

**Charlotte County Boater Improvement Fund / West Coast Inland Navigation District
Fiscal Year 2027–2028 Grant Application
Application Deadline: January 31, 2026**

Grant Availability and Funding Sources

Effective **December 17, 2025**, applicants may apply for grant assistance funded by revenues from the **Florida Boater Improvement Fund (BIF)**, generated through boat registration fees, and the **West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND)**, funded through property tax assessments. Applications submitted after the established deadline will not be accepted or considered.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include **Charlotte County government agencies and non-governmental organizations**.

Types of Grant Funding Available

Three funding sources are available. All proposed projects must serve a public purpose and provide a benefit to the community as a whole.

1. WCIND Funding

WCIND funds may be used for public navigation channels, boating access facilities, waterfront parks and piers, and marine and environmental education and safety programs. Projects fall into the following five categories:

- **Marine Law Enforcement** (100% funded)
- **Navigation Improvements** (100% funded)
- **Environmental Education** (100% funded)
- **Boater Safety/Education** (50% match required)
- **Boater Recreation** (50% match required)

WCIND funds may not be used for general operations or maintenance expenses.

2. BIF – State Funding

State BIF funds may be used for recreational channel marking and other uniform waterway markers; public boat ramps; lifts and hoists; marine railways; public launching facilities;

removal of derelict vessels; and hazardous floating structures. Projects are eligible for **100% funding**.

3. BIF – Local Funding

Local BIF funds may be used for patrol, regulation, and maintenance of lakes, rivers, and waterways, as well as other boating-related activities. **Up to 100% funding** may be available.

General Information

This program operates on a **cost-reimbursement basis** for projects completed within one fiscal year, from **October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027**. Any unspent grant funds remaining at the end of the grant period will be retained by Charlotte County and considered unobligated. Project extensions may be approved for extenuating circumstances upon written request.

Application Requirements for Non-Governmental Organizations

At the time of application submission, all non-governmental applicants must provide:

- Articles of Incorporation
 - A current Florida Not-For-Profit Corporation Annual Report
 - Documentation from the U.S. Department of the Treasury confirming **501(c)(3)** status and the organization's legal name
-

Grant Award Requirements

If awarded, grant recipients will be required to enter into a funding agreement with Charlotte County outlining the responsibilities and obligations of both parties. A sample agreement is available on the Charlotte County website at:

<https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/boards-committees/mac/Pages/BoaterImprovementFund.aspx>

Reporting and Procurement Requirements

Agencies awarded grant funds must submit **quarterly project status reports** to Charlotte County.

For equipment, goods, or services exceeding **\$5,000** in value, recipients must also provide:

- **At least three written bids** for approval prior to purchase. If only one vendor is available, a written request for **sole-source authorization** must be submitted to Charlotte County.
- An **annual report** documenting the equipment's current use and value until the asset value falls below \$5,000.
- A **formal request for disposition** if the equipment is no longer needed or used for its intended grant-funded purpose.

Grant Application Processing Schedule

- **December 17, 2025 – January 31, 2026**
Application period. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted or considered.
 - **March 12, 2026**
Charlotte County **Marine Advisory Committee (MAC)** reviews and prioritizes applications and submits formal recommendations to the **Board of County Commissioners (BCC)**.
 - **May 2026**
The **Board of County Commissioners** reviews MAC recommendations and votes on grant applications.
 - **July 2026**
The **West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) Board** votes on district applications for funding.
 - **July – September 2026**
Grant agreements are developed and executed.
 - **October 1, 2026**
Grant term begins.
-

Application Instructions

- The applicant's organization name must reflect the **legal name** as shown on incorporation documents or governmental designation. If applicable, include the appropriate corporate suffix (e.g., LLC, INC, Inc.). Applicants must submit documentation verifying their organization's legal name, including **Articles of Incorporation**, a **current Florida Not-For-Profit Corporation Annual Report**, and/or a **U.S. Department of the Treasury 501(c)(3) determination letter**, as applicable. These documents must be submitted with the application.
 - The **Principal Officer** identified in the application must be authorized to legally bind the organization contractually.
 - Proposed projects must fall within **at least one eligible category of work**. Applicants should select the single category that best represents the project's scope.
 - Provide a **brief project description** within the application. More detailed project narratives may be submitted as attachments.
 - Applicants must identify the **total amount of grant funding requested**, as well as any **funds contributed by the applicant**. While not all projects require a financial contribution, two WCIND funding categories—**boater safety and education** and **boater recreation**—require a **50% matching contribution**.
If the applicant seeks **BIF-Local funding** from Charlotte County to fund all or part of the required match, a statement explaining how this additional funding serves the County's best interest must be included. Please note that **WCIND no longer accepts volunteer hours as matching funds**.
 - All **project permits, engineering, plans, and specifications** must be obtained and paid for by the applicant and must be **complete and current** at the time of application. Applicants must list all required permits, including status and expiration dates, and attach copies to the application.
 - Applicants must complete the **project budget sheet** included with the application. All columns must be completed to clearly distinguish **grant funds** and **matching funds**. If the provided budget template does not adequately reflect the project, an alternative budget format may be submitted as an attachment.
-

Application Submission

Signed applications may be submitted **via email** to:

Debbie.Thibideau@CharlotteCountyFL.gov

Applications may also be **mailed or hand-delivered** to:

Charlotte County Fiscal Services Division

Attn: Debbie Thibideau

18500 Murdock Circle, Suite B-109

Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Applications must be **received by January 31, 2026**, at the Fiscal Services Division address to be considered for the **FY 2027–2028 grant cycle. No exceptions will be made.**

Questions

Direct all questions regarding this grant opportunity to:

Debbie Thibideau

 941-743-1308

Budget and Administrative Services Department



Fiscal Services Division – Grants Section

Attention: Debbie Thibideau

18500 Murdock Circle, Suite B-109

Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Phone: 941-743-1308

Charlotte County Boater Improvement Fund Grant Application

Fiscal Year 2027

(October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2027)

Application Deadline: January 31, 2026

Applicant Information

Name of Organization: _____

Is the organization a subsidiary of a parent organization?

Yes No

If yes, name of parent organization: _____

Principal Officer: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Project Eligibility Category

All projects must serve a public purpose and fall within one of the following categories
(select the single category that best applies):

- Waterway Management
- Marine Debris Removal
- Marine Law Enforcement
- Dredging
- Environmental Education

- Boater Recreation
 - Protection of Marine Life & Aquatic Environment
 - Aids to Navigation
 - Public Boat Ramps & Launching Facilities
 - Boaters' Safety & Education
 - Other Projects for Boater & Waterway Enhancement
-

Project Information

Project Name: _____

Project Description:

Explain how the project benefits the community as a whole:

Funding Information

Total Amount of Grant Funding Requested: _____

Total Amount of Matching Funds Provided: _____

Boater Safety/Education and Boater Recreation projects require a 50% applicant match.

Is the applicant requesting **supplemental BIF-Local funding** to pay all or a portion of the required 50% match?

Yes No

If yes, provide justification explaining how this additional funding serves the County's best interest:

Project Details

Project Location: _____

Estimated Completion Date: _____

Are there other funding sources for this project?

Yes No

If yes, list sources:

Is a permit required for this project?

Yes No

If yes, list each permit, its type, and status. Attach copies of all permits that have been issued or applied for:

Budget and Supporting Documentation

Complete the **attached budget form**. Applicants may attach additional supporting documentation deemed pertinent to the request.

Committee Review

Applicants should be available to attend the **Marine Advisory Committee (MAC)** meeting on **March 12, 2026**, to answer questions regarding the project. Review dates will be posted on the Charlotte County website at:

<https://www.CharlotteCountyFL.gov/Boards-Committees/MAC>

Certification

By signing below, I certify that I am authorized to legally bind the organization contractually.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Application Submission

Signed applications may be submitted **via email** to:

Debbie.Thibideau@CharlotteCountyFL.gov

Applications may also be **mailed or hand-delivered** to:

Charlotte County Fiscal Services Division

Attn: Debbie Thibideau

18500 Murdock Circle, Suite B-109

Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Applications must be **received by January 31, 2026**, at the Fiscal Services Division address to be considered for the **FY 2027–2028 grant cycle. No exceptions will be made.**

For questions regarding this grant opportunity, please contact **Debbie Thibideau** at **941-743-1308**.

Please complete your project's budget:

BUDGET ESTIMATE DETAIL	Grant Funds	Matching Funds ¹	Total
Construction Expenses (specify)			
Contractual Services (specify)			
Materials (specify)			
Equipment (specify)			
Salaries² (specify)			
Promotional materials (Specify)			
<small>(ineligible for WCIND funds)</small>			
GRAND TOTAL			

The budget may be adjusted between categories; however, the scope of the project may not change.

¹ Matching funds are **required** for WCIND Boating Safety/Education and Recreation projects.

² Salaries are eligible toward BIF grants. Salaries allowed for WCIND grant **only** for Law Enforcement projects.
Volunteer Hours are no longer accepted as a 50% match.