

Using Voluntary Stewardship Program Operating Funds for Project Cost Share

Updated May 2023

After receiving operating funding from the Legislature for the Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP), the Conservation Commission (SCC) makes funds available to each of the 27 participating counties.

After a county VSP work plan has been approved by the VSP Technical Panel, VSP funds may be used for implementation. Each county is free to choose how to allocate its operating funds¹, but regardless of how the funds are allocated, the county must continue to meet all the requirements of the VSP (RCW Chapter 36.70A), the SCC's contract deliverables, and the county-wide work plan goals and objectives of their own county-wide work plan.

The SCC requires that counties follow all SCC policies and procedures related to cost-share, which can be found on the [SCC's grants, contract, and finance web page](#), paying particular attention to the [SCC's Grant and Contracts Procedures Manual](#) and the [training on cost-share put on by SCC financial staff](#). Counties should review and be trained in SCC cost-share policy and procedure before deciding to use operating funds for cost-share.

Counties should also review RCW Chapter 36.70A.700-760, Policy Advisory [03-18 Roles and Responsibilities during VSP implementation – Amended](#), and 05-18 [VSP Implementation Reporting – 2 year and 5 Year Reports](#) before making a decision to use operating funds for cost-share.

Counties are required to create a VSP implementation budget and should use project management protocols to meet the statutory requirements. Counties may find it easier to partner with an entity, such as your local conservation district, that already has training, knowledge, and experience with SCC cost-share requirements.

If VSP operating funding will be used for cost-share projects, there are a few requirements unique to VSP that must be followed:

¹ But see "requirements" below as certain line items will need to be included in the county's VSP implementation budget, depending on choices the county makes.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. That counties follow all SCC policies and procedures related to cost-share, which can be found on the [SCC's grants, contract, and finance web page](#), paying particular attention to the [SCC's Grant and Contracts Procedures Manual](#) and the [training on cost-share put on by SCC financial staff](#).
2. Any staff of the county, county work group, or CD must receive SCC cost-share training prior to the implementation of a cost share program. Please contact the SCC staff below to schedule a training.
3. The county work group will need to approve the use of operating funds for cost-share each biennium. This can be done at the beginning of the biennial contract period during an open public meeting and proof of such authorization shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.
4. Any individual project using operating funds for cost-share shall be approved by the county work group during an open public meeting.
5. The county work group shall establish a cost share rate of reimbursement by passing a rate of reimbursement resolution, as per SCC procedures in the [SCC's Grant and Contracts Procedures Manual](#). If a conservation district (CD) is implementing the VSP cost-share program on behalf of a county work group, and if the county work group has not set a rate of reimbursement, then the conservation district rate of reimbursement is used.
6. All cost share projects are to be reported in the five-year report under RCW 36.70A.720 (2) (b) (i) and (c) (i).
7. If a county wants to use operating funds for cost-share, it must have a separate line-item in its VSP budget for this purpose.

The staff person at the SCC responsible for VSP cost-share is Nicole Boyes. Please contact her by email at nboyes@scc.wa.gov or by phone at 564-669-3149.

Special note about District Implemented Projects (DIPs):

DIP is an alternative to cost-share that the SCC offers that is only available to CDs. All requirements in the [SCC's Grant and Contracts Procedures Manual](#) and SCC policies and procedures related to DIPs must be complied with, in addition to the following unique VSP requirements:

1. A CD must have an ILA with a county for VSP implementation to use DIP in VSP.



2. The county work group will need to approve of the use of operating funds for DIPs each biennium. This can be done at the beginning of the biennial contract period during an open public meeting and proof of such authorization shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.
3. All DIPs shall be approved by the county work group during an open public meeting.
4. All DIPs are to be reported in the five-year report under RCW 36.70A.720 (2) (b) (i) and (c) (i).
5. If a county wants to use operating funds for DIP, it must have a separate line-item in its VSP budget for this purpose.