

# BOATING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT (BIG)

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries  
(NCDMF)

Guide for Applicants  
FY2024

NOTE: Applicants are responsible for referring to the respective Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for [Tier 1](#) and [Tier 2](#) projects as well as the [BIG Final Rule 50 CFR 86](#) for guidance on applying for a BIG Grant. This document should serve only as a resource and not an all-inclusive representation of requirements of the BIG Grant Program.

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## Program Contacts

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## Purpose of the BIG Program

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The Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-178) established the Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG) Program (16 United States Code (U.S.C.) 777g-1) to provide funding to the United States and U.S. Territories for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of boating infrastructure facilities for transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that are operated, leased, rented, or chartered primarily for pleasure. Recreational boating is a popular activity; there are approximately 11.8 million registered motorized recreational vessels in the United States. Of this total, an estimated 575,000 are at least 26 feet long.

Boating infrastructure means the structures, equipment, accessories, and services that are necessary or desirable for a facility to accommodate eligible vessels. Transient vessels are those passing through or by a place, staying up to 15 days. Projects completed using BIG funds must provide public access but may be publicly or privately owned. Some examples of potentially eligible activities include but are not limited to the following:

- Boat slips, piers, mooring buoys, dinghy or courtesy docks, day docks, and gangways;
- Fuel stations, restrooms, showers, utilities, laundry facilities, and similar amenities;
- Lighting, communications, buoys, beacons, signals, markers, signs, security features;
- Floating or fixed breakwaters, wave attenuators, sea walls, and other improvements that provide a harbor of safe refuge;
- Planning, permitting, engineering, cultural, historic, and environmental studies or assessments necessary to construct boating infrastructure;
- Equipment and structures for collecting, disposing of, or recycling liquid or solid waste from eligible vessels or for eligible users;
- Retaining walls, bulkheads, pilings, and living shorelines;
- Debris deflection structures or water hazard removal;
- Dredging necessary to fulfill the purpose and objectives of the project (cannot exceed \$200,000 in Federal funds and applicants have allocated the dredging costs between the expected use by eligible and ineligible vessels);
- Maintenance of facilities during the project period;
- Repair or restoration of roads, parking lots, walkways, or other surface areas damaged as a direct result of BIG funded construction;
- Information and education materials specific to BIG or a BIG funded project that credits BIG as a source of funding;
- Recording of the Federal interest in BIG-funded real property; and
- Administration, coordination, and monitoring of BIG awards.

## BIG Grant Types

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### **Tier 1 – State Competition**

- Projects shall not exceed \$300,000 in federal funding
- 25% applicant match requirement (cannot come from federal funds)
- Compete against other Tier I NC projects

### **Tier 2– National Competition**

- Projects shall not exceed \$1.5 million in federal funding
- 25% applicant match requirement (cannot come from federal funds)
- Compete against other Tier II nationwide projects

## Eligible Applicants, Infrastructures, and Pre-Award Costs

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### *Applicants*

- Both publicly owned and privately-owned marina facilities that are open to the public and located in North Carolina are eligible to apply for funding, including private marinas, local municipalities, other State agencies, or other non-governmental entities.
- Selected applicants must meet all Federal requirements as detailed in the [Tier 1 NOFO](#) or [Tier 2 NOFO](#) and the [BIG Final Rule 50 CFR 86](#).
- The applicant must own or have legal right to operate the BIG-funded facility, or the applicant must demonstrate in the proposal that the owner of the facility will use the BIG-funded facility for its authorized purpose for its useful life.
- Funds may be requested for facility maintenance only if the maintenance action will be completed within the grant award period and only if it directly benefits eligible users and is directly related to the proposed BIG project (for guidance on facility maintenance, see 50 CFR 86.14).
- Awarded subrecipients, as directed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), must record a Notice of Federal Participation for the Federal interest in the BIG-funded real property (defined in the BIG Final Rule 50 CFR 86.18). If directed to record the Federal interest, it will be included in the sub-recipient contract.
- Sewage pump-out service must be provided if your project will allow overnight stays and existing service is not available within two nautical miles of the facility or as required by State or local laws. Though BIG funds may be used for a sewage pump-out station, as a first option, NCDMF recommends applicants apply for an [NC Marine Sewage Pump-out Grant](#) (Clean Vessel Act grant), administered by the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM) concurrently with this request for funding or provide this service through other means.
- Clear information must be given using signs or other methods that direct eligible users to BIG-funded facilities and information users of restrictions and operating periods (see the guidance at 50 CFR 86.94). Credit must also be given to the Sport Fish Restoration Program through the use of the program logo and language at BIG-funded facilities and within educational/informational materials that are produced.
- Print or electronic advertising and communications related to the BIG-funded facility or services for eligible users that credit BIG as the source of funding are eligible expenses, but not marketing of an applicant's marina as a whole to promote business and/or obtain customers. See 50 CFR 86.3 and 86.11 for additional guidance.
- Applicants shall only prohibit overnight use at a BIG-funded facility if it is explicitly stated in the proposal that the facility is only for day use. After funds are awarded,

subrecipients may expand the facility's use to allow for overnight use. However, if you state in your proposal that the BIG-funded facility will allow overnight use, you shall not change the purpose to allow day use only without receiving prior approval from the DMF and USFWS. A reduction in use or services to be provided after grant funds are awarded may result in penalties. See 50 CFR 86.93 and Subpart H for additional information.

- BIG-funded facilities must allow public access that does not interfere with the purpose of the BIG-funded project as described at 50 CFR 86.92. Access may be temporarily limited in cases of emergency, repairs, construction, or as a safety precaution, or when the facility is seasonally closed for business.

### *Infrastructures*

- Mooring buoys
- Day-docks
- Navigational aids
- Transient slips
- Safe Harbors
- Floating docks and fixed piers
- Floating and fixed breakwaters
- Dinghy docks
- Restrooms and showers
- Retaining walls, living shorelines
- Bulkheads
- Dockside utilities
- Pump-out stations
- Recycling and trash receptacles
- Debris deflection structures
- Marine fueling stations
- One-time dredging

### *Pre-Award Costs (only eligible for reimbursement if costs are approved, project is awarded and obligated, and project is completed.)*

- Conducting appraisals
- Administering environmental reviews and permitting
- Conducting technical feasibility studies
- Carrying out site surveys and engaging in site planning
- Preparing cost estimates
- Preparing working drawings, construction plans, and specifications

\*Pre-award costs are not guaranteed. Applicants must submit request to NCDMF for USFWS approval. Construction is not eligible for pre-award costs. The applicant incurs pre-award costs at their own risk.

## Post Award Process

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- Subrecipient provides documentation the NCDMF that required permits/approvals have been obtained for the awarded project.
- NCDMF completes the requirement compliance analysis:
  - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) comments pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
  - USFWS-Determination by local USFWS office pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act
  - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance checklist
  - If applicable, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) consultation to ensure no endangered species will be harmed.
- Funds are obligated (project must be completed within 3 years from start date noted on award letter).

## Post Obligation Process

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- Contract is executed between NCDMF and the subrecipient detailing:
  - Scope of work
  - Performance period
  - Terms and conditions
  - Reporting requirements
  - Federal Award Information
  - Invoice and Payment Information
- Funds will not be obligated until all required permits and compliance approval requirements have been met.
- Construction shall not begin until a fully executed contract is in place between NCDMF and the subrecipient.
- Subrecipients are required to submit performance reports to DMF semi-annually through the duration of the grant award process and a final report upon completion of the project.

## Post Construction Process

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- Subrecipient submits request for reimbursement with corresponding paid receipts/invoices (shall occur through the construction process as parts of the project are completed).
  - BIG funds are dispersed to subrecipients on a reimbursement basis only.



- Subrecipients must submit detailed invoices, copies of all receipts and original invoices received from contractors approved for payment, and the accompanying pay statements to receive payments.
  - The program requires a minimum 25% match; therefore, if subrecipients plan to provide match using cash, each invoice submitted will be reimbursed at the rate of 75% of the actual cost incurred or the value of the services provided.
  - DMF will only authorize up to 90% of the total anticipated project cost prior to completion. The final 10% will be withheld until a final inspection of the work is completed and all required deliverables have been received.
  - In order to receive payment, subrecipients will need to register with the State of North Carolina's eProcurement system.
- Subrecipient shall contact NCDMF to schedule a final inspection.
- NCDMF will continue to monitor the site through the useful life of the BIG funded facility to ensure infrastructure continues to:
  - be used for transient vessels only,
  - is used only for its authorized purpose
  - allows public access to shore and basic features including fuel and restrooms, and
  - complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

## Proposal

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Applicants must submit proposals in electronic format as one file using Microsoft Word no later than Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 5 pm. Proposals less than 20 M.B. should be emailed to Vicky.Pohoresky@deq.nc.gov. Applicants must take appropriate action to reduce any image and/or file sizes prior to emailing to ensure the entire proposal, including all sections, is submitted as one document. Each section in the proposal must be clearly labeled with pages numbered and submitted in the order as requested below. The DMF is unable to assemble proposals for applicants.

Proposals greater than 20 M.B. may be placed on a thumb drive and mailed or hand delivered to Vicky Pohoresky. Please note all proposals, regardless of the delivery method, must be received by NCDMF by the submission deadline to be considered.

### Format Requirements

The paper size requirement is 8.5" x 11" with 1" margins all around. Pages should be numbered with page numbers located at the bottom of the page. The font should be 12-point Arial or 12-point Times New Roman.

Proposals for both the Tier 1 and Tier 2 opportunities MUST include all components as listed below. Additional information is required by the State in order to review your proposal and is detailed below. We require that you label all sections as listed and arrange your application in this order:

1. Title Page
2. Project Summary (1-page limit)
3. Project Narrative (10-page limit)
4. Budget Narrative (no page limit)
5. Response to Ranking Criteria (6 – page limit)
6. Geographic Location/Drawings/Maps/Photographs (20-page limit)
7. Supporting Documents (10 – page limit)

### Title Page

- The title page shall be formatted and include the following:
  - Margin centered
  - Name of marina
  - Funding Opportunity Title and Tier
  - Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 15.622
  - Funding Opportunity Number
  - Date submitted to NCDMF
  - Owner (s) name, mailing address, phone number, and email

### Project Statement (1-page limit)

- Project title
- Latitude and Longitude of project (degrees: minutes: seconds)
- Requested project period (earliest start date is July 1, 2022, up to three years total)
- Project objectives for the project period
- Specific project activities
- Expected results
- Budget information (show only the eligible costs)
- Total Federal funds requested
  - Total cost share to be provided from non-Federal sources and specify whether contributions are:
    - Cash
    - In-kind
    - Other grants or private funds (cannot be federal funds)
- Total project cost

### Project Narrative

- The Project Narrative **MUST** include all of the following elements. These elements should follow the guidance as detailed within the Tier 1 or Tier 2 NOFO.
  1. Need: Explain why the project is necessary and how it fulfills the purpose of BIG
    - Describe existing facilities available for eligible vessels at your location and near the proposed project; and
    - Describe and provide justification how the proposed project fills a need or offers a benefit not offered by existing facilities; and
    - Give information to support the number of transient boats expected to use the facilities in the proposed project area and demonstrate why existing facilities are insufficient to meet demand.
  2. Purpose: State the ultimate purpose for the proposed project and link the purpose to the demonstrated need.
  3. Objectives: State desired outcomes that are specific and quantifiable
    - Write in active tense using action verbs such as construct, survey, train, research, establish, repair, conduct, provide, restore, acquire, etc.
    - Identify specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) objectives to be accomplished during the project period.
    - Note what benchmarks must be achieved to meet the need.
  4. Expected Results or Benefits: Describe the expected results or benefits
    - Describe each capital improvement, service, or product that will result from the project.
    - Describe and provide data on how structures, services, or other products will address the need and benefit transient boaters.

5. Approach: Describe the approach to be used in meeting the project objectives
  - Describe the methods, designs, and/or procedures to be used to achieve the objectives. Include information on the status of required permits or other compliance requirements (National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act).
  - Identify the contact who has or will have detailed knowledge of the project (such as the Coordinator for the State Agency and the county or marina contact), provide contact information, and State whether they have signatory authority for committing the grantee to a course of action.
  - Give name, contact information, qualifications, and role of each known concessioner or subrecipient.
  - Applicant shall explain how they will operate, maintain, administer and manage the proposed project to ensure the BIG funded facility continues to achieve its authorized purpose during the useful life of the facility.
  - Provide a timeline of activities. Include permitting, design, engineering, other regulatory clearances, bidding, material fabrication, construction, etc.
6. Relationship with Other Grants: Describe any relationship between the proposed project and other related work funded by Federal grants that is planned, anticipated, or underway.
7. Geographic Location/Drawings/Maps/Photographs (20 page limit): Proposals will be reviewed, in part, on the quality of the access you provide for eligible vessels to significant destinations, services, and other amenities. In addition to addressing the project location generally in the Project Statement, please provide additional context by visually depicting the following:
  - The location of the project site using Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in the following format: degrees:minutes:seconds;
  - All existing structures, facilities, and amenities;
  - All proposed project components;
  - Clearly marked areas that are for (1) eligible transient recreational vessels, (2) areas that are for others, and (3) areas that are for shared use;
  - Water depths (before and after planned dredging, if applicable);
  - If dredging is proposed, you must include an aerial photograph or schematic drawing to indicate the specific area(s) you intend to dredge;
  - Measurements for all docks, bulkheads, breakwaters, and other features where boats will be accommodated;
  - Any other information that will assist reviewers to identify project components, prorating criteria, or other factors involved with ranking.
  - A small State map that shows the general location of the project;
  - A local map that shows the facility location and the nearest community, public road, and navigable water body;

- Maps or images that show proximity or distances to significant destinations, services that support eligible users, terrain considerations, access, or other information applicable to your project;
- Any other map that supports the information in the project statement.

### Budget Narrative

This section should clearly explain and justify all requested budget items/costs. There must be a clear connection between the costs and the proposed project activities.

In addition to the narrative, applicants must provide the estimated budget for the project in a table, rounding costs to the nearest dollar. The various activities or components of the project shall be broken down by cost and by cooperator, using prevailing rates. The budget table shall reflect the total project cost and eligible prorated cost, if applicable. The table shall also provide a breakdown of Federally requested funds vs. matching funds by major project element.

The below example shows a prorated share for a mixed-use facility and the required 25% match.

COMPONENT	COST	TRANSIENT SHARE (58%)	REQUEST	MATCH
Design	\$ 30,000	\$ 17,400	\$ 13,050	\$ 4,350
Dredging & Disposal	\$ 100,000	\$ 58,000	\$ 43,500	\$ 14,500
Pre-constructed Dock	\$ 425,000	\$ 246,500	\$ 184,875	\$ 61,625
Mobilization & Assembly	\$ 38,500	\$ 22,330	\$ 16,747	\$ 5,583
Dock Pilings	\$ 52,000	\$ 30,160	\$ 22,620	\$ 7,540
Tie Pilings	\$ 1,600	\$ 928	\$ 696	\$ 232
Gangway	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,900	\$ 2,175	\$ 725
Electric System	\$ 200,000	\$ 116,000	\$ 87,000	\$ 29,000
Water System	\$ 70,000	\$ 40,600	\$ 30,450	\$ 10,150
Contingency	\$ 55,140	\$ 31,981	\$ 23,985	\$ 7,995
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 977,240</b>	<b>\$ 566,799</b>	<b>\$ 425,098</b>	<b>\$ 141,701</b>

The budget narrative shall include:

- Explanation and description of the resources used to develop the project cost estimates
- Any Federal funded equipment, if applicable, including the funding source
- Contingency costs, if applicable, as a separate budget line item
  - If included, must be necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives,
  - Must be verifiable from the applicant's financial records, and
  - Applicant must include how any contingency costs were calculated and why they are necessary to improve the precision of budget estimates.
- Include anticipated program income, if applicable, as a separate budget line item.
- Match and other partner contributions as a separate budget line item
  - Applicants are required to provide at least 25% of the total allowable project costs
  - All matching funds must come from non-Federal sources
  - Match may come from cash, in-kind services, materials, and other contributions that the applicant, a partner, or other entity will contribute to the project.
  - Describe how the contributions directly and substantively benefits completion of the project.
- Prorated costs must also be included as a separate budget line item
  - Costs for facilities that will benefit operators of boats other than eligible transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that share landside facilities shall be prorated
  - Examples include fuel docks, restrooms, showers, pump-out stations, etc. that may
  - Applicants must clearly state:
    - The basis or method you used to allocate costs between eligible and ineligible users.
    - Your reasoning and evidence supporting use of this method.
    - Why prorating is not necessary (if applicable).
- Program Income – Gross income earned that is directly generated by a grant-supported activity or earned as a result of the grant during the grant period. Any revenue earned from the project before the grant is closed the fees have to be reported and deducted from the Federal reimbursement.
- Equipment – Includes tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more. A list of equipment to be purchased with BIG funds must be provided in the budget.

\*\*\*\*\*Budget must account for the Buy American Provision for Infrastructure and describe how this requirement will be met. [2024 NOFO - Section F2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements](#).

### Useful Life

Useful Life – Estimate the useful life in years of each capital improvement for the proposed project. This is typically a structure that costs at least \$25,000 to build or a repair or renovation of a structure costing at least \$25,000 that increases the structure's useful life by ten years or more. Useful life means the

period during which a BIG-funded capital improvement is capable of fulfilling its intended purpose with adequate routine care and maintenance, except in the case of a catastrophic event (for guidance on determining useful life, see 50 CFR 86.73 and 86.74). You may be required to revise or adjust useful life estimates during the approval process. The former 20-year requirement for maintaining a BIG-funded facility has been removed.

### Other Information

- Federal Tax ID Number (EIN) – Applicant shall provide the organization/business/etc. Federal Tax ID Number (FIN); organization fiscal year end date; website URL for the organization/business/etc., if applicable; and Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.
  - DUNS registration information is detailed within the NOFO for [Tier 1 NOFO](#) and [Tier 2 NOFO](#) under Basic Eligibility Requirements, Section III.
- Applicant must advise whether the organization/business/etc. applying for the grant is majority woman or minority owned.
- Permitting – Applicant shall include appropriate permit information in the proposal.
  - Applicant must include evidence of an on-site consultation with the DCM indicating conditional approval of the project activity.
    - Include date consultation was held
    - Include name of DCM Field Representative that conducted the consultation
    - Include details of the consultation
  - If appropriate permit has already been obtained for the project, applicant shall include a copy with the proposal.

### Ranking Criteria

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Criteria for reviewing and ranking proposals can be found in the [BIG Final Rule at 50 CFR 86.51](#). Applicants must fully address the criteria detailed within the [Tier 2 NOFO](#), Section VII. and at [50 CFR Part 86.52 through 86.60](#) for BOTH Tier 1 and Tier 2 proposals to be considered for this funding opportunity. Responses to the ranking criteria will be used to rank and select projects for both Tier 1 and Tier 2.

Receiving a BIG grant is a competitive process. Proposals will be reviewed based only on facts provided. To avoid inequities among applicants, DMF is not required to ask for clarification on any proposals received. DMF cannot help prepare your proposals or review them prior to submission.

The DMF will initially review proposals. Only the eligible and best proposals in each Tier will be submitted to the USFWS. The DMF will apply to the USFWS on your behalf for BIG Program funds based on the information that applicants provide. Selected applicants will be notified by October 1, 2023, if their proposal was selected for submittal to the USFWS. There is no appeals process for proposals that were not selected for submittal.

Applicants shall provide written responses to the following ranking criteria. Appendix A provides a scoring rubric that will be utilized by reviewers to score and rank all projects to determine proposals that will be submitted to USFWS.

- Need, access, and cost efficiency (50 CFR §86.52, 86.53, and 86.54)
  - Will the proposed boating infrastructure meet a need for more improved facilities?
  - Will eligible users receive benefits from the proposed boating infrastructure that justify the cost of the project?
  - Will the proposed boating infrastructure accommodate boater access to significant destinations and services that support transient boater travel?
- Match and Partnerships (50 CFR §86.57)
  - Are partnerships included?
  - Is match included?
- Innovation (50 CFR §86.58, 86.59, 86.60)
  - Will the proposed project include physical components, technology, or techniques that improve eligible-user access?
  - Will the proposed project include innovative physical components, technology, or techniques that improve the BIG-funded project?
  - Has the facility where the project is located demonstrated commitment to environmental compliance, sustainability, and stewardship and been officially recognized by an agency or organization?



Appendix A. Ranking Criteria for Points

1.Needs, Access, and Cost Efficiency	20 Total Possible Points
<u>50 CFR § 86.52, § 86.53, § 86.54</u>	
a) Will the proposed project meet a need for more or improved facilities? Is the need clearly identified in the proposal? <i>For example, what will your proposed project provide that is not being provided by other local facilities? This might be restrooms, fuel, etc. If increasing transient docks in the local area, include data in your proposal that clearly shows why more docks are needed.</i>	0 - 10
b) Will eligible users receive benefits from the proposed project that justify the cost of the project? <i>Describe any benefits to users and/or local area. For example, a project in an area with other transient marinas may not provide as many benefits as a project in an area with few or no transient facilities. This relates directly back to the need.</i>	0 - 7
c) Will the proposed project accommodate boater access to significant destinations and services that support transient boaters? <i>For example, does the location have a tourism industry that the proposed project will provide easy access to for boaters?</i>	0 - 3
2.Match and Partnerships	3 Total Possible Points
<u>50 CFR § 86.57</u>	
a) Does the in-kind match directly contribute to the completion of the project?	0 – 3
3.Innovation	6 Total Possible Points
<u>50 CFR § 86.58, § 86.59, § 86.60</u>	
a) Has the facility where the project is located demonstrated commitment to environmental compliance sustainability, and stewardship and been officially recognized by an	0 - 1

agency or organization? <i>You must provide documentation supporting any recognition.</i>	
b) Will the proposed project include innovative physical components, technology or techniques that improve the BIG-funded project? <i>Examples include anything that extends the useful life of the BIG funded project; design that may save costs or improve operations; reduces any negative environmental impact during construction.</i>	0 - 2
c) Will the proposed project include physical components, technology, or techniques that improve eligible-user access? <i>For example, anything that improves American with Disabilities Act (ADA) access The improvements must be described in the grant application in addition to what the current standard is and how this standard will be exceeded.</i>	0 - 3
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS TIER I</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL MATCH POINTS TIER 2</b>	<b>0 - 7</b>
<b>50 CFR § 86.56</b>	
<b>PERCENT CASH MATCH (GRANTEE)</b>	
0 – 25	0
26 – 29	1
30 – 39	2
40 – 49	3
50 – 59	4
60 – 69	5
70 – 79	6
80 OR HIGHER	7
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS TIER 2</b>	<b>36</b>