

154.14-050 Project to be in public interest -- Evaluation of grant application -- Scoring system -- County population ranking -- Regional projects.

- (1) The cabinet shall not approve a project unless it finds that the project is in the public interest and the grant funds will be used for a public purpose. For purposes of this subsection, projects that are in the public interest and for a public purpose can include a derivative private benefit, if the cabinet finds the following:
 - (a) The project will enhance a community or region;
 - (b) The granting entity for which the cabinet's matching grant is being used requires a public purpose for grant eligibility; or
 - (c) The cabinet in its judgment concludes the proposal will enhance the quality of life or services in a community or region.
- (2) The cabinet shall evaluate each applicant's eligible project according to the criteria described in this section for the purpose of compiling a score for the eligible project pursuant to this section.
- (3) If a match applicant is selected as an eligible grant applicant approved under the GRANT Program, it shall comply with any incentive agreements and reporting requirements deemed necessary by the cabinet to verify that the awarded grant shall go toward an eligible use.
- (4) In the administration of the GRANT Program, the cabinet shall develop a scoring system for eligible grant applications based on the total projected return on investment and the relative positive impact in the community.
- (5) The scoring system shall include a:
 - (a) Score in each category as specified in subsection (6) of this section; and
 - (b) Total weighted score, which is the average of the scores in each category.
- (6) The scoring categories shall include but are not limited to:
 - (a) Projected return on investment the project will yield, which includes an assessment of the:
 1. Likelihood of project completion both with the match funding and without;
 2. Application content when evaluated against the federal grant program's publicly available scoring rubric or evaluation criteria, if any;
 3. Projected gross economic impact of the proposed project on the community;
 4. Projected number of jobs created by the proposed project and subsequent impact on the community;
 5. Determination of the cost of the project based on the amount expended by the cabinet if it obligates the requested grant amount to the applicant;
 6. Evidence of community support for the project submitted by:
 - a. The eligible grant applicant; or
 - b. A majority of eligible grant applicants for a regional project;
 7. Likelihood that the applicant can successfully manage the federal grant's administration requirements; and

8. Likelihood of success based on a federal agency prioritization of a particular applicant; and
 - (b) Overall positive impact the project will have on the surrounding community as evidenced by clear and feasible projected outcomes of the grant-funded project.
- (7) (a) On or before May 1, 2024, and not later than May 1 every two (2) years thereafter, the cabinet shall determine a county population ranking for each county by adding the following two (2) factors:
1. The population density ranking; and
 2. The ten (10) year percentage change in population ranking.
- (b) For applications submitted on or after July 1, 2026, the required local match for each county shall be as follows:
1. Eligible projects in counties where the county population ranking is greater than or equal to one hundred ninety-three (193) shall provide a minimum amount of local matching funds equal to two percent (2%) of the state match;
 2. Eligible projects in counties where the county population ranking is less than one hundred ninety-three (193) but greater than or equal to one hundred forty-five (145) shall provide a minimum amount of local matching funds equal to four percent (4%) of the state match;
 3. Eligible projects in counties where the county population ranking is less than one hundred forty-five (145) but greater than or equal to ninety-seven (97) shall provide a minimum amount of local matching funds equal to six percent (6%) of the state match;
 4. Eligible projects in counties where the county population ranking is less than ninety-seven (97) but greater than or equal to forty-nine (49) shall provide a minimum amount of local matching funds equal to eight percent (8%) of the state match; and
 5. Eligible projects in counties where the county population ranking is less than forty-nine (49) shall provide a minimum amount of local matching funds equal to ten percent (10%) of the state match.
- (c) On or before November 1, 2024, and no later than November 1 every two (2) years thereafter, the cabinet shall report to the Legislative Research Commission and the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue the following information for each county:
1. The county name;
 2. The population density ranking for that county;
 3. The ten (10) year percentage change in population ranking for that county; and
 4. The county population ranking for that county.
- (8) (a) For selected eligible grant applicants that are involved in a regional project, the cabinet may pool the potential allocation of funds available for each county represented by the eligible grant applicants for the grant amount

awarded.

- (b) A county that is an eligible grant applicant involved in a regional project shall provide that county's local matching funds based on the county population ranking determined under subsection (7) of this section and each county's local matching funds may be pooled as described in paragraph (a) of this subsection.

Effective: April 13, 2026

History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 115, sec. 4, effective April 13, 2026. -- Amended 2025 Ky. Acts ch. 71, sec. 4, effective March 24, 2025. -- Created 2024 Ky. Acts ch. 188, sec. 5, effective April 12, 2024.