

Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Recreational Trails Grant Program



Application Instructions and Information

Revised August 2016



The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) administers the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). DPOR offers this competitive, reimbursable and matching trail grant for developing and maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects.

The Outdoor Recreation Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) reviews grant applications and makes grant-funding recommendations to the Director of DPOR.

These instructions are intended to provide information and application assistance to grant applicants as well as describe the requirements for participation in this program, the application process, and administration of the grant through project completion.

Please read this document carefully. You are responsible for this information and may risk disqualification of your application if instructions are not followed.

Questions concerning this program and these application instructions should be directed to the DPOR Grants Administrator or the State Trails Program Coordinator.

We look forward to working with you to develop your trail grant application.

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

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Information can also be found on our website:

www.alaskastatetrails.org

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Program Introduction

Program Background

These instructions will guide applicants through the grant application process for the RTP. The purpose of the RTP is to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities in Alaska for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Reimbursable grant funds are available for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education programs relating to recreational trail use (please refer to specific definition in Part A of an eligible Safety/ Education project).

(NEW) This program offers 90/10 federal matching funds on all projects for all applicants.

This program is unique in that, legislatively it is specified that 30% of the funds must be expended for projects that are strictly motorized, 30% will be spent on projects that are strictly non-motorized, while at the same time encouraging the development of projects that provide for multiple uses, 40 % must be spent on projects called *diversified*. Of the funds available for the RTP, a maximum of 5% may or may not be used for safety and education focused projects and it is up to the state to make this decision. This program was first funded in 1993 through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was called the National Recreational Trails Fund. Since that time, this program has funded over 440 trail projects in Alaska, and over 20,500 trail-related projects nation-wide, including urban greenways, nature centers, and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and motorized trails, as well as snow and water routes.

Funding Source

The RTP is funded from the Federal Highway Trust Fund managed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), which is funded from a percentage of federal fuel taxes. That money is allocated through the current Highway Transportation Bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or "FAST Act" where it continues the Recreational Trail Program as part of federal surface transportation funding.

Part A: IMPORTANT ITEMS YOU NEED TO KNOW

- This is a reimbursement program; therefore, the grant recipient must pay 100% of the cost for any eligible project line item before submitting a request for reimbursement.
- A recommendation for funding is not a guarantee of funding. Only projects that meet the public benefit criteria defined in Part A of this document, demonstrate an appropriate state of readiness to begin work (shovel-ready), and have been recommended by the Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) and the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will be forwarded to the FHWA for formal approval.
- Be aware- despite ORTAB recommendation and tentative approval, there is no guarantee that your project will be funded until you have a signed contract in-hand.
- Regardless of all supplemental funding sources, your RTP project must be self-sufficient. If you have questions about this, please contact the State Trails Program Office.
- There are absolutely no funding advances allowed.
- Be aware- if you have not provided all requested information by August 1 your project will likely not be approved by FHWA.
- Non-profit organizations and public agencies are eligible to apply for the RTP grants. (Businesses and individuals are not eligible for the RTP).
- Current grantees may not have two grants open concurrently with the same scope of work or exact title. Current grantees are eligible to apply for completely different projects or different phases of the same larger project. (EX: Happy Trail phase 1 and Happy Trail phase 2 could be considered two distinct projects even through the names are similar, if the project scopes were sequential phases of the same project.) These phases may not be open at the same time.
- The applicant must obtain, or be in the process of obtaining, (ex: early-entry authorization) landowner authorization for project work from all relevant landowners whose land the project crosses, unless the project is for safety and education or an equipment purchase, and has no land impact.
- Per 23 U.S.C 206 All trail development projects must have support from, or be generally referred to in a land management plan that has been adopted by a local government, state or federal agency. Source and specific language must be included with this application. Please refer to the current Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or a local land management plan for support.
- Projects should have a resolution of support from a local governing body. This can be a Tribal Council, Community Council, Municipal or Borough Assembly, area citizen's advisory board. etc.
- If using a contractor bid, submit the bid with the application and add it as a single line item in the budget under the "Other" section. Do not break it down into "Labor" "Materials" etc. If you do you will be asked to fix it.
- All projects will need three letters of support (and no more) from local community organizations or the public if they are **not** being submitted by Alaska State Parks. Section 9: Community Support discusses this in more detail.
- If you are submitting letters, **please limit** your submission of support letters to 3 and please **do**

not submit signed form letters.

Reasons for Application Denial

The following are a few reasons that your application may be denied. This is not a comprehensive list. If you have questions about other circumstances, please contact the State Trails Program Office.

- The application is insufficient or missing important components; i.e. a clear and comprehensive scope statement or narrative, comprehensive budget, feasible schedule, etc.
- The project lacks landowner or management-plan support.
- The project is not feasible or shovel-ready.
- Project does not adequately benefit the public. (see Public Benefit Section on page 8 for more detail)
- The budget is lacking a thorough explanation and breakdown of costs. (please use excel spreadsheet- download from State Trails Program webpage)
- The budget includes lots of incorrect math- yes, have someone else look it over, and use a calculator- we aren't kidding!
- The budget numbers do not match the one of the quotes or bids. These numbers must match exactly. Please do not average the three quotes or bids. Submit all three, but make the choice ahead of time based on your organization's criteria and use those numbers in your budget.
- Budget line items are grouped and unspecific or vague. (Use NEW expandable excel spreadsheet)
- Public Notice requirements are not met.
- Project is predominantly for planning, assessment, evaluating. RTP money is intended for on-the-ground trail work.
- If you identify future, unconfirmed, volunteer work as match for a scope of work that only includes an equipment purchase your application **will not move forward** to the next stage of review. Please see the Matching Requirements section for more explanation.

Grant Cycle

- Application documents are available August 15th at this location:
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> . Please use new and updated documents.
- Mandatory public notice posting deadline: **October 1**.
- Applicants must submit their application to the State Trails Program Coordinator **BOTH** electronically and by mail. All applications must be received electronically (by email) **(NEW) November 1 AND postmarked by November 1**, unless you are unable to send it electronically, and have made special arrangements. Prior to the deadline, to only mail a hard copy.
- Applications sent to ORTAB mid-December
- ORTAB meeting in Anchorage, January or February
- Notification to applicants about their tentative award – March
- Agency Review – March
- Grant Agreements – Dependent on agency review and federal approval, April- September 31 (end of federal fiscal year).

Community Involvement

Before applying for a grant, it is important to spend some time discussing project needs, goals, and expectations with your local trails community. Garner user support. A little pre-planning will pay dividends down the way. Start small and do not overestimate what you can accomplish. Many larger projects fail because they are too ambitious and do not have clear goals or agreements among important stakeholders.

Consequences

Consider potential consequences of your project such as environmental, historical, and archaeological

impacts (these must be documented and minimized), permits (you may need to obtain various permits prior to obtaining approval), and possible opposition (some people may oppose your project for various reasons, including concerns about property rights, liability, safety, or historic and environmental impacts). An applicant should review the work plan and staff resources to assess a contractor's ability to take on the proposed project.

Ask Questions

DPOR staff is available for assistance with grant application and technical assistance until the application deadline. Contact information is located in Appendix A.

Tentative Approval

After the ORTAB makes their funding recommendations RTP awards are tentatively approved by DPOR. At that time, applicants will be notified of tentative approval and must wait for FHWA project determination and funding approval. Notice of tentative approval is not a guarantee of funding. After FHWA has completed its review and signed the federal agreement, DPOR staff will execute a grant agreement with successful applicants. Funds will not be available for reimbursement to any applicant until state and federal agency review is complete and environmental review conditions are satisfied. Project expenditures made BEFORE a signed grant agreement is in place will not be reimbursable. Please also see the *Procurement and Reimbursement Guidance* section in Part B of this document or call for details.

Only One Application Choice

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment projects, and Trail Safety, Signing, and Education projects now use the same application. If you are applying for a Safety, Signing, and Education project, please check the appropriate box in Section 4, Project Category, of the application, AFTER you read the Definition of a Safety and Education Project in Part B of this document or below in the Permissible uses section to ensure your project fits the criteria.

Permissible Uses of Funds

Public Benefit

All projects using grant funds must have public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.

Due to the variety of project proposals, it is possible that while a proposed project may satisfy the eligibility and rating criteria, the completed project may not provide adequate public trail use opportunities. Therefore, the DNR reserves the right to disqualify proposals in which:

1. Costs exceed the general public benefits.
2. The project only benefits a small number of people.
3. The project is not shovel-ready.
4. The site requires intensive and high-cost future management.
5. Any other situations where the public benefit will not justify the federal investment.
6. Adequate control and tenure of property is not provided.
7. The project manager failed to post the mandatory public notice.

This list is not comprehensive and other reasons for disqualification may be determined as projects are reviewed. When a project application is denied for any reason, the project sponsor will be notified in writing.

Permissible uses

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment

Development and repair or restoration of existing trails,
Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities, bridges, signs, and trail linkages,
Purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment, (check rules for match requirement)
Construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands),
Acquisition of easements or property for trails, and
Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and needed repair.

Safety, Signing, and Education Projects

Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training (limited to 5 percent of a State's apportionment, but not required). Please be aware that because of this, the competition is generally very high in this category.

These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost, also see Public Benefit section below. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials.

Allowable Labor Costs

Labor costs, including force-account labor and contractual services costs that are directly related to and required for completing the project are acceptable and may be reimbursed. Costs shall be based on the actual wage or services rate paid.

Non-Permissible Uses of Funds

1. Grants are for general public purposes and benefits (see *public benefit* section in this document). They are not intended to provide financial gain to any individual, business, or organization. Applicants must comply with all ordinances, laws, and regulations. Misappropriation of grant funds, or other fraudulent activities may result in criminal prosecution and loss of eligibility to apply for future DPOR or FHWA grants.
2. Grant funds may not be used exclusively for planning, assessment, engineering, or designing. Grant funds may be used for some project planning, assessment, engineering, or design costs as long as those costs are incidental to one of the permissible project types listed above. The rule of thumb is that this money is intended to be put on the ground in the form of a recreational trail asset (shovels in the soil). If your project can be put in a binder on a shelf and forgotten, it will not meet the intent of this program. Furthermore, grant funds may not be used for planning, designing, developing, or maintaining paved sidewalks and trails along roads, which are primarily intended for transportation rather than recreation. An exception would be a trail that forms an important missing link between two existing recreational trails or recreational trail segments, or trails in rural parts of Alaska used for transportation, subsistence, and recreation.
3. Grant funds may not be used to pay for food, drink, gratuity, tax, sales tax, or court costs involving litigation. However, these costs (except for alcohol) may be documented and used as part of the matching requirement if they are directly related to the accomplishment of the proposed project, and if they are incurred within the grant term. Only approved budget items will be permissible uses of grant funds. ******The one exception is food for *remote "spike" camps* essential for the completion of the project. If the crew cannot go home at night or access places to buy food, then it is considered remote. These food costs must be clearly identified in the proposed and approved budget as such, and must be reasonable and non-excessive (basic camp food, not steak and lobster). This spike camp food may not simply be identified as "*per diem*" or "*subsistence*". These terms have different and ambiguous meanings and should be clarified.

Grant Fraud

A grant agreement is a legally binding contract; grantees are obligated to use their grant funds as outlined in the agreement and to act with integrity when applying for and reporting their actual use of funds. Grantees are also obligated to properly track the use of the funds and maintain adequate supporting documentation. If you are not sure what constitutes federal grant fraud, and what the associated consequences are, please feel free to contact our office or visit one of the following websites:

<http://www.grants.gov/documents/19/18249/Grant+Fraud/76cd8f66-7036-475c-9f13-b7a89a00444b>

<http://www.justice.gov/oig/hotline/docs/GrantFraudPresentation.pdf>

<http://www.justice.gov/oig/>

Part B. Application Process

Application Submittal

Trail Development, Repair, Acquisition, and Assessment projects, and Trail Safety, Signing, and Education projects now use the same application. Please use the **updated** application and instruction manual available each year after August 15. The link to the fillable .pdf application is available on the State Trails Program website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> . Many of these requirements have come from the advisory board. **Hint:** your project may score better if you follow directions closely and the reviewers find it easy to go through your application package.

1. Each applicant should submit a bound (with paper clip only) and **doubled-sided** paper-copy application for each project, **excluding** large reference documents. Consider keeping one complete copy for your files. Please do not put pages in protective sleeves or binders, or staple. This makes it very labor-intensive to reproduce if necessary.
2. Each applicant should submit an electronic copy of the entire application, **excluding** very large reference documents, to which one can simply reference and include a link to its online location, if available. If you are unable to send the application electronically, contact the State Trails Program Coordinator **prior** to the due date to arrange sending only a paper copy. In all cases you are encouraged to send all parts of the application on a thumb drive to avoid size issues for email accounts. After submission, make sure you have received a confirmation email that your application has arrived in a useable form by the due date. Applications submitted in an unusable format will NOT be considered for funding. If there are any questions about submitting the application, please contact the program staff.
3. Each application should include all pages and all necessary supporting documentation, in the correct order and clearly labeled as outlined in the application. Please clearly label with letter **AND title of attachment to help the reviewers find the attachments**. This will allow DPOR staff and the ORTAB to work through the review and evaluation processes more effectively and efficiently.
4. In addition, please include **ONE .pdf of the entire package scanned in order**. *This was a special request by the ORTAB to facilitate the review process.
5. Submitting your application with these criteria will allow for the application and approval notification timelines to be met as quickly as possible. Because there are commonly over 40 RTP applications the ORTAB and DPOR staff are required to review and score, please adhere to these requests AND limit your application to about 50 pages.
6. Please include the name of your project in the subject line of **every** email about your project. We have up to 100 RTP grants open at any one time and this helps us to keep track of each specific grant. If you label your email "RTP grant" it is **not** specific enough.

Procurement and reimbursement guidance

Federal Office of Management and Budget Circular 2 CFR 200

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) “Super Circular” 2 CFR 200 took effect December 26, 2014. State, local and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions must follow the cost principles outlined in OMB circular 2 CFR 200. The following web address is a link to the entire circular: <http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1>. The new general guidance from this CFR is interspersed throughout this instruction manual. If you have specific questions about how this may affect your particular project, please contact the State Trails Program Office.

Grant Agreement

DPOR will execute a grant agreement with each successful applicant, and the grant agreement will set forth terms and conditions of the funding award, including a budget. Grant agreements are reimbursable. That is, DPOR will reimburse a grantee for expenditures provided that expenditures meet applicable laws and regulations, and are detailed in the approved budget and schedule prior to expenditure. To be eligible for match, project costs must be incurred after the federal project approval date.

Reimbursements will only be made within the grant’s period of performance. Therefore, money cannot be spent on your project with the expectation of reimbursement, until a grant agreement is in place, which requires the signatures of both the applicant and DPOR.

One Exception: The only costs incurred prior to federal project approval that are eligible for retroactive reimbursement of the match requirement are architectural/engineering, archaeological literature search, or environmental review permits (such as a SWPPP or MLW land use permit) that were included as pre-agreement costs in the grant application. Donations of equipment, labor, cash, and materials must be contributed after federal grant approval.

By signing the grant agreement, the grantee promises to abide by the grant contract’s terms and conditions. A grantee must comply with all applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the new 2 CFR 200 Circular from the OMB for additional information on cost principles associated with federal grant programs. Misappropriation of grant funds can result in criminal prosecution and loss of eligibility to apply for future DPOR grants. Please also refer to the sections on non-permissible uses of funds and grant fraud.

(NEW) Period of Project Performance

Plan ahead! This program is intended to fund “shovel-ready” projects. The grantee’s agreement with DPOR has a maximum two (2) year term, unless otherwise specified or amended. ***However, in order to avoid appearance on the FHWA “Inactivity” list, there must be at least one significant project billing within 8 months of FHWA grant approval (the date FHWA signs the agreement- **NOT** the date that you sign the agreement with DPOR). A grantee should avoid this list because to FHWA it is the first step toward de-obligation of project money. Please plan your project accordingly. If you have questions about this, please contact the State Trails Program Office.

Plan ahead! According to 2 CFR 200 the applicant must choose a project end date for the approved grant contract with FHWA and DPOR. This date will be unchangeable unless there is significant scope change or serious circumstances out of the grantee’s control (major earth quake, flooding etc.- NOT simply leftover funds or poor planning) and an official project amendment is made with, and approved by, FHWA. Any significant changes that require an amendment from FHWA will trigger establishment of a new federal aid package.

In order to establish this project end date, the applicant will be required to break their project schedule down into weeks based on project tasks or milestones. You may account for weather, winter months, supply chain, communication, or other identified delays,

For Example:

Task 1: Initiate project, secure crew: 1 week

Task 2: Order materials plus shipping time: 3 weeks

Task 3: Trail layout. (this task can occur while waiting for materials to ship) 0 additional weeks.

Task 4: Cut in new trail plus hand finishing work: 6 weeks

Task 5: re-vegetate old trail: 1 week

Task 6: Let crew go, final paperwork, project close-out: 1 week

Total 12 weeks plus 2 weeks' contingency for weather or supply chain issues.

If the contract is signed by May 15 we estimate completion on September 1.

Plan ahead! All reimbursement requests must be submitted to DPOR within 30 days of the project end date that you choose. At that time the DPOR will request reimbursement from FHWA. **At 90 days after the final project completion date, no more reimbursement will or can be made.**

Force Account Labor and Little Davis Bacon:

Grantees performing project work with their own employees or volunteers, otherwise known as *Force Account labor*, are not subject to the Little Davis Bacon Act (LDBA) requirements. However, if the grantee enters into a subcontract to perform a public construction project, the project will be subject to LDBA requirements. A public construction project is defined in [AS 36.95.010\(3\)](#). Without the existence of a contractual relationship between the grantee and a third party performing the work, Alaska Title 36 does not apply. For more information and to request a determination, please contact the [State Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Standards and Safety Division, Wage and Hour Section](#) (contact information can be found in the State Agency Review section of these instructions).

Davis-Bacon:

Any RTP project within the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway must pay prevailing wages to all non-volunteer labor. If a proposed project includes work within an existing highway, contact the Alaska Department of Transportation to determine if the highway is a federal-aid highway. If it is, the applicant must contact the Alaska Department of Labor for prevailing wages for the project location. These wages are the minimum to be paid on the project. A contract for the labor must be made prior to the beginning of construction. The applicant should be aware that these wages are subject to change and the correct wages must be verified by contacting the appropriate regional office of the [Alaska Department of Labor, Wage and Hour office](#).

Procurement:

Grantees are required to procure supplies, materials, equipment, and services in a manner that is fair and reasonable (think: you are spending your own money); if the grantee works for a state agency, they must also follow the State of Alaska procurement law. The grantee shall attempt to solicit at least three quotes when the purchase price for equipment or an individual supply or material order is over \$1,000. For purchases of equipment over \$5,000 and having a useful life greater than one year, all grantees must have federal and state approval prior to purchase. Applicants should remember to include shipping and freight costs, if applicable. Reminder: for state agencies, the \$5,000 procurement limit includes all shipping and handling charges. Please refer to the General DNR Procurement Requirements in the table below. If you have any questions, please contact the State Trails Program Office BEFORE you buy.

General DNR Procurement Requirements

Order Value	Minimum Quote Requirements	Purchase Document Requirements	Payment Document Requirements
Less than \$1000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Solicit Alaskan first ➤ Common Sense ➤ Pretend you are spending your own money and you are on a tight budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Verbal orders OK ➤ Delivery Order (DO) required for "class A" property — see your Property Custodian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded and approved invoice listing items and costs

		➤ Copy of DO to DNR/SSD/Admin	
From \$1000 up to and including \$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Solicit Alaskan first ➤ Reasonable and adequate competition ➤ Solicit 3 verbal or written quotes whenever possible ➤ Complex purchases should be in writing, i.e. construction, maintenance or more complex equipment / services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written Order Document (DO, Stock Request, PO, etc.) recommended. ➤ Delivery Order (DO) required for all property items – see Property Custodian ➤ Copy of order to DNR/SSD/Admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded & approved invoice referencing order number if one was issued ➤ Written order document if one was issued
Greater than \$5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Submit purchase requisition (PR) to DNR/SSD for processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Written Order Document will be prepared by DNR/SSD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coded and approved invoice referencing order/contract number to DNR/SSD.

*****Reminder: If you are caught violating the rules, you will be judged in accordance with DNR policies and procedures and AS 36.30, the State Procurement Code, AS 36.30.930.**

Equipment Purchase:

Equipment purchased with grant funds is the property of the State of Alaska, and must continue to be used for the purposes specified in the specific grant agreement. When equipment is purchased with grant funds, DPOR staff will issue an inventory tag for placement on the equipment and the equipment will be listed in DPOR’s equipment inventory. The grantee is responsible for all maintenance and care of the equipment for the useful life of the equipment or five (5) years whichever is shorter. If a grantee is no longer using the equipment for the purposes of the grant, the state, at its option, may request the grantee refund to the state the current market value of the equipment, return the equipment, or transfer the equipment to another organization that will use it for the purposes originally intended in the grant.

Buy America:

“Buy America”, which is specific Congressional Law for USDOT funding, is different than “Buy American”. Buy America provisions apply to steel and iron products that will be purchased with RTP funds and permanently incorporated in a project funded under Title 23 including Recreational Trails Program projects. This includes trail construction and grooming equipment, bridges, large culverts, sleds, ATVs, Snowmachines and attachments, trailers, etc. All manufacturing processes, including application of a coating, must occur in the United States. Steel materials of foreign origin may be used up to a total project value of \$2,500. This threshold applies to the entire project regardless of fund source. If the value of steel or iron on a project exceeds \$2,500, the project sponsor shall submit a certification from the supplier(s) that the steel was manufactured and processed in the USA. This certification must be presented prior to requesting reimbursement for these costs. If your organization wants to purchase a unique piece of equipment only manufactured outside the United States a waiver must be submitted. A waiver must consist of clearly described reasons that address the following provisions why foreign steel must be purchased.

1. (Purchasing otherwise is) Inconsistent with the public interest.
2. (The equipment or materials are) not produced in the US in sufficient quantities and satisfactory quality.
3. (Purchasing foreign steel is 25% cheaper) domestic steel will increase the cost by more than 25%.

There is no template for a waiver and no list of “approved” manufacturers or distributors. Each circumstance is evaluated on a case-by-case basis and posted on the FHWA website for public review. These waivers are only reviewed and approved by FHWA on a quarterly basis and can take months to be complete. If you think you will need a waiver for your project, please begin the process as soon as possible. Get more information about the Buy America Act and review other projects requesting waivers at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/contracts/waivers.cfm> .

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise:

To participate in the RTP, grantees must comply with Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) stipulations and are expected to make good faith efforts to provide DBEs with the opportunity to compete for work. The Department of Transportation, Civil Rights Office, maintains an up-to-date list of qualified DBE firms, including information on services offered and firm contact information. To obtain DBE information, visit the following web page at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/cvlrts/directory.shtml>. Compliance with DBE requirements will be the responsibility of the applicant. Should the applicant have any questions on the DBE requirements, please contact the Department of Transportation, Civil Rights Office at (907) 269-0846.

RTP Grant Funding Amounts

Grant funding amounts may be requested for non-motorized and diversified projects up to \$50,000; the minimum requirement is \$5,000. DPOR has increased the motorized trail project limit to \$100k; the minimum requirement is \$5,000. To qualify, these motorized projects must be for development or improvement of predominantly motorized trails (not just purchasing machinery to be used on a non-motorized trail). If you have questions about if your project idea will qualify, please call the State Trails Program Office.

(NEW) Matching Requirement for the Recreational Trails Program

This program allows for a federal grant share of 90% for **ALL** applicants. The applicant is responsible for the remaining 10% of the total project cost. The matching share may include volunteer labor, in-kind services, cash donation of private funds, or materials and services at fair market value. *Federal agencies applying for grant funds must provide a 5% non-federal match of the total project cost.

Please Do Not try to show more than the required match on your application. It may encourage FHWA to change your match ratio.

Please use Excel-format budget sheet available on the State Trails Program website. The budget form is no longer embedded within the application.

Match Formula: Grant Funds Requested (divided by) 90% = Total Project Cost
Total Project Cost (times) 10% = Match Requirement. **Please use a calculator and be certain your match amount is correct on your budget sheet. This will save time later if your project is approved.**

For example, \$50,000 requested in grant funds (federal share) will have a total project cost of \$55,556 ($\$50,000/90\% = \$55,556$). To determine the match requirement of 10%, $\$50,000 / 90\% = \$55,556 * 10\% = \$5,556$. Therefore, this project's total project cost = \$55,556, and the match requirement = \$5,556, with grant funds providing \$50,000 of the project.

IMPORTANT:

- 1) If you are using **volunteer hours** for match, the work those volunteers do must be included in the scope of the proposed project. **For example:** Your project is to buy a piece of trail construction equipment. Building a segment of trail using that equipment with volunteer labor **MUST** be within the written and approved scope of work if you are going to use those volunteer hours as match. If you do not have any project work identified in the scope of your project and it is just to buy a piece of equipment for future trail work, the match must be cash. If you identify future, unconfirmed, volunteer work as match for equipment in this manor your application **will not move forward** to the next stage of review, because you will not have clearly identified a valid match source.
- 2) The current (2016) value for an adult volunteer is \$27.51/ hr.
- 3) If using “**project management**” or “**administrative management**” as part of your match, these costs will also need to meet the **same documentation standards** that reimbursable line items require.

Reimbursable Program

Successful applicants must execute a Grant Agreement with DPOR **prior** to beginning the project. Expenditure cannot occur with the expectation of reimbursement until a Grant Agreement is in place. This requires signatures from both the Grantee and DPOR. Reimbursement can only be awarded for expenditures incurred within the grant timeframe. Applicants are required to expend funds and complete portions of the project before applying for reimbursement.

Note: It is important to clearly document all expenditures throughout your project to guarantee a smooth reimbursement process. When submitting documentation for reimbursement, the grantee must ensure that the expenditures are within the project scope and on the approved budget within 10% of the estimated cost. Paystubs and receipts, not invoices or copies of cancelled checks, will be required.

Property and/or Easement Acquisition

If an application proposes to purchase property, the application must include legal descriptions of the property to be acquired, names of property owners whose property is to be acquired, and a letter from all property owners indicating their willingness to sell. If a grant is approved for acquisition, additional coordination will be required.

Public Access

The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with RTP funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for a minimum of 5 years (into the future). Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least 10 years (into the future). The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to submitting an application. If the grant is for winter access, public access need only be assured for the life of the grant. **Applications missing landowner permission to access will be considered incomplete and ineligible.**

Land Management Plan

Proposed projects should be a community or area priority or referred to by type in an area land management plan and not just be ad-hoc. Within the application, provide documentation that the proposed project is in some type of land management or area use plan approved by the local government or governing body in the project area. For example, the project type may be listed as a community priority in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. There will be a new SCORP issued before the end of calendar year 2016.

Environmental Review

Every applicant must fill out an Environmental Review Checklist (ERC) unless they have a “*categorical exclusion*”. This checklist is part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is required by federal law. This shows the reviewers that the applicant has gone through the process of thinking about the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all of the necessary agencies, and acquired or begun the process to obtain, all necessary permits or authorizations. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no” – this is OK.

A “*categorical exclusion*” is defined under Stipulation 1 of the [Programmatic Agreement](#) as

- Purchase of trail maintenance equipment, materials and supplies
- Rehabilitation contained within the footprints of existing trails and trailhead facilities, including resurfacing or improving the trail facility surfaces.
- Re-grading within the footprints of existing trail and/or parking areas
- Striping and/or re-striping of existing trail facilities
- Development and distribution of educational materials
- Replacement, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of existing signs, kiosks, and markers
- New installations of signs, kiosks and markers at existing facilities

- Minor alterations to existing facilities in order to make them accessible to elderly and handicapped persons.

According to the RTP guidance, a categorical exclusion is “*an action which does not induce significant impact to planned growth or land use for the area, require the relocation of significant numbers of people, have a significant impact on any natural, cultural, recreational, historic, or other resource; involve significant air, noise, or water quality impacts, have a significant impact on travel patterns, or otherwise, either individually or cumulatively, have any significant environmental impacts.*” FHWA and DPOR have developed a Programmatic Agreement, which categorically excludes identified projects from the NEPA process. Under “Grant Forms” on the State Trails Program web page, <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>, refer to both the [CFR 771.117](#) and the [Programmatic Agreement](#).

*****If your project qualifies under Stipulation 1 ONLY, you will not need to fill out an ERC. If any part of your project qualifies under Stipulations 2 or 3 of the Programmatic Agreement, you must have a completed ERC to be eligible for a contract.**

Applicants must have initiated current communication for required permits, determinations, and authorizations from all of the agencies identified within the ERC. Applications that do not provide this information will be considered incomplete and will not be accepted. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

If you are applying for the sequential phase of your project, and it has been more than a year since you contacted the agencies for environmental review, please request that they each send you an email stating they still authorize you to do your project. Submit these emails with your application as verification of current authorization.

Projects occurring on federally administered lands or with federal funds must comply with the NEPA requirements imposed by that federal agency. These requirements can be more stringent; thus, a project on federally administered lands may or may not satisfy NEPA requirements under a categorical exclusion. Project applicants must submit a letter on federal agency letterhead from the federal agency verifying that all NEPA requirements have been met.

ADA Accessibility (access for people experiencing different abilities and access impediments)

NOTE: A Regulatory Negotiation Committee reported to the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) on September 15, 1999. The Committee developed Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for picnic and camping facilities, beach access routes, and trails. For more information see: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards> .

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people on the basis of disability. While specific technical standards have not yet been finalized for recreation facilities (including recreational trails), state and local government trail developers and operators nevertheless have statutory responsibilities to provide opportunities for the participation of people experiencing disabilities. Federal laws that affect the design, construction, alteration, and operation of trail facilities include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the ADA. Current regulations implementing these statutes contain requirements that apply to existing trail construction and program operations and adopt technical standards to guide new trail construction and alterations of existing networks:

- Buildings and facilities newly-constructed or altered with Federal funds are subject to the accessibility requirements contained in the [Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards](#) (UFAS), the standard currently referenced in the ABA.
- Accessibility in federally-assisted programs is governed by the requirements of the USDOT regulations ([49 CFR part 27](#)) implementing [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) (29 U.S.C. 794).

- At the time of latest revision of this document, the ADA is the newest legislation intended to improve access for people experiencing disabilities. The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) title II implementing regulations ([28 CFR part 35](#)) describe the obligations of state and local governments for existing facilities and program operations, and require title II entities (public entities) to comply with either [UFAS](#) or the [Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines](#) (ADAAG) developed by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the [Access Board](#)) when newly constructing or altering facilities. Private sector entities, including lessees, concessionaires, and contractors to State and local governments, are governed by the DOJ title III implementing regulations, which adopt ADAAG as the standard for accessible design.
- RTP projects are primarily recreational in nature, rather than serving a more utilitarian transportation function. The applicant should consider the potential uses of each trail project, consider what is reasonable and feasible, and provide for users in an appropriate manner. It is not necessary to construct every recreational trail according to the ADA guidelines, but trail project sponsors must not install barriers or other features that would make it more difficult for people with disabilities to use the trail.
- Trail designers should seek opportunities to incorporate accessible features and elements, and to include trail routings that meet accessibility criteria to ensure that there are recreation opportunities for a variety of users within the RTP. Where trail-related facilities, such as parking, shelters, toilets, drinking fountains, and other features are provided on or along an accessible trail site, they should provide the required level of accessibility and be served by an accessible route. Trail designers should account for people experiencing disabilities that may arrive at trail facilities by horse, ATV, or snowmobile, with assistance, or by other means.

Application Review

Application Assistance

Technical assistance is available to all grant applicants through DPOR. DPOR staff will make every effort to answer questions regarding application procedures, proper completion of grant applications, and criteria used for project selection and grants awards. One key to receiving technical assistance is lead-time. Requesting technical assistance a few days before the project application deadline does not allow adequate time for review. For assistance, please contact the Grant Administrator or State Trails Program Coordinator- the earlier in the process the better. See Appendix A for DPOR contact information.

Grantee Performance Standards

In order to be compliant with 2 CFR 200.205 *Federal Awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants* as well as allow for the reviewers to use performance standards in their evaluations, these criteria will be evaluated and shared with all grant application reviewers to assist with the decision whether or not to fund a grantee in the future. The costs to the program for applicants that do not follow directions or perform to acceptable standards are significant. The results include, but are not limited to, projects being de-obligated and future applications being denied. Please take these seriously.

- Did the grantee organization submit a reimbursement request within the first 8 months of project authorization to avoid the FHWA “inactivity” list?
- Did the grantee organization submit their final reimbursement request no later than 30 days after their federally approved project end date?
- Were the reimbursement requests and associated attachments correctly calculated, complete, legible, and on time?
- Were project milestones and tasks met per the approved schedule?
- Did the grantee organization adhere to their approved budget and scope of work?

Outdoor Recreational Trails Advisory Board

The ORTAB is a statewide citizens advisory board, mandated by federal regulation for the RTP, that

contains representatives for non-motorized and motorized trail users. The primary purpose of the ORTAB is to advise the Director of the DPOR on project funding for eligible outdoor recreation projects under the RTP. ORTAB nominates, reviews, and comments on trail, and outdoor recreation projects during the competitive public process to ensure funding of high quality trails and recreational projects throughout the state.

ORTAB scores and ranks each qualified application in the project category or categories in which it belongs. The Director then has the opportunity to approve the recommended projects; those that meet eligibility criteria may advance to the FHWA for approval. The ORTAB and DPOR have the discretion to further rank projects after scoring to ensure geographic diversity over time. The amount of available funding determines how many projects are funded. Please refer to Part A of this document for further detail.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications are scored by the following criteria:

- General quality and adherence to directions: 0-28
- Project Description, Scope of Work: 0-10
- Detailed timeline of project tasks and the resulting project end date: 0-10
- Proposed Budget: 0-25
- Project Funding, Sponsor Support, and Sponsor Match:0-2
- Public Benefit: 0-14
- Community Support: 0-11

Total: 100 possible

We encourage all applicants to peruse the score sheet while filling out the application to know how it will be judged and reviewed. You can find the score sheet here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> .

Please also see **Performance Standards** Section.

Multiple open grants

An applicant may not apply for funding for a project that is currently under a grant agreement with DPOR. However, an applicant who is currently receiving grant funds may apply for a different project or apply for the same project scope once the existing grant has been closed. For example: Happy Trail, Phase II.

Application Sections

Section 1: Qualifying Criteria

Qualifying criteria have been developed to determine basic project eligibility for the RTP. Please provide supporting documentation within the application for all “yes” answers.

Section 2: Sponsor Introduction and Identification

This section requests the project title, applicant contact information, type of organization, and tax identification or EIN number. **You will need an EIN number in order to be reimbursed, if your project is funded.**

Section 3: Public Access Documentation:

This section requests documented legal public access authorizations from all landowners in which the project area is located. Indicate within this section the landowner(s) for the entire length of the trail or project area. If the trail is on state-owned land and has legal access in the form of an easement it will have an Alaska Division of Lands number (ADL#). If this is the case, please list the ADL number(s).

To ensure the public has access to the trail(s), there must be landowner assurance that the public has access for a designated period of time. Either an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use is required. The following are the requirements regarding land owners:

- If any part of the project crosses private property, an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use for at least five (5) years must be included in the application.
- If any part of your project crosses public land, an easement or written agreement from the land manager allowing public use for at least ten (10) years must be included in the application.
- If the project is for winter trail grooming only, the application must include documentation from property owners that public access has been assured during winter months until the grant expiration date.

Land and / or Easement Acquisition:

If the application is to purchase property, your application must include legal descriptions of the property to be acquired, names of property owners whose property is to be acquired, and a letter from property owners indicating their willingness to sell. If the grant is approved for acquisition, additional coordination will be required.

Project Location and Map Documentation

Please identify the borough, region, or nearest community to your project. Please list the Meridian, Township (s), Range(s), and Section(s) of the property on which the project will take place.

Please attach a detailed map(s) that clearly show all adjacent property lines, land ownership, and the location of the proposed trails, facilities, and access points. Please include as **Attachment G** and submit all pertinent documentation. Please see Section 4 for more detail.

Section 4: General Project Information

Amount of Funding Requested:

This section asks for the amount of grant funds requested to perform the proposed project. This includes the total project cost and the amount of grant funds being applied for. Note the funding limits for each category referenced below. *****Please round your request to the nearest dollar and note that your budget sheet must exactly match these numbers. FHWA will not accept any budget sheets that do not match the requests to the penny. Please also see Section 6: Proposed Budget below for more instruction. Please use the NEW excel format budget sheet. It has embedded formulas and is expandable.**

Project Summary:

Provide two or three complete sentences that describe the proposed project's overview that could possibly be used in an informational briefing to the legislature. This section is **not** the place to talk about the project background, the benefits, the funding, or anything other than the actual work to be accomplished. Please save that information for the Detailed Project Narrative section.

Project Category:

Grants are available in the following four categories. Please mark the category in which your project best fits. If your project includes more than one category such as developing educational materials and building a motorized trail, please apply for separate grants.

Motorized (Primarily Motorized Use):

A project primarily intended to benefit one or more modes of motorized recreational trail use, such as snowmobile trail grooming, and/or ORV riding. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses; it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses, but the primary

intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

Non-Motorized (Exclusively Non-Motorized Use):

A project intended to benefit one or more modes of non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian and/or equestrian use. Motorized use isn't allowed for projects in this category. *Note: wheelchair use by mobility-impaired people, whether operated manually or powered, constitutes pedestrian use, not motorized trail use.*

Diversified (Accommodates multiple user groups):

A project intended to benefit multiple recreational trail users. This category could include projects where both motorized and non-motorized use will occur simultaneously. This category also includes projects where motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. Some other examples are a common trailhead project serving separate ATV and bicycle trails, and purchasing a machine to groom both snowmobile, and cross-country ski trails.

Safety and Education

The state may use (not required) up to 5 percent of its apportionment each fiscal year for projects that develop and disseminate publications and operate educational programs that promote safety and environmental protection. These objectives relate to one or more of the uses of recreational trails by supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training for free, or at a minimal cost to the public.

Definition of a Safety and Education project: i.e. free brochures, free classes, interpretive panels

All projects using grant funds must have a clear public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using federal grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.

A Safety and Education project may be development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials.

Educational materials developed with grant funds become the property of the State of Alaska. Any materials developed with grant funds must also recognize the funding program. Electronic versions of agency logos will be supplied to successful applicants for placement on developed materials. Materials and curriculum developed with grant funds must be supplied to the division for public and future applicant use. Products developed will also be posted on the DPOR web site.

Types of Use

Check the boxes for all types of use or users the trail will accommodate.

Trail Information

Fill in the boxes regarding how many miles of trail the project will encompass.

Detailed Project Narrative:

Provide as much visual and narrative detail as necessary to help evaluators understand your project. Provide a detailed location map, site plan, drawings, and photos to clearly show the location and specifics of your proposed project, what the finished product will look like, and its relationship to other existing trails, roads, landmarks, access points, and the nearest community. Develop a workable project. Be sure the narrative answers these questions: Why is this trail project important? Is it feasible? Is it shovel-ready? Is the scope self-sufficient without depending on additional funding sources? **If your project application does not include this narrative, it will not advance to the next level of review and will be denied. Use the following guidance to help you with your narrative.**

Educational Materials:

If educational materials are proposed, provide an example of the content and explain how it will be posted or distributed.

Maps:

Two maps are required of the project area: a vicinity map and a site-specific map. Land ownership must be indicated on the map for the entire project. Use U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic map at a scale of 1:63,360 and no larger than 11" x 17". Show the location of your project on the map, and provide the name of the map (e.g., Seldovia C-4). If the project includes many sites, such as a purchase of trail equipment to be used in a regional area or funding for a trails position, provide a map of the target trails the project will influence.

Equipment:

Attach photos, drawings, or specifications of equipment proposed for purchase. Any Equipment over \$1,000.00 will require 3 quotes. Please include these with application. If there is only one distributor of a specialized piece of equipment, please make this clear in your application. *Note: equipment purchased with grant funds is the property of the State of Alaska and inventory tags will be issued to the applicant for placement on the acquired equipment.* Also see the "Buy America" section for requirements.

Trail Details:

Attach details of trails to be built or maintained including clearing width, grades, curve radii, surface material, and specifics of any excavation or fill proposed, and how you will dispose of cut vegetation or other wasted material. Include drawings showing trail modifications and describing impact on habitat, users, and neighboring property owners and adjacent land uses.

Bridges or Culverts:

If bridges or culverts are proposed, provide locations, dimensions, and design details. Also see the "Buy America" section for requirements.

Environmental restoration:

If proposing environmental restoration, give details of how damaged areas will be restored.

Trail Reroute:

If rerouting or altering the appearance or location of a trail, include drawings showing changes or modifications, and describe impacts this might have on habitat, users, or neighboring property owners.

NOTE: All projects described as having a "reroute" or "realignment" will be required to include an ERC.

Signage:

If signing is proposed, include the material they will be made from, sign dimensions, colors, content, method of installation (will there be excavation? heavy equipment involved?), and spacing between signs or markers.

RTP grant recipients must comply with the following:

- FHWA *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*; from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Part IX is for bicycle facilities, and is suitable for shared use paths.
- FHWA *Standard Highway Signs*; from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Many signs have dimensions for bicycle facilities and trails.

Winter Trail Marking:

If marking winter trails, describe type of permanent marking system or explain in the project description why temporary markers will be used. Permanent winter trail markers are encouraged.

Land/Easement Acquisition:

If you are proposing to purchase land or easements, provide enough description to clearly identify the location of the intended acquisition. Include a plat or map of the property, who owns the properties to be acquired, and a timeline for acquisition.

Program Recognition:

All grant recipients are required to reference the State Trails Program that funded the project as their funding source on trail signs, equipment, etc. or in any printed materials. Decal or sticker logos may be provided by DPOR.

ADA Compliance:

Define the level of ADA access provided on this trail (easy, moderate, difficult, and very difficult).

Define the trail surface, grade, cross slope, trail width, minimum clearance width, and obstacles. NOTE:

All trailheads and trailhead facilities must be ADA accessible. For more information on ADA requirements see the ADA Accessibility section of these instructions.

Section 5: Timeline of Project Tasks:

Provide a schedule of planned tasks or milestones and associated timelines that includes a brief description of the individual project to be completed. Include a list of the names of the project managers, associated task dates from start to completion, acquisition of needed materials and project assistance. When will the project be started and completed? Part of the new grantee performance standard evaluation is adherence to identified tasks and schedule.

***The tasks referenced in the budget workbook should match the tasks listed here.

*****Plan Ahead!** You must include a thoughtful project completion date. You will be expected to adhere to the date in your approved agreement. For more detail see 2 CFR 200.308 Revision of Budget and Program Plans, the *Period of Performance*, and *Grantee Performance Standards* sections in Part B, and the *Extensions* section under the *Grants and Administration* part of this document.

Section 6: Proposed Budget: PLEASE READ: IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Project cost information is by far the most troublesome part of the project application for many applicants. Please take extra care in preparing and checking the Proposed Budget section. Grantees may expand the excel table or include additional budget sheets as necessary.

Suggestions for a successful Proposed Budget include:

- Please use the budget sheet in the excel format available as a download from the State Trails Program web page: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>
- Please make sure the math is correct; check the math with a calculator or in Excel. We are serious.
- The total matching share plus the total grant share MUST equal the total project cost.
- Please calculate (NEW Match Ratio for All Applicants 90/10) match correctly. $\$50,000 / 90\% = 55,556$, $55,556 * 10\% = \$5,556$ (match)
- Please clearly identify match sources. (cash, confirmed-volunteers that are doing work that is included in the scope of work for your project, third-party donations (from whom?, how much?), in-kind resources (what?), etc.)
- Include 3 competitive quotes for equipment, contracted work, or single item purchases over \$1,000.00. This includes groupings of things such as >\$1000 of 2x4 lumber, or >\$1000 of railroad ties etc.
- Please make sure the application is complying with “Buy America” for anything made of steel or iron or that you have talked with the State Trails Program Office about securing a waiver. Contact the State Trails Program office with questions. More information can also be found here:

<https://www.transportation.gov/highlights/buyamerica>

- All items identified in the budget must be in the scope of work statement. Ex: Purchase of snow-grooming equipment, where volunteer labor is used for match but not included in the scope of work, will not be accepted. Volunteers grooming a trail must be in the approved scope of work for a trail grooming project, to be eligible match. This is a common cause of disqualification. Please ask if there are specific questions.
- This cannot be emphasized enough: Please specifically identify all budget items. FHWA wants to know exactly what it is getting for the public money it is reimbursing. Avoid words like “supplies” or “materials”, or “etc.” Instead use specifics, like “work gloves, hard hats, 100 feet of poly rope, 5#box of 2” galvanized nails.”
- Budget amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar in the calculation columns. Grantees should do the math correctly in the explanation box but enter a rounded total in column. Please do not include the pennies.
- The budget numbers must match one of the quotes or bids exactly. Please do not average the three quotes or bids. Submit all three, **but make the choice ahead of time based on your organization’s criteria and use those numbers in your budget.**
- Please be sure to include all quotes from contracted services. And an explanation why your organization chose the one it did.
- If using a contractor bid, submit the bid with the application and add it as a single line item in the budget under “Other”. Do not break it down into “Labor” “Materials” etc. *If you do you will be asked to fix it.
- When submitting documentation for reimbursement, the grantee must ensure that the expenditures are within the project scope and on the approved budget within 10% of the estimated cost. Paystubs and receipts, not invoices or copies of cancelled checks, will be required. Also see *Reimbursable Programs* section in Part B of this document.

See *Permissible Uses of Funds* within these instructions for additional information on allowable uses of grant funds.

Budget Narrative

A budget narrative, also known as a budget justification, exists as part of the proposed budget. When applying for a grant, a project includes a budget narrative as a means of explaining the reason for costs. If all costs associated with a proposal prove self-evident to the grant reviewer, budget narratives prove unnecessary. A proposal item reading "trail crew wages," for example, constitutes a clear and distinct expenditure -- when an application reviewer reads that item, he or she knows what it means. Budget narratives exist to explain hidden or confusing costs listed in a proposed budget.

Common Expenditures Necessitating Budget Narratives

A number of common items in grant proposals may necessitate a budget narrative. This grant, for example, only provides funding for food if the food is to feed a trail crew at a remote “spike” camp where there is no option for the crew to go to a store, restaurant, or home to eat. A budget narrative will explain the necessity of food in relation to the project goal and the actual cost of the expense. Other common grant costs necessitating budget narratives in proposals include materials and equipment costs, indirect costs, or the cost associated with permitting. Some projects elect to create budget narratives even if not entirely necessary as a means of transparency when applying for grant funding.

Section 7: Project Funding and Sponsor Financial Support:

This is a reimbursement program; therefore, the grant recipient must pay 100% of the cost of any item before submitting a request for reimbursement for eligible costs. Trail grant funds cannot exceed the program requirements (80/20) of the total project cost. The remaining costs must come from the sponsor. Donations and in-kind services may be used as part of the sponsor’s match, including skilled and unskilled labor. Land, construction materials, and other tangible resources may be considered acceptable donations. Some matching funds from other federal sources and agencies are allowed under certain conditions. Please contact the State Trails Program Coordinator if you are considering matching with

other state or federal funds.

Section 8: Public Benefit

The following information is requested in the application:

- Explain why your project is important and why it is needed.
- How will the public benefit?
- Estimate how many and what types of users you expect as a result of your project.
- How does this project provide new recreational opportunities?
- What problem does your project solve?
- Does your project provide an important missing recreational trail link?
- Will your project provide for people with disabilities?
- Will your project utilize youth development groups to provide labor or assistance?
-

Section 9: Community Support:

The following information is requested in the application:

- Provide documentation that your project is included in, or is consistent with, local land-use plans and priorities.
- Include 3 letters of support from potential beneficiaries of your project- UNLESS you are Alaska State Parks and your project is in a designated State Park or State Recreation area then you only need one letter from the citizens' advisory board stating that that project is a top priority.
- Has the local governing body given this project priority? Provide a resolution of support.
- What are the concerns from the opponents of this project and how have they been addressed? Some trail projects may be regarded as intrusive by local property owners or members of the public. It is the applicant's responsibility to work with local property owners or interest groups to mitigate objections.
- Describe the effort you made to determine the extent of any opposition. Include the list of individuals, organizations and communities you contacted. Provide a copy of the Courtesy Notice, posting locations, and the dates notices were posted. This information must be supported in the application.
- Resolutions from local governments and letters of support from land managers, community councils, and trail user groups are required and must accompany the application. Letters of support and documentation must be current and signed. Please do not include form letters.

Public Notice and Map

Before submitting an application, public notice must be given within the vicinity of the project location. This notice can be in the form of the public notice in the grant application. Notice should be posted in local areas that are likely to reach interested individuals. Possible posting areas include the local post office, trailheads, the project site, or a community meeting area, etc. Public notification must be posted at least four weeks before the application deadline. Other acceptable means of public notice may be public meetings, radio announcements, management plans, etc. If using the format found in the grant application, a completed notice and posting locations must be included with the application. If this information is not submitted with the application, the application will be considered incomplete and not eligible for funding. Address any public responses in the grant application under the Community Support section.

Section 10: Sponsor (applicant organization) Commitment:

The following are suggestions to include in the application:

- Include a signed resolution from the sponsoring organization/public agency showing support for

the project and commitment to grant management if awarded funds.

- What experience does your organization or agency have accomplishing similar projects?
- Who will be responsible for organizing and overseeing the work to ensure successful completion?
- You are required to document project expenditures and matching contributions, and to submit progress reports documenting work accomplished. What is your plan for documenting the work?
- What is the plan for long term maintenance or implementation of safety or educational project(s) after the life of the grant?

Past Grant Performance:

See Grantee Performance Standards in Part B. List Recreational Trails or Snowmobile Trails grants, or others, you have received for other projects. Include project title, grant identification number and grant award year. Include a signed resolution from the organization/public agency showing support for the project and commitment to grant management if the project is approved.

Section 11: Permits and Authorizations

Applicants are required to fill out the environmental review checklist and contact the following offices to determine if relevant permits or authorizations are required. Applicants are responsible for obtaining all required federal, state and local permits and approvals for any work that requires such. Indicate the permits and/or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents required for ground disturbing projects, if applicable. Permits may not be applicable to safety, educational or non-ground disturbing projects. See the Environmental Review section in Part B of this document.

Section 12: Attachments and file names, correspondence

Please consider your audience: the application reviewers.

Please make sure you have included all required attachments, each file labeled with the content title (not just letter) so it can be easily identified by the reviewers.

Note: although we appreciate applicants who clearly label their files, we have run into problems opening files that have excessive title length. PLEASE ABBREVIATE APPROPRIATELY. Please consider file path length when naming your file. Documents may be unable to be accessed.

Please clearly label all emails pertaining to your project and application with project name and RTP project number once appropriate. **Do Not** simply write “RTP grant” in the subject line of an email. This may be your only RTP grant so that makes sense to you, however, we may have over 100 RTP grants going at any one time.

Please make sure all of your documents are copied straight, legible, clear, and of large enough size to be evaluated by reviewers not familiar with your project. If materials are sent in unacceptable condition they will not be considered in the review process, and will count against the overall score of the application.

Section 13: Certified Signature

The application must be signed by an authorized official in order to be valid. Electronic signatures are acceptable, for electronic and paper copies. Unsigned applications will not be accepted.

Grant Management and Administration

Grant Agreement

Upon award, a grant agreement is prepared by DPOR with input from the applicant. The grant agreement contains a number of appendices for standard provisions, project description, reporting requirements, budget and financial accounting, and financial reports. You can find a pdf of a blank agreement for reference in Appendix C of this document. The grant agreement is signed by DPOR's certifying officer and the grantee. The grant period of performance is two years. However, please refer to the Grant Period of Performance section in Part B of these instructions for more, and very important, detail.

Extensions (NEW)

Please also refer to the Period of Project Performance section in Part B of this document.

Grantees will only be given extensions for circumstances beyond their control, and only with prior approval from FHWA will a grant be extended past its original term.

If circumstances arise and extensions are requested, they must be fully justified in writing, illustrating unavoidable delays. When determining the timeline to complete the project an applicant should take delays into consideration caused by winter weather and the fire season, etc. Grantees requesting an extension must satisfy the criteria listed below. The criteria include but are not limited to:

- Requests for extensions must be received by the Grants Administrator before the expiration date of the grant. Requests for extensions after the expiration date of the grant will be denied.
- Grantees must have submitted timely quarterly progress reports. Grantees must maintain communication with the Grant Administrator during project implementation.

Multiple time extensions will only be considered if:

- Significant progress was made since the first extension was granted.
- The grantee encounters problems caused by external factors (legal problems, new regulatory requirements, inclement weather, etc.).
- Unforeseen circumstances arise during construction (physical, historical and/or archaeological site specific issues).

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation does not guarantee requests for extensions will be approved. Extensions will not exceed a total of four years beyond the grant start date as specified in the original Grant Agreement.

Terminating a Grant

Grant agreements will be terminated for reasons that include but are not limited to:

- Grantee requested or agreed to terminate the grant agreement.
- Grantee intentionally submitted fraudulent documents or engaged in other fraudulent activities involving the approved project.
- Grantee failed to acquire permits required to implement the approved scope of work.
- Grantee performance on the submission of quarterly progress reports throughout the life of the grant has been out of compliance with the grant agreement or performance standards.
- Grantee in non-compliant with federal billing requirement and FHWA de-obligates the project funding. (See Period of Project Performance section for more detail)
- Grantee made little or no progress toward completing the approved scope of work prior to the completion date noted in the original grant agreement.
- Loss of funding from the Federal Highway Administration.
- Grantee has not complied with a requirement outlined in the grant agreement.

Appendix A: DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation Contacts

For project development, application assistance, and programmatic questions contact:

State Trails Program Manager

(907) 269-8699

(2015) darcy.harris@alaska.gov

For general questions regarding an existing grant, or reimbursement status contact:

Grant Administrator

(907) 269-8709

(2015) steve.neel@alaska.gov

Mailing Address:

Alaska State Trails Program

550 W. 7th Avenue Suite 1380

Anchorage, AK 99501-3561

Fax: (907)269-8907

Appendix B: Agency Contacts for environmental review checklist (ERC)

Please note: as staff changes and turnover are frequent the numbers below are main- numbers for each office, not for individuals.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)- Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW):
<http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/>

Contact one of these offices to determine if the project will require a permit or authorization if the project is on state lands.

For projects in:

Southcentral: 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 900C
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-8552

Southeast: 400 Willoughby, Suite 400
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3400

Northern: 3700 Airport Way
Fairbanks 99709
(907) 451-2740.

DNR - Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR): Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):
Contact this office to determine if your project will affect a LWCF project site. Contact the LWCF State Liaison Officer at 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 269-8694.

Office of History and Archeology (OHA):

Contact this office to help you determine if your project will affect historical or cultural properties. Applicants must allow at least thirty (30) days for project reviews; this can take longer if the applicant is asked to submit additional information. Applicants must first, determine project site location information by calling the phone number listed below. Applicants then must conduct the necessary research to determine if historic or cultural properties exist in the project area. If it is determined that historic and/or cultural properties will be affected, the applicant must specify a plan to mitigate any these concerns on the identified properties. The applicant may wish to include the cost of a site visit by OHA in their grant application. These costs are the responsibility of the applicant. To determine these costs contact the OHA. It is required that applicants submit a letter addressing the project's detailed scope of work, site location, and address any concerns regarding historic or cultural properties to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In the letter to the SHPO, include the following language "*We are seeking your concurrence that no historic properties are adversely affected*".

Contact: 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1310, Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-8721

Department of Environmental Conservation, (ADEC) Division of Water

Applicants who will be disturbing an acre or more total combined area (think about cumulative acreage

length and width of trail being built) will need to contact someone in the Division of Water to see if you qualify to complete a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. (SWPPP)

For more information, go to <http://www.dec.alaska.gov/water/wnpspc/stormwater/index.htm>

Contact: (2014)

Storm Water and Wetlands Manager
Division of Water – Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
555 Cordova Street
Anchorage, AK 99501
Telephone: 907-334-2288
Fax Number: 907-334-2415

Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G);

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=home.main>

Applicants that propose to work within a designated State Game Refuge, Critical Habitat Area, Special Use Area or Sanctuary should contact the following offices. They may be able to provide information on other state land as well.

Division of Wildlife Conservation (within ADF&G):

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=divisions.wcoverview>

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=conservationareas.locator>

For projects within Sanctuaries.

Contact: Fish and Game Coordinator
333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599
(907) 267-2281

Division of Sport Fish (within ADF&G):

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingsport.main>

For projects within Special Use Areas:

Contact: Regional Information Officer
Phone: (907) 267-2219
333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599

Department of Labor and Workforce Development - Division of Labor Standards and Safety:

Grantees that propose to contract work must comply with all State and Federal requirements for wage rates. For questions and project determination grantees must contact the Division of Labor Standards and Safety.

Contact Wage and Hour Supervisor at:
3301 Eagle St. Suite 302
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 269-4900.

The following websites will link to the Department of Labor:

Wage and Hour Administration

<http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/home.htm>

Laborers' and Mechanics' Minimum Rates of Pay (Pamphlet 600)

<http://labor.state.ak.us/lss/pamp600.htm>

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):

For questions contact the State Trails Program Coordinator.

The state has implemented a Programmatic Agreement with the FHWA - Western Federal Lands Highway Division, which categorically excludes work listed from additional NEPA analysis. For project work types that are not listed, contact the State Trails Program Coordinator, with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation at 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380, Anchorage, AK 99501; (907) 269-8699. Please find the entire Programmatic Agreement here:

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/state_practices/agreement_ak.cfm

*Activities outside of the those described below, may require additional NEPA analysis

- Purchase of trail maintenance equipment, materials and supplies
- Rehabilitation contained within the footprints of existing trails and trailhead facilities
- Re-grading within the footprints of existing trail and/or parking areas
- Striping and/or re-striping of existing trail facilities
- Development and distribution of educational materials
- Replacement, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of existing signs, kiosks, and markers
- New installations of signs, kiosks and markers at existing facilities
- Alterations to existing facilities in order to make them accessible to the elderly and handicapped persons

United States Army, Corp of Engineers (USACE):

For projects involving wetlands or bodies of water contact the following office:

<http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/About/Offices.aspx>

Contact:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District

P.O. Box 6898

JBER, Alaska 99506-0898

907-753-2522

Local Governing Body in your community:

Obtain project authorizations, approvals and support from a local governing body, such as a tribal entity, Borough, village council, or city assembly.

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions

Updated August 2016

- **What is a public project?** All projects using federal grant funds must have public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the general public, or targeted to a broad segment of the general public. Federal grant funds should not be used for projects that have such limited capacity that only a few paying (or potentially paying) guests have access to the product of the project. The portions of a project using federal grant funds must be open for general public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.
- **Do I have to fill out an Environmental Review Checklist? Yes.** Every applicant must fill out an ERC unless they have a “**categorical exclusion**” (see question below). This shows the reviewer that the applicant has gone through the process of thinking about the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all of the necessary agencies and acquired all necessary permits. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no” – this is OK.
- **What is a “categorical exclusion” and how do I know if my project qualifies?** Under “Grant Forms” <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> on the Trails Program web page, refer to both the [CFR 771.117](#) and the [Programmatic Agreement](#). If your project qualifies under Stipulation 1 **ONLY**, you have a “**categorical exclusion**” and will not need an ERC. If your project qualifies under Stipulations 2 or 3 of the Programmatic Agreement, you must have a completed [ERC](#) to receive grant money.
- **Do I need new letters of support if I got them last year? Yes.** The circumstances or the stakeholders surrounding your project may have changed and those that supported last year may not support this year. You may have your supporters simply email an updated voice of support that can be attached to last year’s letter.
- **Can I just turn in last year’s application if I change the dates? No.** Please use the [new and updated application form](#) from the website available on or after August 15 of the year in which you are applying for funds. We will try to update and improve the application annually.
- **Must I have all my permits and authorizations final and included with my application? 1.** All land use authorizations or letters of non-objection for land use must be included with the application. If your project doesn’t have permission from the land owner, it cannot move forward.
2. All agency documents such as an Office of History and Archaeology inspection, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), or Fish Habitat Permit do not necessarily have to be finalized. These permits can cost money or take months to obtain and, 1. If your project doesn’t get approved for funding you will not need, and 2. You must only have them in hand before you break ground for the project.
- **If I include more match than required, does it reflect favorably on my application? No,** you will not receive a higher score for having more match than is required. Having more match could cause the federal share to decrease if the Federal Highways Administration determines there is less need based on more than the 20% match requirement. (the amount of donations or volunteers you secure on your own is your business as long as you document in your budget the minimum amount required in the application.)

- **Can my project be mainly for surveying, planning, research and assessments?** **No.** Recreational Trails Grants are intended to help initiate shovel-ready projects with tangible, on-the-ground results; i.e. a bridge across a creek on a ski trail, a new hiking trail, a bike pump park, motor-cross track improvements, etc.
- **Can my project be for routine maintenance?** **No.** This grant is intended for project initiation, trail or trail facility development, repair or improvement.
- **Will any costs that I incur before the grant agreement is signed be allowable reimbursements?** **No.** See Application Instructions for one exception.
- **Can I just guess at how much it will cost to contract out a service?** **No.** Please contact contractors and collect their professional estimates or bids. Include those with your package.
- **Can I leave the explanation part of the budget sheet blank if I don't know the information?** **Please avoid this.** It will be returned to you and you will need to clearly justify all labor, materials and services with explanations of hourly /unit/other costs. (Example: If you enter \$22,000 labor as a line item with no or little explanation you are guaranteed to have your application returned.) Please see the Application Information and Instruction Manual for further detail.
- **Once the grant agreement is signed, how long does it take for me to get my money?** The Recreational Trails Program is a reimbursable grant. You are expected to buy or pay upfront for services and materials and then submit your receipts with a reimbursement form for payment. There are no advances.
- **How do you figure the match percentage?** (NEW match ratio for all applicants is 90/10) \$50,000 requested in grant funds (federal share) will have a total project cost of \$55,556 ($\$50,000/90\% = \$55,556$). To determine the match requirement of 10%, $\$50,000 / 90\% = \$55,556 * 10\% = \$5,556$. Therefore, this project's total project cost = \$55,556, and the match requirement = \$5,556, with grant funds providing \$50,000 of the project.
- **How long do I have to complete my project?** Grant agreements may be good for up to two years, **however** you must turn in a reimbursement request for within the first 8 months after FHWA approval or risk federal de-obligation of your project. Please plan accordingly and see Instruction and Information Manual for more information.
- **How much money is available for one project?** Currently \$50,000 is the maximum award for non-motorized projects and \$100,000 for motorized projects. A motorized project is one where the trail is predominately for motorized recreation. This is not for motorized equipment to be used on a non-motorized trail.
- **Can I have more than one grant open at the same time?** You may have more than one grant open for different projects, and you may have one grant project contain more than one phase, but each phase will have to be completed before the next one can begin.
- **Is it useful if I JUST put "RTP grant" in the email subject line when communicating about my project?** Not really. Please include the entire name of your project (appropriately abbreviated) in the subject line of every email about your project. We have up to RTP 100 grants open at any one time and this helps us to keep track of each specific grant. If you label your email "RTP grant" it is not specific enough. Please see Application Information and Instruction Manual for more detail.
- **How are awarded projects selected?** Applications submitted on time are initially reviewed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, then forwarded to an advisory board (ORTAB) for scoring and

recommendation. Once the scores and recommendations are received, the State Parks Director's office selects the grants to be awarded.

- **Do I have to own the land where the project will take place?** The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with grant funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for a minimum of 5 years. Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least 10 years. The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to submitting an application. If the project is for winter access or trail grooming only, public access need only be assured for the life of the grant. Applications missing landowner permission to access will be considered incomplete and ineligible.
- **What is the current value of volunteer labor?** For 2016 it was \$27.51 / hr. This will change in the summer of 2017 and we will update this publication. Until the new amount is released, use this figure.
- **Are there applicant performance standards?** Yes. Please see Application Instruction and Information Manual for more detail.
- **Will my project have to comply with the Buy America provision?** Yes, if the project uses an item containing steel valued at \$2500 or more. Think: bridges, culverts, machinery, etc. Please see Application Instruction and Information Manual for more detail.
- **I think my project idea might qualify under the Safety, Signing, and Education apportionment. How do I know?** Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails, including supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail-related training (limited to 5 percent of a State's apportionment). These projects must offer training or materials either free to the general public, or at a very minimal cost. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials. Also see definition of "public project", and other detail in the Application Instruction and Information Manual.