.
F140	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> Scenario examples and Cost-Share Q&A - But some may need to be reviewed/updated
F141	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (split 1 of 6) It is outdated, incomplete, In places it is confusing due to: - too wordy: important words get lost in haystack of non-critical words - unclear examples - Double Negative Affirmatives - unclear examples
F142	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (split 3 of 6) In places it is confusing due to: - meaning of May/Must Can/Will
F152	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> Organization and clarity. To be fair, I could say the same thing about multiple agency grant manuals.
F155	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (Split 1 of 2) Some areas seem duplicative, or like the information could possible be located in multiple sections, so takes checking both sections to ensure you have the information.

F156	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> Some of the wording is not clear as mentioned in my earlier comments.
F158	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> The formatting and length of the manual.
F160	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (Split 1 of 2) The manual has been built up over a long time and there are duplications, potential contradictions, and the structure is not that logical. Regrouping of topics ... are necessary.
F172	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> 1099 - G issuance, suggest either shifting to a "other considerations" section that catches a few other random elements or leaving it stand alone after the payments part.
F191	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Contract for Cost Share Funds: I would suggest renaming this to "required documentation" and include all subheadings that are specific to documentation for payment of cost share.
F193	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Cost sharing questions/answers - the first question should reference the later question that describes the cost share cap exception request.
F194	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> SCC Grant and Contract Compliance Oversight: Providing and maintaining voucher backup is always required for each voucher, this is an unnecessary component here. Just the "reserves the right to visit" type language. The records availability and SCC inspection component is also stated in other places
F204	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Advertising: need to re-word this to make it methodology neutral. Methods of advertising has been changing over time and specifying the method will be difficult to keep up. Suggest the language as: Advertising: Allow for the following purposes: *use existing list*
F213	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Navigation: - Simplifying navigation within the Manual to make it easier to read and jump to various sections. Some options may include a link or a button on each page that would take you back to the TOC or possibly have Bookmarks on the right side of the screen for easy navigation. (split 1 of 2)
F214	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Office and Operating Supplies: There is no line specifically for project supplies such as plant material, etc. Suggest creating a Supplies and Materials category and including office and operating supplies as examples as well as project costs.
F215	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Reference material: Why is this a specific item? Wouldn't it fit under the supplies/materials category?
F216	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 1 of 2) Overall, this section doesn't feel like it fits the term compliance or its own section. It seems most of the content has to do with either reimbursable expenses or getting paid, but really only monitoring compliance, recovery of payments, and CAPP relate to compliance.
F235	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Suggest grouping Equipment Usage, Work Crews, CD Staff, Unique Situations, Materials already owned by participant, participant as contractor, and others focused on how things get done into one section.
F239	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> There are two maintenance and operations sections.

F251	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> - Maybe for the next version of this manual we think about reorganizing things so that there isn't so much duplication and the document can be shortened substantially. Because most of this appears to be a repeat of what I've already reviewed a couple of times earlier in the manual, I won't do it again in this section.
F254	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> We recommend reformatting the manual into smaller more digestible booklets, like RCO's grant manual or PEBB's benefits 24/7 manual.
F282	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> 5.Rewrite the Grants Manual using plain language for non-finance professionals oGood for communication, but this is my lowest priority because the substance of the policies and requirements are the most important.
F307	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Please format the document to be read on the computer, not like a printed book.
F310	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Sections should be cross referenced to make future updating simple
F348	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Grant Manual Comments General Comment - consider not using contractions for words...i.e aren't.
F376	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Lastly, as was mentioned in the ombudsman meeting and the March 2025 WSCC meeting, this manual needs to be pulled apart, reorganized and put back together again. It should be updated such that a newly hired finance person could read the manual and successfully be able to document and request payment. Right now, essential elements that need to be known up front end up at the end of a section or too many chapters down the line. I look forward to participating in future rounds of updates.
F388	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Allowable expenses: Suggest putting the meaning of the asterisk at the top of the section, not the bottom.
F409	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> 1/25 - Make dates in manual consistent. Currently dates on the website and in the document aren't consistent. For example, the website says the manual was updated in July 2023 (https://www.scc.wa.gov/files/grant-and-policy-manual), the effective date on the cover of the manual is July 2024, the adopted date is May 2023, and the footer date is June 2023.
F419	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Envirothon - this is only mentioned in the glossary, no where else in the manual. Should either include in the manual or remove from glossary.
F420	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> GAAP - this is only mentioned in the glossary, no where else in the manual. Should either include in the manual or remove from glossary.
F421	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Open Contract - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual. - Privately Owned Vehicle - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual.
F422	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Purchase Card - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual.
F423	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Request for Applications - COMMENT - I don't recall seeing this in the manual. If it isn't in here, why put it in the glossary?
F424	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> RFA - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual.

F425	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> RFP - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual.
F426	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Direct Costs: This definition should be at the start of this section, not the end. Ideally there would be a big heading called "Direct Costs" which includes this definition and all of the content in this section. Followed by a big heading that says "Indirect Costs" which includes the overhead calculation content.
F427	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Sponsorships: Can likely remove the last sentence. An additional funding source would not relate back to the capital funded grant and would follow that specific funding source's rules. i.e. We have a riparian grant program that includes the potential for sponsorship but bring in Ecology to fund the sponsorship, SCC would not be involved in the decision whether the sponsorship was eligible. Or is this saying that if you can get a second sponsor that the expense would then be eligible under the program?
F452	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Overall, this section doesn't feel like it fits the term compliance or its own section. It seems most of the content has to do with either reimbursable expenses or getting paid, but really only monitoring compliance, recovery of payments, and CAPP relate to compliance.
F454	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Speaker - the tone of this definition feels odd given that the manual is now making speaker fees ineligible for reimbursement. Supplemental Funding - only mentioned in glossary, not the manual.
F458	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Composite Rate Forms COMMENT - This is the third time I've seen this same information about composite rates
F474	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> GRANT - QUESTION - when referring to cooperative agreements, What is a cooperative agreement? Maybe include it's definition above. It's not included within the interagency agreement definition.
F477	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Employee Composite Rates: It should be near the top as this is the number one expense for programs.
F479	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> COMMENT - consider including the term Entities. You use this term throughout. Either don't use it or include it in the glossary.
F485	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Sentence that starts with Exceptions.... (capitalize exceptions). Update to say, "Any expenditures that fall outside of this criteria may be approved on a case-by-case basis."
F486	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> In this section, you'll learn about..." doesn't match what's in the sections below.
F487	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Districts and Counties Must Pay First and Payment of Allowable Costs - there is some duplication between these two sections which are sequential.
F497	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> COMMENT - in section starting A SAM... Seems like I read all this somewhere else in this manual. Might want to think about reorganizing for a future version to avoid duplicative language and shorten the document.
F503	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> 1/25 - Navigation (clarified): Update the TOC. Simplify navigation within the manual to make it easier to read and jump to various sections. Add footer with section title and link it so it jumps back up to the TOC.
F504	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Run a grammar check on the whole manual. There are many spots with incorrect verb agreement, mixing tenses, etc.

F541	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 5 of 7) Links: Cross-References to relevant policies/procedures
F551	<i>Email comment</i> Page 8 of the manual states that all grants have a 2-letter abbreviation. That is no longer true. Many have 3 letter abbreviations.
F552	<i>Email comment</i> Page 51 of the manual has a sentence that was cut off at the bottom of the page.
F576	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 2 of 4) Subscriptions in the glossary does not match the definition in the "allowable expenses" section. The glossary refers to newspapers, etc. and allowable expenses focuses on software. It should be both.
F577	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 4 of 4) The following items only exist within the glossary and are not mentioned in the document: GAAP, Governmental Funds, Packing Slip, Privately Owned Vehicles, Purchase Card, Request for Proposals, Request for Applications, Sales Receipt
F579	12/25 - 1/26 <i>Comment Period</i> (Split 2 of 2) Could there be a definition of "Contract" somewhere in the manual. As a new employee (this term, versus Grant, DIP, and Cost Share was) confusing, as to what constitutes which definition.
F580	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 2 of 3) Make sure there is clear definitions for language used for professionals
F581	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 2 of 2) Additionally, the first section "In this section, you'll learn about..." doesn't match what's in the sections below.
F582	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) In this section, you'll learn about..." doesn't match what's in the sections below.
F588	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 4 of 7) References: consistency in references to (names of) specific documentation/forms
F589	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (split 2 of 6) In places it is confusing due to: - using words to describe math where tabular data would be more clear
F590	11. <i>What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> (split 5 of 6) In places it is confusing due to: - information required in required documentation
F591	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 6 of 7) Online Availability: Use of web-based tech to store manual as articles which can be updated as needed and searched rather than relying on a PDF which may or may not have been updated since downloaded
F596	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Cost sharing questions/answers - the first question should reference the question later regarding appealing the cost share policy. Likewise, the question about cost sharing with another public entity should also reference the appeal question.

Electronic Signatures

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Addressed before Tiger Teams

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F109	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Electronic Signatures: Clarify specially what is required of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS for electronic signatures. Current manual states WSCC policy but it is my understanding that most of that only applies to WSCC staff. Ex. Master contract requires wet signature, all other documents require wet signature unless CD has a policy for electronic signatures	Language was updated in the July '25 manual update. See section "Electronic Signatures" on page 10, where there is a linked policy including a list of documents that allow electronic signature vs require a wet signature.	2025
F134	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Signature requirements	Language was updated in the July '25 manual update. See section "Electronic Signatures" on page 10, where there is a linked policy including a list of documents that allow electronic signature vs require a wet signature.	2025
F199	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Electronic Signatures: Clarify specially what is required of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS for electronic signatures. Current manual states WSCC policy but it is my understanding that most of that only applies to WSCC staff. Ex. Master contract requires wet signature, all other documents require wet signature unless CD has a policy for electronic signatures.	Language was updated in the July '25 manual update. See section "Electronic Signatures" on page 10, where there is a linked policy including a list of documents that allow electronic signature vs require a wet signature.	2025
F356	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Thank you for accepting electronic signatures on the master contract. Will SCC accept electronic signatures on the authorized signature form?	No, the Authorized Signature Form requires a wet signature. Language was updated in the July '25 manual update. See section "Electronic Signatures" on page 10, where there is a linked policy including a list of documents that allow electronic signature vs require a wet signature.	2025

Foreign Transaction Fees

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Addressed before Tiger Teams

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F398	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Ineligible Expenditures: Foreign transaction fees: in cases where the only high quality option for a small tool is located in Canada, we cannot bill that cost to the grant? Prime example is that Forestry Suppliers Archaeologist Screens fall apart almost immediately. There is a company in BC that sells high quality ones, no other real suppliers in the US, but there is a foreign transaction fee when purchasing from them.	We moved this to the conditionally allowable section in our manual effective July '25.	2025

Honoraria, Stipends, Speaker Fees

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Travel

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F314	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Speaker fees and any travel costs associated with hiring a speaker for an event - does this mean someone putting on a training for staff? Or just a motivational speaker?
F392	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> 2. Speaker fees and any travel costs associated with a speaker - This is quite restrictive and means we can't pay for hosting our own trainings. According to the definition in the glossary, a "Speaker is a person who presents information, ideas, or stories to an audience at an event. These can be any event, such as conferences, seminars, workshops, or webinars. Speakers are often experts in their fields and may include professionals, academics, or motivational leaders. Moreover, their primary goal is to educate, inspire, or entertain the audience, making the content relatable and accessible." This seems like an important eligible cost to improve the training and education of our district employees. What is the thought process behind this?
F393	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Speaker Fees: Why are speaker fees specifically excluded? Speakers can be sources of producer education around program topics. They can also be a draw to get more attendance and more reach. At the minimum this expense should be conditionally allowed. The definition of speaker in the glossary talks about them as a very positive thing, but are specifically excluded here.
F443	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> 3. Host stipends for producers holding workshops - We need a way to pay for the labor provided to producers who host workshops. If a stipend isn't eligible, would an hourly rate be?

Individual Grant Programs

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F133	(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand) SFF materials purchases	This was addressed with updates to program guidelines in 2025.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F130	(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand) (split 1 of 3) Section 5: Special Grant Programs All of the special grant programs in this manual have their own program guidelines. This section should simply be a reference section to the appropriate guidelines. It could be a comprehensive list of all existing guidelines. I also refer back to my suggestion that this manual needs to be the foundation for the rest of the grant programs, including Implementation. The funding landscape is too complex to try to develop a manual that includes every possible scenario in a single spot. This manual should be the rule-set that all of the other grant programs follow
F149	11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual? lack of consolidation with new funding pools and programs
F154	11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual? SCC interpretation of eligible capital expenses is unique. Example: many other capital funded grant programs allow for "design only" grants. This is likely because these designs lead to the actual construction of the capital project. SCC does not allow for "design only" grants. Similarly, if a plan is necessary to implement a capital project then the planning should be eligible under a capital program. At this point, if the answer to any of this is "its because of the color of capital funding we receive", then the answer is inadequate. This is what SCC told us about SCC RGP vs RCO Riparian. We all know that the money came from the exact same pool of funding. If the answer is the "color of money" then help us understand by showing us the proof in statute/OFM requirements.
F173	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? The list of allowable expenses doesn't match the reality. Many of these expenses are not allowed for the various funding programs. Anything that is not allowed on one of the funding programs needs to be moved to conditionally allowed. This grant manual seems focused on the Implementation grant and then expects all of the other program guidelines to modify it. It should be the other way around. This should be the base that is allowed for everything, and then having other program guidelines modify this manual. I suggest limiting the allowable expense list to things that will always be accepted in all grant programs and putting the rest in conditionally allowed expenses stating that it depends on the grant guidelines. Then the other guidelines need to have allowable expenses components as well to tie back to this manual.

F203	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Any special grant programs should be housed on a webpage on the commission website and just linked here. When new programs are added, the link would remain the same.
F222	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> All of the special grant programs in this manual have their own program guidelines. This section should simply be a reference section to the appropriate guidelines. It could be a comprehensive list of all existing guidelines. I also refer back to my suggestion that this manual needs to be the foundation for the rest of the grant programs, including Implementation. The funding landscape is too complex to try to develop a manual that includes every possible scenario in a single spot. This manual should be the rule-set that all of the other grant programs follow
F279	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual 3.Creating consistency across grants, such as a consistent outline and content for each grant in the Grants Manual</i> oThis seems like more of a want more than a need. Consistency is good, but we shouldn't handcuff a program in the name of consistency. Keep flexibility whenever possible. oEach program is created by its own unique statute or proviso. Therefore, they may need to have different rules/requirements, prioritize flexibility. Don't add additional requirements in the name of consistency.
F280	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual 4.Integrating grant guidelines into the Grants Manual, ensuring information is cross-referenced</i> oThis sounds great on the surface, but I would suggest caution. Guidelines may have the need to be more flexible than the procedures manual and may need a small change mid-biennium.
F281	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual 2.</i> Clarify the specific information that needs to be provided for each grant
F300	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> It should include a clear concise framework for all grants, identifying in a table consistencies and unique requirements, which should be further details.
F528	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Training and Education: This is not universally allowed, need to update the rules to the actual practice or adjust the actual practice. Some funding programs are capital and only allow training when approved. Others don't require it. Need to update this to reflect the reality.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F111	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Program Codes: Can we work on reclassifying them so they are more unique? Need to update the list too. RPP, RP, RGP are too close. Suggest a linked document with the program code list with descriptions of each program. Maybe the smartsheet list?	Elected not to advance	Existing system limitations and legislative naming conventions constrain available program codes. The Tiger Team did not wish to advance a recommendation to try changing any of the codes. The Tiger Team felt there is adequate documentation of the codes through the list of program codes in the manual, the list of programs in Chapter 5, and links to programmatic guidance with more information. At this time they did not suggest creating another list.

F126	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Could clarify a bit more about what implementation dollars can be used for.	Elected not to advance	Maintaining flexibility is preferable. Prescriptive lists could unintentionally restrict appropriate uses or require frequent revisions.
F135	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> So many new programmatic guidelines are coming out with new funding opportunities and they are not always included in the manual. It would be nice to have it all consolidated.	Elected not to advance	The Tiger Team felt that embedding detailed program requirements in the manual would make updates difficult and increase the likelihood that information becomes outdated between manual revisions.
F151	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> Organization and administration of grant aren't consistent from grant to grant. - outcome organization - eligible expenses like CR that result in increase in award amount (amendment - after expense incurred) for some grants but not others - eligible expense list not applicable to all grants	Legal or Statutory	Different funding sources, provisos, and legislative requirements require program-specific rules. Complete standardization is not feasible. The Working Group focused instead on better organization and communication of program-specific requirements.
F168	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (split 2 of 4) Bottom line, I would like us to be able to implement grants with rules that span all grant programs	Legal or Statutory	Different funding sources, provisos, and legislative requirements require program-specific rules. Complete standardization is not feasible. The Working Group focused instead on better organization and communication of program-specific requirements.
F219	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Consolidation to include all of the programmatic guidelines.	Preferred alternative	Embedding detailed program requirements in the manual would make updates difficult and increase the likelihood that information becomes outdated between manual revisions. Instead, the Tiger Team recommended linking to programmatic guidelines and removing duplication in the manual, and encouraged improvements to the programmatic guidelines.
F220	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Program Codes: Can we work on reclassifying them so they are more unique? Need to update the list too. RPP, RP, RGP are too close. Suggest a linked document with the program code list with descriptions of each program. Maybe the smartsheet list?	Elected not to advance	Existing system limitations and legislative naming conventions constrain available program codes. The Tiger Team did not wish to advance a recommendation to try changing any of the codes. The Tiger Team felt there is adequate documentation of the codes through the list of program codes in the manual, the list of programs in Chapter 5, and links to programmatic guidance with more information. At this time they did not suggest creating another list.
F371	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 6 of 6, also re-organized by topic) Consistency is important and currently there is little to none between programs when it comes to allocation of funds and development of outcomes.	Legal or Statutory	Different funding sources, provisos, and legislative requirements require program-specific rules. Complete standardization is not feasible. The Working Group focused instead on better organization and communication of program-specific requirements.

F459	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Program Codes: Can we work on reclassifying them so they are more unique? Need to update list too. RPP, RP, RGP are too close. Suggest a linked document with the program code list with descriptions of each program.	Elected not to advance	Existing system limitations and legislative naming conventions constrain available program codes. The Tiger Team did not wish to advance a recommendation to try changing any of the codes. The Tiger Team felt there is adequate documentation of the codes through the list of program codes in the manual, the list of programs in Chapter 5, and links to programmatic guidance with more information. At this time they did not suggest creating another list.
F524	13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual? (split 2 of 2) And try to make requirements consistent from grant to grant (e.g. which outcomes can include TA, goods and services, projects, etc.).	Legal or Statutory	Different funding sources, provisos, and legislative requirements require program-specific rules. Complete standardization is not feasible. The Working Group focused instead on better organization and communication of program-specific requirements.
F535	13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual? (split 2 of 2) And try to make requirements consistent from grant to grant (e.g. which outcomes can include TA, goods and services, projects, etc.).	Legal or Statutory	Different funding sources, provisos, and legislative requirements require program-specific rules. Complete standardization is not feasible. The Working Group focused instead on better organization and communication of program-specific requirements.
F546	<i>Email comment</i> Define a process that CD's and legislators can use to directly pass funds through to CDs without additional SCC process and requirements. For example, if a legislator puts funds for fire recovery into the budget for a CD, those funds go directly to the CD for those purposes.	Legal or Statutory	When SCC administers funding, it remains accountable for compliance and stewardship and standard SCC processes will continue to apply. The Tiger Team instead recommended improving tools outside the Grants Manual to support Districts seeking/receiving earmarked funding.
F567	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Inconsistencies in CPDS requirements between programs.	Legal or Statutory	Program-to-program differences in CPDS requirements stem from different funding and program requirements, and cannot be completely resolved. The Workgroup instead recommended improving CPDS (or replacement) usability.
F619	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 2 of 2) <i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Inconsistencies in CPDS requirements between programs.	Legal or Statutory	Program-to-program differences in CPDS requirements stem from different funding and program requirements, and cannot be completely resolved. The Workgroup instead recommended improving CPDS (or replacement) usability.

Labor Rates

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Cost Share and DIP

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F202	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? (Split 1 of 2) Hourly donated labor rate, where does this dollar figure come from?
F308	Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual Raise the labor rate for cost share.
F357	Grant Manual Comments (Split 1 of 4) Labor Rate: Is the labor rate not being updated for 2025-27?
F363	Grant Manual Comments (Split 1 of 3) 1/25: Participant Labor Rate: Where does \$25 come from? Could we instead refer to the Washington or Federal volunteer labor rate? \$25 is pretty low.
F573	11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual? A local CD should be able to set it's own landowner labor rate.
F613	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? (Split 2 of 2) Could we instead refer to the Washington or Federal volunteer labor rate?
F614	Grant Manual Comments (Split 3 of 3) 1/25: Participant Labor Rate: \$25 is pretty low.
F615	Grant Manual Comments (Split 2 of 3) 1/25: Participant Labor Rate: Could we instead refer to the Washington or Federal volunteer labor rate?
F616	Grant Manual Comments (Split 2 of 4) Labor Rate: Another suggestion is a CPI adjusted rate that is updated annually.
F617	Grant Manual Comments (Split 4 of 4) Labor Rate: Is it possible for a district to exceed the \$25 rate in policy? If so, please add that option to the manual.
F618	Grant Manual Comments (Split 3 of 4) Labor Rate: The value of volunteer time determined by an independent organization has determined that volunteer labor is currently worth \$34.79. Value of Volunteer Time - Independent Sector The value of labor has gone up regardless and should increase.

Mortgage

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F482	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Rental of office space: Please refer to my mortgage payment question. Why is rental OK but not mortgage.
F483	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Mortgage Payments: Why is this not eligible but leases are? Mortgage payments for buildings owned by Districts apply equally to all programs like leases.
F484	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> New additions include: 1. Mortgage payments - Why is this ineligible? What if the District wants to purchase an office building and takes out a loan to do so, how is this any different than rent?

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F284	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Allow mortgage payments as reimbursable	Legal or Statutory	Federal cost principles, state requirements, and recent consultation with the Attorney General's Office and OFM indicate that mortgage payments are not allowable direct grant expenditures because they finance long-term ownership rather than time-limited grant activities. The Working Group concluded that there is not a reasonable legal or regulatory basis to adopt this policy change.
F301	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Mortgage payments - why is this not allowable suddenly?	Elected not to advance	There has been no change to mortgage payment rules for many years. The manual was edited in 2025 to clarify the long-standing policy.

F620	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Rental of office space: Also, the stipulation on not exceeding the cost of similar facilities would be impossible to enforce or check. It is almost impossible to compare two rental locations and the cost at the beginning of the lease might be comparable but the terms might cause it to exceed another location. Will the Commission force a CD to move their office by disallowing rental costs that are deemed "too expensive" compared to a building down the street?	Elected not to advance	The situation of a district appearing to have excessively expensive space rental/lease costs has not come up in years. The Commission is not actively analyzing these costs during voucher review, and should these costs appear unusually high, the Commission would work with the District and their RM to understand the situation. The WSCC does not have the authority to force Districts or other funding recipients to relocate their office space. Given the unlikelihood of this occurring, the Tiger Team did not identify a need to respond with a recommendation to change the manual or supporting processes.
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Overhead / Indirect

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F102	(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand) Allowable Reimbursable Expenses - Overhead vs Direct Expenses
F432	Grant Manual Comments Computing Conservation District Overhead Costs - would be worth putting in here that the rate is 25%.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F138	(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand) What is eligible to be charged to overhead. I know this is not covered by the SCC but as the governing agency it would be important for a new hire to understand. According to the SCC manual, subscriptions, insurance, office supplies, and communications are all reimbursable expenses. These were previously explained to me as overhead expenses.	Preferred alternative	The Commission intentionally does not regulate how funding recipients spend overhead funds once they have been earned. Guidance and training are preferred to creating new policy defining what costs are eligible to charge to overhead.
F568	Feb '26 Ombuds Workgroup Meeting Re: Overhead, how is the 25% calculated and is there an option to change it?	Elected not to advance	The current rate is reasonably aligned with other agency rates (e.g., Federal de minimis 15%, Ecology 30%). Reopening the policy to consider changing the rate could create risk that the current rate would be reduced rather than increased. The Tiger Team did not advance recommendations to explain the basis of the rate or to increase it.
F569	Feb '26 Ombuds Workgroup Meeting Re: Overhead, is there an option for allowing Districts with a NICRA to charge that rate instead?	Elected not to advance	The current rate is reasonably aligned with other agency rates (e.g., Federal de minimis 15%, Ecology 30%). Reopening the policy to consider changing the rate could create risk that the current rate would be reduced rather than increased. The Tiger Team did not advance recommendations to explain the basis of the rate or to increase it.

Overtime

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Fruit Basket

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F548	<i>Email comment</i> Allow overtime decisions to be made at the local level to empower the best management of resources. Federal laws do not prohibit paying overtime or qualify a position to receive overtime. Federal law requires minimum wage and overtime payment to specific positions. The cost of overtime can be much cheaper than alternative ways to meet a conservation need.	Elected not to advance	Funding Recipients are responsible for determining whether employees are eligible to work or receive overtime under applicable employment laws and local personnel policies. SCC's role is limited to determining whether overtime charged to SCC funding is allowable, properly documented, and reasonable. The Tiger Team did not identify any issue with current SCC policy that would warrant changes to the manual or reimbursement requirements.

Peer-to-Peer Rentals

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Travel

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F403	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Peer or Peer Rental: Edited this sentence to clarify that the Commission won't reimburse more than per diem: Original: The nightly rate plus associated fees must not exceed the per diem rate for the area. --> edited: REIMBURSEMENT FOR the nightly rate plus associated fees WILL not exceed the per diem rate for the area."	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F445	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Peer or Peer Rental - The edits state: "When there are multiple employees staying at the facility...The district must pay for the cost of the rental with agency card and one employee cannot incur the total cost of the rental and be reimbursed for the cost" à What is the intent of this policy? What if multiple employees choose to reserve accommodations together that are slightly above per diem? Past policy would allow them to submit receipts and be reimbursed up to per diem amounts by the District. This addition seems unnecessary.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F283	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Align peer to peer rentals with the linked guidance.	Preferred alternative	The manual references SAAM Chapter 10 (which is binding) and OFM risk guidance (which provides a suggested, non-binding approach), and currently aligns with the latter. The Working Group recommends maintaining alignment with SAAM Chapter 10 while allowing additional payment options beyond those described in the OFM guidance.

Taxes

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F233	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Tax Related Information (1099-MISC) - Align 1099 information (page 10) with actual guidelines (not all payments over \$600 need a 1099) or else just put a notice that Districts must follow federal regulations for issuing 1099 forms and note the operations brief on 1099 issuance for cost share.
F272	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (split 2 of 2) And the 1099-MISC guidance is incorrect.
F488	<i>Grant Manual Comments 1/25</i> - Tax Related Information (1099-MISC) - Align 1099 information (page 10) with actual guidelines (not all payments over \$600 need a 1099) or else just put a notice that Districts must follow federal regulations for issuing 1099 forms and note the operations brief on 1099 issuance for cost share.
F570	<i>Feb '26 Ombuds Workgroup Meeting</i> Please correct link under "Tax Related Information (1099-MISC) (p.9) - looks like it is supposed to point to the District Operations Brief, but instead goes to IRS https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-1099-misc

Travel

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Travel

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F406	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 1 of 2) Travel vouchers: travel-related expenditures vouchers after it has commenced (started) or after it has been completed?	Thank you for pointing this error out. Wording updated from "commenced" to "concluded" in the July '25 manual update.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F118	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Meal Per Diem Reimbursement: Contractors, volunteers, and district partners are not eligible for per diem reimbursement. This is in paragraph 1 on this topic but this seems to either not be enforced or not true. When we hire an out of the area contractor, we will and have covered travel expenses up to per diem amounts. This is common practice with contractors. We do require them to provide receipts so that they are verified appropriate.
F237	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Meal Per Diem Reimbursement: Contractors, volunteers, and district partners are not eligible for per diem reimbursement. This is in paragraph 1 on this topic but this seems to either not be enforced or not true. When we hire an out of the area contractor, we will and have covered travel expenses up to per diem amounts. This is common practice with contractors. We do require them to provide receipts so that they are verified appropriate.
F240	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Meal Per Diem Reimbursement: Contractors, volunteers, and district partners are not eligible for per diem reimbursement. This is in paragraph 1 on this topic but this seems to either not be enforced or not true. When we hire an out of the area contractor, we will and have covered travel expenses up to per diem amounts. This is common practice with contractors. We do require them to provide receipts so that they are verified appropriate.
F320	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Meal Per Diem Reimbursement: What about Americorps? They act as staff but are contracted staff. What about 1099 contract employees? Also serving as staff but may not be on a W2 payroll.
F321	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Meal Per Diem Reimbursement: The restrictions on this exclude AmeriCorps members. Can this be opened up to staff, interns, and volunteers volunteering over some amount per week to the District?
F323	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Not allowing contractors to collect per diem for travel is a burden to communities that do not have robust contracting firms. We bring in experts for design purposes and they may need to travel in for a few days to collect field data, why are they not allowed to be reimbursed for travel costs? This would severely limit our ability to implement projects if we have to limit contractor's ability to recover their costs.

F354	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Out of State/Country Travel: Will SCC fiscal staff be responsible for communicating the appropriate Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner rates for the travel destination? Federal Per Diem includes a \$5 incidentals element that Washington State splits between the three meals. This is where most of the errors occur and could use either a general rule of thumb (i.e. \$1 to breakfast, \$2 to Lunch and Dinner) or direct guidance from SCC Finance staff before travel occurs.
F621	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Travel vouchers: What about travel that crosses months (leave on the 31st and continue traveling in the next month)? Can we combine 2 months of travel onto one reimbursement form?

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F242	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Travel: Can we open the policy up so that we can group multiple months of travel to deal with travel that crosses a month or when there are very few miles on a travel voucher for an individual month? Why are required to process paperwork for a \$3 reimbursement when we could combine it with 2 or 3 months to make it worth the cost for processing. As with all other expenses in cash-basis accounting, travel reimbursement is not incurred until we pay the employee. If we wait to pay 3 months of travel expenses, that should be OK since the expense wasn't incurred to the District until the employee asks for reimbursement.	Legal or Statutory	WAC 135-10-030, https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=135-10-030 , requires conservation district travel vouchers to be submitted monthly. Instead, the Working Group recommended that the WAC be referenced in the manual to clarify the basis of this requirement.

F286	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Currently the grants manual applies to all entities submitting for funding from SCC. That fails to reflect the unique relationship between SCC and CD's created by RCW 89.08. The intention of RCW 90.08 is to empower locally led decision making in conservation. Given 89.08, CAPP and the legislative authority of local CD boards there is opportunity to reduce the state wide prescriptive guidance in the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual that reduces CD's operational flexibility, increases administrative costs and increases timelines to put conservation on the ground. I advocate that for CD's, policy that isn't specifically required and can be referenced be removed. Local boards have the good governance to manage financial resources without the added time and cost of SCC micromanaging. An examples of micromanagement is the requirement for SCC to determine if out of state travel is approved. Some may champion that more policy means more accountability, but the accountability that CD's have through our local boards, relationships with local communities, relationships with local legislators, CAPP, the state auditors office is far more significant that a book of policy that shifts decision making up to a few individuals and out of the hands of the local government. The Grant and Contracts Procedure Manual should be reviewed in full and written to empower CD's to be as efficient and effective as possible.	Legal or Statutory	State travel regulations require prior authorization for out-of-state travel (10.10.50.a, https://ofm.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/ch10.pdf). The Tiger Team therefore does not recommend eliminating the approval requirement.
F326	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Training and Education: Restating the request to add some base authorization for out-of-state travel that doesn't require a flight ... Suggest allowing costs up to a certain amount (\$2,000/grant?) without SCC approval.	Legal or Statutory	State travel regulations require prior authorization for out-of-state travel (10.10.50.a, https://ofm.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/ch10.pdf). The Tiger Team therefore does not recommend eliminating the approval requirement.
F469	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Travel and Transportation: "Out of country and out of state travel must be approved in advance of the travel taking place." Can you clarify in the manual that this is for flights or extended travel, or put some qualifiers on it? We regularly travel to the Portland metro area for training or if we go to Underwood CD, we drive down to Portland and pay a toll to cross back over on the Hood River bridge. This policy would make those costs require approval. Perhaps there could be a threshold at which out-of-state travel requires approval?	Legal or Statutory	State travel regulations require prior authorization for out-of-state travel (10.10.50.a, https://ofm.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/ch10.pdf) and do not establish a general exemption based on the dollar amount of the trip or whether air travel is involved. The Tiger Team therefore does not recommend eliminating the approval requirement, or creating a separate threshold or ground-travel exemption. Existing state-defined exceptions, such as certain travel to contiguous areas of Idaho and Oregon, continue to apply.
F544	<i>Email comment</i> Allow local governance and oversight by leaving out of state travel decisions to the local board. Or explain why a board of 5 local citizens can't be trusted to make travel decisions for their staff.	Legal or Statutory	State travel regulations require prior authorization for out-of-state travel (10.10.50.a, https://ofm.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/default/files/public/legacy/policy/ch10.pdf). The Tiger Team therefore does not recommend eliminating the approval requirement.

Vocabulary

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Ombuds Workgroup as a whole

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F346	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> General comment - consider replacing BMP with the term practice, practices, or suite of practices as appropriate.
F347	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> General comment - the term entity is used throughout and seems awkward. Maybe just something like "funding recipient" or "grant/contract awardee".
F349	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> CPDS QUESTION - First paragraph where it refers to recipients, by recipient, do you mean grant recipient or cost share recipient?
F401	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 1 of 2) Participant as Contractor COMMENT - referring to participant, there are so many other less ambiguous terms we could use.
F453	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Landowner - may also be referred to as producer.
F455	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Best Management Practice - COMMENT - The NRCS refers to them simply as conservation practices.
F456	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Participant - COMMENT - I prefer cost-share recipient, since participant can mean so many different things.
F457	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cooperator - would add "producer" to the list of who they can include.
F480	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Cooperator - QUESTION - where it refers to eligible participant, Eligible for what? Are entities that receive RPPP or SFF funds from the SCC considered cooperators? Do cooperators work directly with the SCC? Don't some cooperators get funding SCC from counties?

Vouchering - Processes and Docs

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Tiger Team: Process and Help

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F131	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> (split 2 of 3) Section 6: Documents Required with Reimbursement Requests: Need to add a requirement that each bill must be marked with a paid date. This single issue resulted in a lot of wasted administrative time at both WSCC and CDs and is an easy solve.	This change was made in the July '25 manual update.	2025
F195	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Credit Cards (pg 18) - More clearly state that the Credit Card Statement AND the supporting receipt/document must accompany the voucher.	The 2025 Manual version removed the requirement to include credit card statements by default.	2025
F198	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Documents Required with Reimbursement Requests (pg 43) for Cost Share & DIPs: we've been told several times that the landowner's name must be at the top of the Cultural Resources statement, but it's not mentioned in the manual. The Form itself asks for the Practice/Project and the CPDS number is generally what's input there. Is it possible to amend the form and add a field at the top of the page?	This change was made in 2025.	2025
F223	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Documents Required with Reimbursement Requests: Need to add a requirement that each bill must be marked with a paid date. This single issue resulted in a lot of wasted administrative time at both WSCC and CDs and is an easy solve.	This change was made in the July '25 manual.	2025
F275	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (split 3 of 3) The above-listed topics aren't a high priority for our district now. I like to see the following prioritized: Would love to see the budget spreadsheet & A19 labeled with the grant # and date	This was updated in 2026 Q1.	Q1 2026
F338	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Thank you for removing the no activity requirement.	Happy to remove it!	2025
F339	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Voucher Payment Requests - No deadline given for voucher submittal. There is a lot of duplication from section 3 here, would suggest linking to Section 3 for voucher detail.	The July '25 manual update includes a link to Section 3 for further details as suggested. Thank you!	2025
F341	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Documents required w/Reimbursement-> DIPs mentioned here, maybe say "monthly invoicing only required if project costs incurred that month"	Language was edited for clarity in the July '25 manual update.	2025

F362	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> Credit Card statements submitted only once/month instead of duplicates with every voucher.	The 2025 Manual version removed the requirement to include credit card statements by default.	2025
F461	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> COMMENT - Likewise, it would be helpful for us if the budget spreadsheets and A19s were named accordingly when sent to us, rather than simply named "BudgetSpreadsheet" and "A19."	This was updated in 2026 Q1.	Q1 2026
F462	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> 1/25 (edited for clarity) - Scenarios - Credit Cards - Do we need to include the credit card statement in our vouchers? Still doesn't state that anywhere. More clearly state that the Credit Card Statement AND the supporting receipt/document must accompany the voucher.	The 2025 Manual version removed the requirement to include credit card statements by default.	2025
F531	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Why are the CC statements now needed, when they haven't been in the past? Is this a one-time thing or a new requirement? If the reasoning could come along with the request, or preferably communicated before, it's very helpful. A clear directive from SCC Finance that the statements are now required is needed. Or, better yet, maybe a letter on file from each district that says 'yes, expenses, including CC purchases, are paid before included in a voucher for reimbursement'. It's an additional burden to have to include statements in every voucher pdf for each employee every month. The 'final voucher' thing addressed in a previous section of the survey.	The 2025 Manual version removed the requirement to include credit card statements by default.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F120	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Fiscal Year end and final request for payment: The second line about requests for additional documentation is confusing. It makes it seem like if WSCC staff do not request additional documents within 30 days, it will be considered late. Should be reworded to reflect that districts are required to respond to requests for additional documents by the 30th of July or it may be considered late and may not be authorized for payment.
F136	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Technical requirements for Voucher documentation, submission
F159	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> The manual also is based on the existing financial billing methodology that could be greatly improved through modernization.

F165	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (split 1 of 3) Voucher Support Form - Detail and summary page Posing this question back to WSCC finance staff - are there any common issues that could be addressed in this format to speed up processing? Consistent naming conventions, formatting, etc.? re-ordering columns?
F169	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (Split 2 of 2) Fiscal Year end and final request for payment: The second line about requests for additional documentation is confusing. It makes it seem like if WSCC staff do not request additional documents within 30 days, it will be considered late. Should be reworded to reflect that districts are required to respond to requests for additional documents by the 30th of July or it may be considered late and may not be authorized for payment.
F372	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 3 of 6, also re-organized by topic) The amount of documentation provided IN a voucher is crazy. There are better mechanisms that can be incorporated into the system to provide the Commission the required information in an efficient manner.
F505	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> COMMENT - regarding the complied statement form, I request that we be able to upload it into CPDS instead of scanning and emailing. If you're going to require us to use it, I think it's only fair that you use it, too.
F506	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> QUESTION - Why can't we upload completed cost share agreements and cultural resources forms as documents into CPDS instead of scanning and emailing them? You already look at CPDS for photos and other stuff.
F539	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> (split 3 of 4) As just one example, District financial staff should be able to upload expenses to a portal for review and approval by Fiscal staff.

Considered, alternate or no recommendation made

Unique ID #	Comment	Reason "alternate or no recommendation made"	Brief explanation
F628	12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective? (split 3 of 3) Voucher Support Form - Detail and summary page If changes are suggested, we need to include Springbrook in the conversation since they have mimicked the format of both the detail and summary pages.	Elected not to advance	SCC would not be able to directly interface with Springbrook or any other accounting platform because they are not a customer. The Working Group opted not to advance a specific recommendation to address communicating potential format changes with Springbrook, but notes that the Finance & Admin Workgroup may be a better venue to organize feedback.

WSCC - CD Interactions

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Ombuds Workgroup as a whole

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F317	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 1 of 2) This survey does not address priority concerns that have been continually brought to SCC leadership and finance staff. Ranking the "priorities" offered would generate results that produce a false narrative.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F597	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 3 of 3) None of the priorities listed address the concerns or issues that are commonly brought up it up.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025

Addressed through recommendation(s)

Unique ID #	Comment
F117	<i>(5a) Please specify which sections/topics (you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> Vouchering ~ I have received conflicting guidance from SCC financial staff to that which is in the manual, specifically when an invoice is eligible - invoice date vs date of payment
F128	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> I feel WSCC finance staff are changing how grants are administered financially throughout the biennium due to unknown, or at least poorly communicated reasons, and as such each grant program is administered differently than each other and mass confusion has reigned supreme for the past 18 months. Requests to fix the problems mid-biennium have gone almost completely unheeded. It isn't that there isn't enough detail in the current manual. Rather, the problem lies in how grant finance, and sometimes grant management staff, interpret the policies or they have unilaterally changed how they interpret the rules to be different than how we have done things for years without actually changing the policy or showing those affected why the change is actually REQUIRED BY LAW, versus someone's statement similar to, "It would be great if....".
F137	<i>(5b) Please specify (which sections/topics you find unclear, confusing or difficult to understand)</i> The manual needs a dispute resolution process to allow CD's to a process to revise the manual and refute decision making that counters local efficiency, effectiveness and applicability.
F139	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It's being thrown in the trash hopefully because very little of it still actually stands true so I can't give employees proper guidance on what is allowed. So we don't refer to it anymore and just go begging Commission staff for permission or prepare ourselves for an onslaught of criticism and bad juju if we did something without the required triplicate approvals.
F146	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> Doesn't address current, new, and ongoing issues. Great to have it, it's needed, but it's inefficient.

F157	<i>11. What do you dislike most about the current Manual?</i> That it isn't what is actually being used to administer grants.
F166	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (split 1 of 4) I can't begin to recount the number of items I have sent WSCC staff requesting fixes to the grant policies. I've already submitted them in multiple formats and I hope beyond hope that those requests and suggestions will be included because they are written down somewhere.
F171	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> (split 4 of 4) ... when something comes up that we didn't think of ahead of time that the Commission staff are first trying to find ways to help us do what we want versus conducting an inquisition as to why we didn't think of some process or expense two years prior and trying to justify every penny as if we too don't have public boards that scrutinize every move and state auditors that ask the same questions. You know, like trust us maybe?
F188	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Consistency on how it is used by SCC staff.
F226	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Review more often. Have supplements to it.
F229	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> SCC staff and manual need to be congruent.
F236	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> This manual has been remodeled each biennium and reads exactly like that. Is it time to tear it down and rebuild? Not enough time this biennium but maybe we need to start looking at that as a goal for next biennium (to be adopted 7/1/2027). SCC has grown and the methods used need updated which could/should coincide with a manual update/overhaul. Emailed vouchers, documentation submittal, DIP/Cost-Share project management (CPDS or new system).
F260	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> Access to WSCC staff who administer this is critical and helps us to be really successful in implementing WSCC contracts and grants.
F263	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> (split 1 of 4) In the short term, there are some specific policy issues that could be resolved in time for the next biennium, but we also need to move forward with long-term reforms of the granting system . This includes the whole cycle of funding requests, program rules, grant applications, funding approval, project expense approval, voucher submissions, budget tracking, and more .
F269	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (split 1 of 2) It is frustrating that the email for this survey went out without a due date, especially as we only have one week to complete it. I only saw there was a due date when I opened the survey. Unfortunately, none of these listed options are really priorities for our district, or anyone else's, as far as I can tell. Districts have discussed major issues in this manual until we are blue in the face, and the priorities listed here are not the main issues. Some of these things have been mentioned, for sure. But these are not the priority issues. This survey further reinforces that WSCC is listening, but you are not hearing us.

F273	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (split 2 of 2) The priority issue for us is that the manual has become increasingly restrictive and requires more micromanagement from WSCC fiscal staff who are already significantly overcapacity. I am not advocating a blank check; I completely understand that government funding requires checks and balances and the ability to pass audits. However, the fact is that the relationship between WSCC and districts is not like that of RCO or ECY. WSCC exists to support districts. Districts are audited every three years, and are the only entity statewide that collectively completes its annual financial report on time. We know how to handle projects and money efficiently, effectively, and responsibly. Let us do that without more burdens than we already have.
F276	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (The grants manual ...) ...should include... a process to allow for other innovations that may be developed and adopted quickly in the future.
F292	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Guidelines should work for both WSCC and CDs, this document is a tool defining how we work collaboratively.
F297	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> It should require that sections are reviewed annually for understanding and updates to avoid the need for total overhaul in the future.
F302	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> (Split 1 of 3) My main priority is to look at the content of the manual to identify unnecessary bottle necks, requirements and inefficiencies... This process needs to include a summary of most common exceptions, biggest time requirements, and areas where commission policy differs from state accounting standards.
F305	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Please ensure all finance and program staff are familiar with the entirety of the grants manual so WSCC is creating programs with understanding of how other existing programs work.
F313	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> The inconsistency between finance, guidelines and actual implementation and interpretation of grants has been unclear over several biennium and consistency across WSCC would be a significant improvement to managing the WSCC grants
F319	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> We need a guideline process that goes well. That includes listening, but also getting the final product to the commissioners who will vote on these guidelines in a way and with enough time that they understand what they're voting for.
F374	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 4 of 6, also re-organized by topic) The reality is the 45-day comment period does not allow time to make changes and incorporate feedback. Unfortunately, the timing meant the ability to incorporate recommendations for this biennium wasn't feasible.

F375	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (split 1 of 6, also re-organized by topic) At the WSCC meeting in September 2023, (3 months into the biennium) I let Commission staff know that the Asotin County Conservation District staff was willing to help with "overhauling" the Grants Procedure Manual. Obviously, there were more pressing issues at the time and it was down the priority list. Fast forward one year and it was very disappointing to hear that Commission staff was working on updates internally. There wasn't a plan to engage Districts for input outside the formal comment periods. Many Districts expressed concern, and I appreciate that the Executive Director formed a group of managers and fiscal staff to "review the current Grant and Contract Policy and Procedure Manual and work together with us on improvements". This group met in February and had a great meeting. There were several ideas and concerns brought up which were already addressed in the updates that Commission staff made internally. It validated that the Commission and Districts are on the same page about many things that haven't worked well. I am still waiting to receive a copy of the report from the consultant who facilitated the meeting as it should capture all the items identified by the workgroup.
F381	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> These guidelines should be thoroughly rewritten through an interactive process with your primary customer, conservation districts, after Commission staff have had ample opportunity to understand the ramifications of these rules and how they are applied in a local CD office. Furthermore, CD staff and supervisors should be afforded the opportunity to learn more about the restrictions and rules being placed upon Commission staff in an effort to better understand each other's needs
F473	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> It is easier for us to give feedback through the committee members, and maybe more importantly, through our RMs. Those conversations are a "one-stop shop" for many things that impact our districts. SCC operations and guidelines being a popular topic. We have confidence in those people, which gives us the opportunity to focus on other things. And there are a lot of other things.
F501	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> I'm not sure if you've gotten a lot of comments or just a few. There were definitely issues that needed to be resolved that were discussed during manager/ED meetings, and our RM's got an earful that they were bringing forward on our behalf. I feel that the SCC heard us and formed a committee to help implement changes. For me, once that was done, I had confidence that the right people were having the right dialogue, and something better was going to come out the other side.
F540	<i>13. Are there any additional comments or suggestions you would like to provide about the manual?</i> (split 4 of 4) Thank you for being willing to engage us on this process. I am looking forward to this continuing beyond this spring and making this an ongoing workgroup into the future.
F565	<i>12. What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> Timing of Expenditures (also see section 6 below): ...And despite the detail in this section and in those below, it doesn't mention the simple issue of showing the date paid on a proof of payment receipt. This one issue cost Districts and WSCC dozens if not hundreds of hours over the last biennium, and was such a simple fix that should have been clearly communicated in the manual and disseminated to Districts immediately when these issues came to light.
F612	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> (Split 2 of 2) Why is there no trust that we are paying first and asking for reimbursement after? That's the rule, we follow it.

z. Other

Workgroup / Committee Assignment: Addressed before Tiger Teams

Resolved prior to OWG

Unique ID #	Comment	Response Prior to OWG	Completion Date
F162	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It is a manual to reference as a starting point.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F174	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It serves as a thorough starting point to manage grants with.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F306	<i>Please let us know any other priority concerns relating to the Grant and Contract Procedure Manual</i> Please follow the guidance currently and previously provided by Mason Conservation District.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F414	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> First of all, thank you for all the effort that has gone into this project. Probably like many district managers, I never seem to have the time to give you the feedback you deserve for doing this work. I had my financial staff member go through this, and she said the changes looked good and didn't have any comments.	Thank you! We appreciate all of the feedback to help improve our processes as we continue to grow.	2025
F415	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> This likely has been an unhelpful comment. Thank you again to the SCC for giving us this process. I value the SCC fiscal staff for their willingness to work through the guidelines. I appreciate my fellow CD peers who are spending their valuable time on the committee. I am thankful for our RMs, who we continually put in difficult positions as our direct voices to the SCC.	Thank you! We appreciate all of the feedback to help improve our processes as we continue to grow.	2025
F416	<i>Grant Manual Comments</i> We appreciate everyone's efforts to work through this manual and update it.	Thank you! We appreciate all of the feedback to help improve our processes as we continue to grow.	2025
F509	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It provides information regarding policies and procedures.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F511	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It's a helpful tool to reference when unique scenarios come up.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F513	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It is a good resource.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F514	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It provides a platform that allows us to get great work done.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F515	<i>10. What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> Gets my adrenaline going. Makes me feel alive.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025

F519	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> Lots of adaptive management has gone into this. I know it's always there to answer our questions and refer our staff to. Thank you!	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F521	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It's fine.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F522	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It is a source for general policies and procedures.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F525	10. <i>What do you like most about the current Manual?</i> It's always a good go-to when questions arise!	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025
F536	12. <i>What improvements or changes would you recommend to make the manual more effective?</i> I think the manual is extremely effective.	Comment reviewed by SCC Staff. Thank you for the feedback.	2025

Appendix C

Recommendations and implementation leads for
completed topic areas

Overview

What is a Recommendation?

A recommendation is a proposed action developed in response to stakeholder feedback and Ombuds Working Group review. Recommendations may correspond to specific stakeholder comments or address broader themes identified across multiple comments. Feedback may be addressed through recommendations that advance approaches different than those suggested by individual commenters. Overall, recommendations represent the Ombuds Working Group's considered response to the information available.

Recommendation Types

Recommendations are intended to improve the Grants & Contracts Policy Manual and related processes through:

- Developing or enhancing training, technical assistance, communications, or other support for Conservation Districts and/or Commission staff.
- Creating or revising supporting documents, forms, templates, guidance, or other tools.
- Editing the Grants Manual without changing policy or practice (for example, correcting, reorganizing, or clarifying language)
- Establishing or modifying Commission policy or practice. These recommendations may also require updates to guidance, forms, tools, training, or other supporting resources.

Advisory Nature of Recommendations

The recommendations developed by the Ombuds Working Group are advisory. During implementation they may be refined, combined, deferred, superseded, or discontinued following additional review, stakeholder engagement, operational planning, legal review, technology considerations, resource availability, or Commission decision making.

Priority for Community Review

Highlighted recommendations are those likely to result in a substantive change to current Commission policy or grant administrative practice. We especially encourage review of these recommendations, and consideration of whether their implementation will result in unintended consequences, implementation barriers, or other important considerations the Working Group may have overlooked.

All recommendations remain open for review and fatal-flaw feedback; the highlighting is simply intended to help readers identify recommendations most likely to affect current practice.

Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Additional Support

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-170	Explore options to create a central directory of training resources (video & other) so that people can have more of a one-stop-shop to see what is available. With the directory: a) Highlight that SCC Finance staff are available for 1:1 training on demand. b) Provide a simple feedback form (e.g., a button that says “Don’t see what you need? Click here!”) so folks can submit suggestions/asks for training they want and don’t see available. c) Intent is not to suggest that all training materials be consolidated to one page if it makes more sense for them to be distributed, just to have a directory with links to where they are located in multiple places.	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*
R-171	Update existing “Videos & Trainings” page on SCC website. ● Add a tag for “Funding Administration” (or something) for anything that reflects Grants Manual content ● Improve searchability ● Change button “more information” to “link to video” - unless some of them actually link to more information ● Clarify which might be for funding recipients who are NOT CDs ● Provide link to a simple submission form (e.g., a button that says “Don’t see what you need? Click here!”) so folks can submit suggestions/asks for training they want and don’t see available.	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*
R-172	Put a link on the website to a submission form to allow users to report technical issues such as broken links, things needing minor edits, etc. It would be ideal to have this available on every (or many) pages, not something in one location that users would have to find.	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*
R-173	Establish a web-based, modular FAQ / Q&A resource system, separate from the Grants Manual. Organize this aligned to manual sections (either structurally or via tags) and cross-link between this resource and the manual (bidirectional). Each page should contain a	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations

Updated 9/28/2026

Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	link to a standardized question / request submission form recommended in R-172 and R-182.			
R-174	Provide District Digests, Financial Times, and other newsletter content on website in a searchable archive.	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*
R-175	Provide at least one example of each form, correctly filled out. Where there are acceptable variations (e.g., voucher format), it would be useful to provide more than one example to reflect the range of acceptable options.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-176	Add links from the Grants Manual to relevant supporting and training materials / resources. Suggest structuring to link to a resource page rather than directly to individual items, so that additional materials may be added without needing to change the link in the Grants Manual.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-182	Create a standardized submission form for questions, requests for clarification, and/or suggestions for additional guidance. Put a link to this form on many of the webpages, especially those with Grants Manual-related guidance. Content could populate the FAQ/Q&A. Note: this submission form is for non-urgent questions and general guidance needs. It should not replace direct communication channels, which remain the appropriate path for time-sensitive issues and active grant administration.	7/31/2026	Communications	Target date to be determined*
R-269	Create a reference list, outside the manual, of elements that are required or recommended to be addressed in District policy, with page number references to where they are mentioned in the manual. For example, electronic signatures (p. 10), meal periods (p. 23), light refreshments (p. 29), landowner recognition awards (p. 32), clothing (p. 32), etc. Suggested content derived from current manual is here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1az1Cv8LUmqzqLeR278nCPRddy_PJmNe_vuWZuzDJHFg/edit?tab=t.0	9/25/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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**Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics**

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Advances

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-114	Allow advances for any program, up to 50% of awarded funding, with reconciliation due by the earlier of the funding end date or the biennium end.	7/17/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-234	Clarify in writing the criteria for evaluating advance-related exception requests - including those requesting to exceed the 50% threshold and/or to extend beyond the biennium for a multi-biennia award.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-291	SCC's management and oversight framework for Advances should be clarified and updated with respect to: reconciliation of prior advances; documentation, monitoring, and reporting requirements; circumstances that may limit access to additional advances; treatment of returned funds and outstanding balances at award closeout; and criteria for evaluating potential concerns and determining when additional oversight or consequences are warranted.	9/25/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Approvals and Exceptions

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-135	Encourage Program Managers to explore providing funding applicants / recipients with more detailed guidance on the level of detail desired on applications/addenda to avoid needing additional approvals later.	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-136	Encourage Program Managers to consider providing funding recipients information about funding origin (ala ECY grants) and detailed guidance about which of the funding may be shifted within the award and what can be spent/what can't.	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-137	Encourage the Tech Transformation Team to explore options in the new platform for allowing awarded funding amounts on intermediate outcomes to be exceeded up to a set threshold.	6/12/26	Tech Transition Team	Target date to be determined*
R-138	Encourage Program Managers to consider updating program-specific guidance to include details of allowable expenses on each program. Also to consider including the rationale/foundation for allowable expenses, e.g., funding type (capital vs. operating), state fiscal policy, proviso, etc.	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-139	Add specific and detailed guidance to clarify what information and level of detail is required to obtain an out-of-state travel approval.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-140	If an application / addendum request mentions out-of-state travel, the award issued by SCC should clearly state whether or not out-of-state travel is awarded. If there is insufficient information or detail provided to approve, the award could state that the out-of-state travel is conditionally approved and that further documented approval is required prior to travel.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-141	Add content to manual to clearly define approval versus exception and to outline the process for each (including when to request, who to include in request, information needed, who will be involved in decision process, etc).	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-142	Change policy to eliminate blanket requirement for pre-approval to issue subcontracts and to eliminate requirement that copies of contracts be submitted to SCC. Edit section “Compensation for subcontracted personnel services” (p. 27), to remove first two bullet points.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-145	Edit section heading and lead paragraph under “Compensation for subcontracted personnel services” as follows: Original: “Compensation for subcontracted personnel services. Including wages, salaries, and supplementary compensation and benefits — paid currently or accrued — for services rendered under the contract, including compensation for employees of the conservation district.” Suggested revision: “Compensation for subcontracted services. Costs for services rendered under contracts, including interagency agreements, are eligible for reimbursement. Eligible subcontract costs include but are not limited to personnel costs (e.g., wages, salaries, supplementary compensation, and benefits — paid currently or accrued), travel, and/or supplies.”	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-146	Add text to manual like: “Exception requests will be considered on the basis of state and SCC fiscal policy, state mandated fiscal notes, programmatic guidelines, considerations of equity amongst funding recipients and strategic distribution of funding, and assessment of risk management and/or administrative management issues”	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-147	Institute practice that, when approval or exception requests are denied, SCC Finance will document the reason for disapproval to the requestor.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Topic: Audience

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-148	Add “Funding Recipient” to glossary: Any organization or entity that receives grant or contract funding from WSCC. This includes, but is not limited to, Conservation Districts, local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities. “Recipient” is used as a shorthand reference to “Funding Recipient.” Add “Recipient” to glossary: See “Funding Recipient”. Add “Applicant” to glossary: An organization or entity that is applying for grant or contract funding from WSCC. Review all references to “District”, “County”, “entity”, etc, throughout the manual and update to these terms.	6/12/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Authorized Signatures

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-134	Encourage the Tech Transformation Team to explore options in the new platform to allow mid-biennium changes to the authorized signature form to be handled via addendum adding new signatures only, rather than an entirely new replacement form with new signatures from everyone covered by the form. Consider modifying the form to include a section of individuals with authority to approve changes to signatories.	6/26/26	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*
R-144	Modify policy to allow signatures on the Authorized Signatures form to be collected via e-sign or as wet signatures as desired by the funding recipient.	6/26/26	SCC Leadership Team	July 2027
R-157	Encourage the Tech Transformation Team to explore process and structure options for collecting authorized signatures in the new platform, engaging Districts for their input.	6/26/26	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Award Start Dates

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-154	Issue awards with the effective date set as the date the formal award decision is determined. Suggest that notification of decision-to-fund come from the Program Manager on (or close to) the decision date so that recipients are rapidly aware of the effective date. Then SCC Finance may be under less immediate time pressure to communicate a full formal award notification. The formal award notification will be issued with the effective date retroactive to the decision date.	9/25/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-155	Encourage the Tech Transformation Team to explore options in the new system to allow program staff to provide the initial notice of award directly to recipients, to lessen time pressure on finance staff in actually issuing contracting documentation.	7/31/2026	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*
R-156	Encourage Program Managers to explore options to: (a) Prioritize shifting funding application and award decision timelines so that award decisions are made prior to July 1. (b) Improve processes and communications so that application and award timelines are more predictable and transparent.	7/31/2026	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Benefits

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-116	Encourage Regional Managers to consider publishing guidance (e.g., FAQs) for comp rates, outside the manual. This resource could include topics such as: • How to use the comp rate form • Items from bullet points to be removed from “Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits” manual section • Best practice suggestions about what elements should be covered in a District policy around employee benefits, plus examples	5/29/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-117	Edit Manual section on “Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits” (p. 33). Retain paragraph text only and shift bullet points to a separate resource for Districts.	5/29/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Biennium Hard Stop

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-133	Endorse the Multi-Year Contracting Workgroup’s efforts to explore the possibility of modifying policy and supporting practices to allow for multi-biennium contracts for all programs that receive capital funding.	5/29/26	Multi-year Contracting Workgroup	Target date to be determined*
R-236	Create FAQ about award timelines (external to Manual, but linked from Manual Section 2). Adapt as appropriate during the Multi-Year Contracting Workgroup process. Address topics such as: Q. Why doesn’t Commission funding run longer than a biennium, like other state agencies? A. WA state operates on a biennial budget cycle, meaning that the state enacts budgets for 2-year periods. The legislature appropriates funds for specific purposes and timelines, typically aligning with the biennial cycle. Historically, SCC budget requests to the state have been designed within this 2-year time frame. Q. What is in process to consider changing this SCC policy? A. In March 2025 Commissioners approved a motion “to direct staff to develop multi-year, multi-biennial contract mechanisms so that projects in general may be funded for terms exceeding two years.” Response to this motion is being led by the SCC Leadership Team (?). Updates are available ... (link to updates, or explain how to get them. Hopefully updates would include information about how CDs can be involved in the process, minimum timeline to execute change, potential impacts e.g., application process, reporting) Q. What kind of funding may be able to be extended beyond a biennium? A. Under state regulations, operating funds expire every fiscal year, so there is not an option to extend those. State regulations for capital funds may allow for a longer award period.	9/15/2026	Multi-Year Contracting Workgroup	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: BMP Splitting vs. Lumping

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-159	Encourage the Tech Transformation team to explore options for designing the new platform to preserve future flexibility and support multiple potential funding models. Specifically, looking at how the platform design could support: • Flexible award structures (not limited to BMP-only funding models) • The ability for funding recipients to shift a certain percentage of awarded funds between “outcomes” (or their equivalent in the new system) without prior approval or formal award modification • Project or activity tracking and reporting (CPDS replacement) that is not limited to a structure tied to individual participants and individual BMPs	7/31/2026	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*
R-160	Contingent upon policy and technical platform changes, revise Appendix B and other supporting materials to reflect updated policy and process.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-161	Strategic direction: Encourage WSCC to explicitly establish the intended unit of funding and accountability for each funding source (e.g., BMPs, projects, or programs), and align programmatic guidance (including award structure and reporting requirements), decision packages, and supporting systems accordingly.	7/31/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-162	Interim policy: Contingent on the new Tech Platform being able to support it, allow recipients of BMP-based funding to shift up to a maximum percentage of the total awarded funds between BMPs without prior approval or formal award modification. • Suggest allowing recipients to shift up to 20%	7/31/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations

Updated 9/28/2026

Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-163	Longer term policy: Contingent on the new Tech Platform being able to support it, allow all funding recipients to shift up to a maximum percentage of the total award between award categories, outcomes, or similar elements without prior approval or formal award modification. • Suggest allowing recipients to shift up to 20%	7/31/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-276	Provide additional guidance (outside the manual) about the current process of shifting funds between BMPs.	9/25/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Capital Assets

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-183	External to the Grants Manual, provide written guidance for Districts in creating or improving their own asset management policies. This could potentially be hosted by WACD. Content could include some combination of: (a) The specific elements that should be covered by asset management policy (e.g., capitalization threshold, inventory, disposal, approach to repair vs. replacement decisions) (b) Example District policies, or a list of Districts with a policy in place who would be willing to share upon request. (c) Links to other resources for policy development, e.g. MRSC (which likely has guidance and sample policies)	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-184	External to the Grants Manual, provide examples of District-level documents (e.g., policy, administrative guidance) that would be required to support charging other projects for equipment use. This could potentially be hosted by WACD.	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-185	External to the Grants Manual, provide some best practice guidance, in writing, for how Districts might decide to repair vs replace capital assets, that they could adapt locally.	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-186	Update the “Maintenance and Repair” section under Allowable Reimbursable Expenses to clarify that maintenance of District-owned equipment is eligible and to reflect any updates to policy and/or best practices with respect to expenditure limits. <i>*The current text is unclear that it covers equipment such as ATVs, UTVs, mowers, manure spreaders, seed drills, etc. This may be a function of the complexity of “property” definitions.</i>	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Fully Addressed Topics**

Updated 9/28/2026

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-187	Increase the threshold requiring Commission prior approval for equipment purchase (currently \$2,000) * Suggest matching current OFM Capital Asset Capitalization threshold of \$10,000.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-188	Update the disposition of asset policy to be closer to Ecology's administrative requirements and to align with new capitalization threshold.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-189	Change the capital asset maintenance cost policy to increase the threshold above which SCC pre-approval is required.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-190	Review and update the policy on charging rental rates for district owned equipment to SCC Grants. Suggest reviewing RCO's policy and adapting to SCC use including: *Develop criteria for documenting rental rates (possibly with Cost Share Rate policy) *Develop scenarios on funding source eligibility *Develop internal (SCC) documentation process for total costs	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: CAPP

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-177	Edit Audit sections of Manual to minimize replicating detailed guidance copied from external (non-Commission) sources. Focus Manual on SCC policy requirements, use links to direct users to external sources for detailed information. Replace Federal Audit Requirements (p. 70), State Auditor Requirements (p. 69), and Audit Findings or Management Letter (p. 70) with something like this suggested revision text: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BBsoDX6SkFvxhXk4Ijo4FXewQ1jeL4PAktQAmX9oti0/edit?usp=sharing	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-178	Edit Records Retention section of Manual (p. 71 - 72) to minimize replicating detailed guidance copied from external (non-Commission) sources and to increase clarity. Focus Manual on SCC policy requirements, use links to direct users to external sources for detailed information. See suggested revision text: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1M-MTWO9SMqYqCtoLNVDKdt8xvzydoux5oMFh62O7EZ4/edit?usp=sharing	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-270	Create a resource outside the manual related to audit preparation for Districts. This could include the following: - Districts will be audited by WA SAO (link to more info) - Audit schedule (i.e., could be annual, every 2, or every 3 years) - If certain criteria are met, SAO audit will include additional review to complete a federal audit (link to more info) - Audit findings or management letters may also be subject to CAPP requirements (link to CAPP) - Information about the role of regional manager in audit process, e.g. they join entrance/exit meetings, they help Districts address findings/management letters, Districts submit findings/management letter to RMs - Best practices for being prepared for an audit (link to anything available from SAO or MRSC, then add District-specific info)	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Clothing, Apparel, PPE

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-192	Encourage Program Managers to update each program guideline to specifically include whether clothing/PPE is allowed.	7/31/2026	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-193	Show in a table which programs do or do not allow clothing purchases. This information could be added to the existing Common Expenditures table within the manual, or be separate (in manual or in an FAQ).	7/31/2026	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-194	Provide additional clarification about the definition of “promotional purposes”. Suggested language: “Promotional purchases is defined as clothing purchased as “give-aways” for events, landowner recognition, and other instances where items are given to people who are not representing the District as staff or volunteers.”	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-200	Address in FAQ / Q&A the question of “what criteria are applied to approve or deny a clothing / apparel purchase”. Suggested language: “The criteria for approving a clothing / apparel purchase are (1) Does the funding source allow the purchase; (2) Are the items purchased not promotional; (3) Do the items purchased benefit the purpose of the funding and support the activities of the grant.”	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Construction

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-278	Revise Grant Manual Text (Section 4: Reimbursable Expenses -> Conditionally eligible reimbursable expenditures, p. 30) as follows: "Construction may occur through a DIP or Cost Share. Other construction costs are conditionally allowable on some funding sources if they can demonstrate that the public benefit outweighs individual gain. Construction types that may be conditionally allowable include: (a) Pilot or demonstration project (b) Minor construction (e.g., a fence) or improvements to District facilities Construction costs require SCC pre-approval. Pre-approval can be obtained by being specified in a budget award or proviso or by being included in a grant application or addendum that is SCC-approved."	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Cultural Resources

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-279	Move the existing Cultural Resources text on p. 55 to a different part of the manual (e.g., compliance). State clearly that Cultural Resources applies to any SCC funded project that breaks ground, and to all CS / DIP projects regardless of whether or not they include ground breaking. Internal link to where CR is covered in CS, DIP, and Vouchering instructions. External link to SCC page about CR. Retain in the CS section only this text: The Cultural Resources Complied Statement Form is required for every cost share using SCC funding. It must be included when requesting reimbursement for cost share. See here for more detail. (internal link to where CR is addressed) ADD parallel text in the DIP section: The Cultural Resources Complied Statement Form is required for every district implemented project using SCC funding. It must be included when requesting reimbursement for a district implemented project. See here for more detail. (internal link to where CR is addressed) ADD text about Cultural Resources paperwork in Vouchering Section, with internal link to where CR is covered elsewhere.	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Debarment

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-109	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider updating the debarment-related DO Brief #9-2013 - Suspension & Debarment (contains broken links; outdated text)	4/24/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-110	Edit to remove duplication of Suspension and Debarment sections, currently on pages 14-16 and pages 53-55	4/24/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-111	Edit text around link on pages 15 and 54, which currently shows “Violations of RCW 39.12.065(3) can be found here.” Instead, display clearly that the link leads to the Debarred Contractors List from Dept of Labor & Industries. E.g., “Violations of RCW 39.12.065(3) can be found on the Debarred Contractors List from Dept of Labor & Industries”.	4/24/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-112	Edit Grant Manual to reduce regurgitation of external guidance about debarment. See proposed revision https://docs.google.com/document/d/1YsVE22PEaLvK4H2llpH5qx7uUR81FIUqhoVtzBi0DDI/edit?usp=sharing (to replace text currently on pages 14-16 and pages 53-55).	4/24/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-149	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider providing more District support resources about debarment, outside the grants manual. This could be part of something larger, or stand-alone. Potentially useful elements could include: • Explanation of what is required in files to document debarment (and avoid audit finding) • Any other FAQs related to this • Sample completed SAM verification (with annotations highlighting and commenting about required elements) • Sample completed LNI verification (with annotations highlighting and commenting about required elements) • Video walk-through and/or screenshot-by-screenshot instructions of how to complete the SAM and LNI verifications	6/26/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations

Updated 9/28/2026

Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	• Sample certification language to include in a contract • Sample stand-alone certification of eligibility			
R-150	Update the debarment-related information in the Cost Share Process presentation PDF here: https://www.scc.wa.gov/cd/grants-contracts-and-finance (on the “Procedure Manual tab) to bring it up to date (correct SAM information / screenshots) and align to the manual and other current resources.	6/26/26	SCC Finance	Target date to be determined*
R-151	Correct the link to the CFR on pages 15 & 54 in this phrase: “the nonfederal entity must verify that the entity, as defined in 2 CFR section 180.995...”. The link goes to the definition of “Principal”, should be to section 180.985 “Person”.	n/a**	SCC Finance	5/13/26

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: DIP

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-213	Edit manual header for Section 9 to remove partial payments. This is missing from the section and not relevant to DIPs which are “pay-as-you-go”.	n/a**	SCC Finance	8/20/26
R-214	Encourage Tech Transformation Team to explore options for setting up the new system to support DIP projects implemented as a community project, not just limited to a single specific landowner/cooperator.	7/31/2026	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*

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**Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics**

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Editing & Organization

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-232	Forward compiled editing, terminology, internal navigation, and document organization feedback items to the Editor engaged to revise the entire Manual for consideration and implementation where appropriate (contingent upon prior substantive text revisions and subject to the editor's professional judgement).	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-233	Commission staff to explore options for implementing web-based approaches for presenting the manual and supporting resources, evaluating user preferences and feasibility (including costs and resources required).	8/28/2026	SCC Communications Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Electronic Signatures

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-180	Update SCC Electronic Signature policy to align language in policy to the Grants Manual audience being funding recipients, not just Districts • Change “Local Government Documents” to “Funding Recipient Documents” • Consider shifting anything specific to Districts to a separate section, e.g. Advance Payment Agreement, Master Contracts • Look at “Timesheets (districts)” - should the “(districts)” be dropped? Or changed to “(funding recipients)”?	7/31/2026	SCC Leadership Team	July 2027
R-181	Update SCC Electronic Signature policy to reflect current practices. For example, the Authorized Signature Forms List doesn’t reflect that some addendums now require signature from both SCC and recipient	7/31/2026	SCC Leadership Team	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Employee Benefits

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-116	Encourage Regional Managers to consider publishing guidance (e.g., FAQs) for comp rates, outside the manual. This resource could include topics such as: • How to use the comp rate form • Items from bullet points to be removed from “Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits” manual section • Best practice suggestions about what elements should be covered in a District policy around employee benefits, plus examples	5/29/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-117	Edit Manual section on “Handling Reimbursement for Employer-Paid Benefits” (p. 33). Retain paragraph text only and shift bullet points to a separate resource for Districts.	5/29/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Honoraria, Stipends, Speaker Fees

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-212	Establish definitions to distinguish Honoraria, Speakers Fees, and Stipends. The following are suggested definitions the WSCC may choose to use: • Honorarium - A nominal payment given for a service, e.g., professional service or volunteer time. • Stipend - A payment meant to offset living or training expenses rather than to act as direct compensation for labor. • Speaker Fee - Compensation paid to an individual for delivering a presentation, keynote, or workshop at an event.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-216	To support a policy revision, gather information by canvassing Districts about: • The programmatic value and situations where reimbursing honoraria, stipends, and speaker fees would support program delivery. • The programs that would benefit from allowing these costs. • Suggest some structure for, within definitions, what could be allowable or unallowable expenses. • Suggest how this type of expense should be documented.	8/28/2026	OWG Tiger Team	ASAP - implementation within this biennium
R-219	Consider revising policy to allow reimbursement for honoraria. • Specifically including honoraria paid to landowner/producer hosts of CD-sponsored events (e.g., farm tours, etc.). • Policy should include the requirement that a CD intending to use honoraria and seek reimbursement from the WSCC should have a local policy in place that articulates the “valid” CD purpose for using honoraria and the expected outcomes of community engagement activities to earn honoraria. (See MRSC recommendation outlined in “Safely Using Incentives in Public Engagement Activities”). • May be specific to particular funding	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	Honoraria are intended to support meaningful contribution to the goals of the project. They should not be used simply for participation or for making a property available.			
R-220	Consider revising policy to allow reimbursement for stipends when tied to an executed contract for services or documentation of an employment arrangement. The expenditure formerly classified as a host stipend will now be classified as an honorarium under the proposed updated definitions	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-221	Consider revising policy to allow reimbursement for speaker fees when tied to an executed contract for services (i.e., included in professional services, small services, or presenter contracts).	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-222	On the basis of policy revisions, identify the appropriate payment and documentation for honoraria expenditures. - Suggest that event hosting should be supported by a simple contract mechanism, such as a small services contract, to document the host arrangement, deliverables, and associated honorarium. - Suggest that documentation should NOT require inclusion of an agenda and/or curriculum, etc.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-223	On the basis of policy revisions, identify the appropriate payment and documentation for stipend expenditures. - Suggest that this may be handled as either a contract-based accounts payable item or a payroll item. - Suggest that documentation should NOT require inclusion of an agenda and/or curriculum, etc.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-224	On the basis of policy revisions, identify the appropriate payment and documentation for Speaker Fee expenditures.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	- Suggest that this requires an executed contract for services (i.e., included in a professional services, small services, or presenter contract) - Suggest that documentation should NOT require inclusion of meeting agenda and/or curriculum, etc.			
R-225	Update Grants Manual to reflect finalized definitions, policy changes, and /or updated reimbursement requirements.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-226	Request that Program Managers update programmatic guidelines to identify eligibility for reimbursement of honoraria, stipends, and/or speaker fees on specific programs.	8/28/2026	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-227	Prepare a model policy template that CDs could use to document the “valid” purpose(s) for using honoraria (and possibly stipends and speaker fees) and the expected outcomes of community engagement activities to earn honoraria (and possibly stipends and speaker fees). (See MRSC recommendation outlined in “Safely Using Incentives in Public Engagement Activities”.)	8/28/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-228	Compile sample contracting mechanisms suitable for documenting honoraria, stipends, and speaker fees, such as small services or presenter contracts. (If desired, Whatcom CD can share templates for both types of contracts for the WSCC to consider adding to its resources for CDs.)	8/28/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Individual Grant Programs

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-121	Encourage the Tech Transformation Team, in their planning for CPDS replacement, to consider improving user experience around understanding (a) that, because different programs have different requirements, the system will look and behave differently for different programs, and (b) how to navigate inputting/selecting covered resource concerns and BMPs across different programs. Ensure that there are supporting materials or training to help users in these areas.	6/12/26	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*
R-122	Encourage Program Managers to explore publishing some FAQs about design-only grants, covering why SCC currently doesn't have any and how they are being considered for future budget requests. (Recommend incorporating into existing resources, not creating new stand-alone resource.)	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-123	Encourage Program Managers, in the process of revising the programmatic guidelines (outside the manual), to prioritize a consistent format with core content elements present for all programs. Encourage the inclusion of information about any program-specific conditionally allowable expenditures (what they are and any special pre-approvals or documentation needed) or ineligible expenditures, as well as any special reporting requirements or policies that vary from the standards in the main policy manual.	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-124	Encourage Program Managers to consider publishing FAQ (or other written materials) to address the following questions (draft responses are just an example): a. Why do different programs have different eligible activities and expenditures, reporting requirements, and policies? <i>Because they are funded from different sources and that funding comes to SCC distinct requirements (e.g., in proviso language and/or program guidelines)</i> b. How do I find the eligible activities and costs, reporting requirements, and policies for my funding? <i>We recommend starting with the general information in the Grants Manual, then looking at the program-specific information in the programmatic guidelines.</i>	6/12/26	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	c. How do the eligible activities and costs, reporting requirements, and policies in the Grants Manual and in program-specific guidelines relate to each other? If they are different, which should I follow? <i>The Grants Manual is meant to communicate general policies and procedures across all funding for SCC. There may be a case where a specific program has requirements that differ from the general SCC practices. If the program-specific guidelines differ from what is in the Grants Manual, follow what is in the program-specific guidelines. Please ask the Program Manager if you have any questions.</i>			
R-125	Encourage Regional Managers to consider publishing something outside the Grants Manual (e.g. FAQ) to respond to questions about awards of state money to specific CDs. For example: Q. Can a state legislator award funds directly to a CD through SCC? A. Yes. The state can earmark funding for a specific CD just as it may earmark funds for specific programs or projects. In this case, SCC will work with the CD to award the funding. SCC standard policies and procedures would apply, as well as anything specific to the funding as awarded by the state. Q. Can a state legislator award funds directly to a CD without going through SCC? A. SCC has no requirement that state funds must pass through the SCC to CDs. CDs are welcome to work with their legislators to have funds awarded without passing through SCC.	6/12/26	Regional Manager Team	Target date to be determined*
R-128	Edit Section 5 “Capital Grant Programs” section on page 37. The link to the capital budget instructions is confusing and seems irrelevant for funding recipients. If funding recipients actually need to do anything with this, add more information and support for whatever needs to be done with it, and consider shifting to programmatic guidelines.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-130	Correct the “Common Expenditures” table for Implementation / “Out of State / Country Travel” which appears incorrect in the Expenditures table. Currently reads “Yes - out of state w/no prior approval”; remove “no” prior approval.	n/a**	SCC Finance	5/13/26

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-131	Update the intro in section 5 to emphasize variations across programs. - Original text: SCC offers grant programs funded through both Operating and Capital funding. Each program is subject to specific proviso language and program guidelines. The eligible expenditures vary based on the funding type and the guidelines for each grant. For more details, please refer to the table of common expenditures starting on page 40 of this document. - Suggested revision: SCC offers grant programs funded through both Operating and Capital funding. Each program is subject to specific proviso language and program guidelines and may have unique eligible activities and costs, reporting requirements, and policies in addition to the general SCC funding policies in this manual. Please see the quick reference table of common expenditures starting on page 40 of this document and refer to the individual program guidelines for more details.	6/12/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-158	Revise section 5 to reduce and simplify. Do not repeat detailed information about each grant program that is covered in programmatic guidelines, instead provide a link to the programmatic guidelines. Retain the allowable reimbursable expenditures table in the manual.	6/26/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
Fully Addressed Topics

Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Labor Rates

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-164	Document somewhere in FAQs or supporting materials outside Grants Policy Manual that Districts may pay participants a higher labor rate, covering the difference from a non-SCC funding source.	7/31/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-166	Increase the labor rate in 2027, at least to acknowledge overall inflation since it was originally set at \$25 (or \$22?).	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-167	WSCC should establish a methodology for reviewing and setting the labor rate at least each biennium. The updated approach should: • Include benchmarking based on relevant data sources (e.g., labor rates used by other agencies, available data on volunteer labor costs); • Account for inflation at least each biennium, and consider an automatic inflationary increase in the second year of the biennium; and • Be documented for transparency and consistency.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-168	WSCC should actively revisit their labor rate cap each biennium, confirming that it is still appropriate in current economic conditions.	7/31/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Mortgage

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-119	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider publishing guidance (e.g. FAQs) outside the manual to educate Districts that they may use overhead to pay for mortgage including interest (perhaps including reference / link to federal rules for indirect-eligible costs).	5/29/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-120	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider publishing guidance outside the manual to address this question, for example a FAQ such as: “Q: Why aren’t mortgage payments allowable direct costs? <i>A: Mortgage payments are not allowable because they represent long-term financing and equity acquisition. SCC grants are intended to reimburse time-limited programmatic costs incurred during a grant period and are not designed to finance real property ownership or debt service.</i> ”	5/29/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Overhead / Indirect

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-103	Request that CTD explore developing an on-demand training on this topic in CTD LMS. Use Federal CFR 200 Indirect rule book as guidance.	4/24/26	CTD	Target date to be determined*
R-104	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider developing a procedure resource about overhead/indirect that covers how to calculate overhead/indirect on vouchering, what to include, etc. Utilize the examples that are currently in the manual.	4/24/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-111	Edit Grant Manual to simplify the section on overhead to focus on the policy. Utilize the first two paragraphs under “Computing Conservation District Overhead Costs” as the policy, remove the rest. If appropriate, include the maximum set rate in the policy manual and update every biennium if needed.	4/24/26	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-195	Add text to Grants Manual addressing “Overhead Rates on Federal Funding” and “Overhead Rates for Recipients with a NICRA”. Suggested text: - Overhead Rates on Federal Funding: Overhead rates on Federal funding will be determined based on federal policy (2 CFR 200.332(b)(4)) and award-specific terms. - Overhead Rates for Recipients with a NICRA: Some funding recipients may have a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) established with a federal agency. As a federal agreement, this does not pertain to state funding. These recipients are still bound by the SCC cap of 25% overhead costs on state grant funding.	7/31/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Overtime

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-118	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider compiling supporting resources outside the manual on the topic of Overtime, including: • Understanding rules about OT (federal and/or state) • Differences between exempt / non-exempt employees, eligibility • How to document OT in vouchers • Best practices for District policies (including examples of policy) • Links to external resources, e.g., Labor & Industries, Department of Labor	6/12/26	Regional Manager Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Peer-to-Peer Rentals

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-229	Update Manual to include links in the Peer-to-Peer Rental section to related SAAM Chapter 10 sections as well as OFM Risk Guidance on P2P rentals.	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-230	Modify SCC grants policy manual to add two payment options (2 and 3 below) in addition to what is currently allowed (option 1 below) for P2P rentals. Any option is contingent upon the expense being allowable on the grant program, and having proper documentation. (1) The District may pay the entire cost of a P2P rental with an agency card and claim reimbursement. (a) Required documentation: credit card transaction documentation along with a list of all personnel who stayed at the facility. (2) An individual employee may incur the entire cost of a P2P rental on a personal card, then claim reimbursement for all employees who stayed at the facility. (a) Required documentation: the travel reimbursement request for the employee who incurred the expense with “expenses paid for others”, the list of individuals who stayed at the facility, and certification that those individuals did not receive direct reimbursement for the lodging. (3) An individual employee may incur the entire cost of a P2P rental on a personal card and request reimbursement only for their per diem share of the total P2P rental cost. Meanwhile, other personnel who stayed at the facility may request reimbursement for their per diem share of the total P2P rental cost. It is the concern of the personnel to manage	8/28/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
	reimbursement between each other, to make whole the individual who incurred the entire P2P facility rental cost directly. (a) Required documentation: travel reimbursement forms for each traveler, each one including the invoice/receipt from the lodging, and each one including a list of individuals who stayed at the facility and the amount of reimbursement they each request - to substantiate that the cumulative amount requested for lodging reimbursement does not exceed the actual cost of the lodging.			

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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Taxes

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-101	Please correct link under “Tax Related Information (1099-MISC) (p.9) to connect to the District Operations Brief instead of IRS site	n/a**	SCC Finance	3/5/26
R-106	Encourage Regional Managers to consider compiling a support resource outside the manual with tax requirement resources for Districts. This could include links to IRS, Dept of Revenue, and MRSC tax rules/guidance, and to the District Operations Brief about Cost Share 1099-G.	4/24/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-107	Encourage the Regional Managers to consider refreshing the District Operations Brief about 1099s for Cost Share recipients.	6/12/26	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*
R-108	Replace the section “Tax Related Information” on page 10 of the manual with more general tax information. See suggested revision here .	4/24/26	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Travel

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-271	Edit manual text to clarify how allowable travel costs should be documented and submitted for reimbursement based on the traveler's relationship to the funding recipient. Suggested text: Allowable travel costs for recipient personnel, including officials, employees, AmeriCorps members under contract with the recipient, and interns, should be paid through the recipient's travel reimbursement process. Allowable travel costs associated with contracted services are eligible for reimbursement when included in the contractor's scope of work and invoiced as part of the contracted service. When requesting reimbursement from SCC, the funding recipient must submit the contractor's invoice and supporting documentation for the travel cost. Required supporting documentation for either type of travel cost is the same: an A-20 Travel Expense Voucher or other form with equivalent content, and appropriate supporting documentation. Travel costs for volunteers or partners, including meal per diem, lodging, and mileage, are not allowable costs.	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-272	Edit manual text to clarify that trips that start one month and end in the next month should be fully included in a travel voucher for the latter month (not split across forms).	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-273	Edit manual text to add explanation that monthly travel reimbursements are required for compliance with WAC 135-10-030 https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=135-10-030)	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027

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Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-274	Clarify in manual which rates to follow for which travel: (a) If state-funded, any travel within Washington State follows OFM rates, while travel outside WA follows GSA rates. (b) If federally-funded, follows GSA rates State that Finance can answer questions, but Districts are responsible for knowing and correctly applying current reimbursement rates.	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-296	Encourage SCC leadership to consider prioritizing review and revision of WAC 135-10-030, particularly to modernize the requirement that supervisors, employees, and agents submit travel vouchers monthly. The rule was originally adopted in 1973 and has not been amended since 1978. SCC should consider whether the WAC's prescriptive requirements remain necessary to ensure appropriate documentation and accountability, or whether those objectives could be achieved while allowing conservation districts greater flexibility in establishing travel reimbursement procedures.	9/25/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*

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Topic: Vocabulary

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-247	Update glossary entry as follows: “Cooperator is a participant that works with a conservation district or other funding recipient/sponsor to conserve natural resources. Cooperators can include agricultural producers, farmers, ranchers, landowners, land managers, lessees, land trusts, and other partners.”	8/19/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-248	Update glossary entry as follows: “Landowner is the legal owner of the property.”	8/19/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-249	Update glossary entries as follows: (a) A Cost Share Participant is an individual or entity that, by signing the Contract for Cost Share Funds, accepts the cost-share funding and commits to install the BMPs in the contract. A cost share participant may be the owner of the land, a lessee or operator, or a cooperator of the district.” (b) A DIP participant is the legal owner of the property that signs the DIP landowner agreement allowing the installation of BMPs on the property. (c) Participant may refer to a Cost Share Participant or DIP Participant, depending on context.	8/19/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-250	Update manual text to: (a) Use “Participant” where it is clear from context whether it is referring to Cost Share Participant or DIP Participant (b) Specify “Cost Share Participant” or “DIP Participant” where additional specificity is required.	8/19/2026	Manual Editor	July 2027

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-251	Update glossary entry as follows: “Best management practice (BMP) is a conservation practice or suite of practices designed to protect the air, water, soil, animals, plants, and humans. BMPs must meet NRCS standards, or alternative practice designs approved by a licensed professional engineer. NRCS Practice Standards and Specifications are contained in the USDA NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG). SCC also maintains a list of approved practices eligible for cost share.”	8/19/2026	SCC Finance	July 2027
R-252	Update the section heading from “Participant as Contractor” to “Cost Share Participant as Contractor” (p. 62). Repeat “Cost Share Participant” in the first instance within the text of this section.	8/19/2026	Manual Editor	July 2027
R-253	Request that the professional editor review the following requests for clarity and assess whether they have been addressed in the updated version (potentially not explicitly): Q. Are entities that receive RPPP or SFF funds from the SCC considered cooperators? A. No, they would be considered funding recipients or sponsors. Q. Do cooperators work directly with the SCC? A. No, SCC does not contract directly with, nor directly pay, cooperators. Q. Don't some cooperators get SCC funding from counties? A. Yes, they do. Counties are considered a funding recipient/sponsor in the context of the grant manual.	8/19/2026	Manual Editor	July 2027
R-254	Request that the Manual Editor review all recommended vocabulary changes in context during their review of the manual.	8/19/2026	Manual Editor	July 2027

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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: Vouchering Processes and Documents

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-280	Provide vouchering support tools, including: (a) Sample voucher annotated with key elements (b) List of required voucher elements (c) List of common errors in vouchers that result in them being returned	9/25/2026	SCC Finance	Target date to be determined*
R-283	Encourage Tech Transformation Team to gather user feedback (including from experienced PRISM users) to help design vouchering tools and processes.	9/25/2026	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*
R-284	Encourage Tech Transformation Team to explore the possibility of building cost share documentation into the new platform so that it can be uploaded once to meet requirements for both reporting and vouchering.	9/25/2026	Tech Transformation Team	Target date to be determined*

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Ombuds Working Group Concurred Recommendations
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Updated 9/28/2026

Topic: WSCC - CD Interactions

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-179	Maintain a change log of Grant Manual updates on the GM's webpage. Send an email notifying of update and linking to change log whenever an updated version is published (to an existing or a new purpose-specific mailing list).	7/31/2026	SCC Communications Team	Target date to be determined*
R-237	When the Commission collects (internal) community feedback about Commission grant administration policy and practice, lean to not allowing anonymous feedback. One intent is to support the Commission's ability to clarify received feedback and to provide individual feedback to commenters. Another intent is to continue building a culture of professional and open interaction. (a) Does not apply to public comment processes (b) Commission may always identify specific instances where anonymous feedback is critical and allow that option	8/28/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-238	Educate Districts about the occurrence of inconsistencies: (a) Share that Finance staff follow consistent internal processes, including around decision-making processes, have established training and succession plans (b) Support better understanding by continually communicating that (a) programs have different rules / regulations and (b) Commission staff are continuously evolving their understanding. This means that different programs will naturally have different rules, and that rules may change over time.	8/19/2026	Regional Managers	Target date to be determined*

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Fully Addressed Topics

Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-240	Build on the concurred recommendations about providing a “Button” feature throughout the website and grant manual that leads to a feedback form (R-172 and R-182 in Additional Support) to make it easier for users to provide feedback and to track its handling, and to improve accountability through transparency. (a) The Feedback form should: (i) Ask the commenter to identify the type of feedback (e.g., editing vs. policy) (ii) Include a reminder that the submissions are potentially public (iii) Potentially be available only to authorized users, not general public (b) Gathered feedback should: (i) Be transparently tracked, so Districts can see status of response, who is tasked with responding, and ultimate resolution. (ii) Include an ability to upvote or comment on feedback submitted by others (iii) Be accessible to Districts on a not-entirely-public platform (c) Commission staff should seek feedback from the community and use a continuous improvement model to assess the effectiveness of this process and iterate to improve it.	8/19/2026	SCC Communications Team	Target date to be determined*
R-241	Clarify the escalation pathways within the Commission for questions or feedback.	8/19/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-242	Clarify the existing process for formal appeals (e.g., when should it be used, how to access).	8/19/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-243	Support the work of the Executive Leadership Team to develop a calendar for major grant administration updates (e.g., grant application deadlines) and policy/guideline revision processes. This calendar should be shared transparently (not kept as an internal Commission document) and should explicitly include opportunities for feedback / engagement.	8/19/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*

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Rec Code	Recommendation	OWG Meeting Approval Date	Implementation Lead	Implementation Target Date or Completion Date
R-244	Convene an ongoing Advisory group as a lower-intensity continuation of the Ombuds group. (a) The group membership should include Districts, Finance staff, RMs, and Program Managers. (b) The group “title” should emphasize the advisory nature of the effort. (c) This group should: (i) Use a continuous improvement model to co-develop a feedback mechanism and communication plan that considers accountability, frequency of reporting, and medium that will best reach the community. (ii) Review feedback received to help identify emergent themes that should escalate to a broader conversation or process in the community and develop recommendations. (iii) Examine and resolve inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, and conflicts in the ongoing review and engagement process.	8/19/2026	SCC Leadership Team	July 2027
R-245	The Commission should develop a more explicit approach to dealing with District staff who repeatedly communicate unprofessionally and/or unkindly with Commission staff. These concerns should be communicated back to Districts. (a) District Managers should address concerns about their staff. (b) If the problematic behavior is by a District Manager, then the Commission may communicate with the Board to request assistance.	8/19/2026	SCC Leadership Team	Target date to be determined*
R-246	Encourage process improvement around funding application timelines so that award decisions (and notification) routinely occur prior to the start of the biennium.	8/19/2026	Program Managers	Target date to be determined*

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