

Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Recreational Trails Grant Program



Application Instructions and Information Manual

Revised July 2023



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 Recreational 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.

Questions concerning this program and these application instructions should be directed to the DPOR Grants Administrator.

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

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Information can also be found on our website:

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

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Program Introduction

Program Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federally funded assistance program authorized by the U.S. Congress under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Infrastructure Investment and Job Act. The RTP was originally authorized under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. In 1998, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) codified the RTP in Section 206 of Title 23 United States Code (U.S.C.). Subsequent surface transportation authorization legislation has retained Section 206.

The program's purpose is to help states provide and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational use. Examples of recreational trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, boating, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving or using other off-road motorized vehicles. The program provides funds for recreational trail development and repair, and environmental protection and safety/education projects relating to recreational trail use (please refer to specific definition in Part A of an eligible Safety/ Education project)

This program has funded over 650 trail projects in Alaska, and over 22,000 trail-related projects nationwide, including urban greenways, nature centers, and horse, hiking, mountain bike, and motorized trails, as well as snow and water routes.

Use of the Annual Apportionment

The RTP is funded from the Federal Highway Trust Fund managed by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and represents a percentage of federal fuel taxes. Each fiscal year money get allocated through the current Highway Transportation Bill, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act or "FAST Act". This Act authorized \$305 billion over federal fiscal years 2016 through 2023 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The Recreational Trails Program is part of this federal surface transportation funding. Alaska's available apportionment is typically between \$1 million and \$1.5 million each year.

RTP Legislation (23 U.S.C. 206) requires that States use 30% of the funds for projects that are strictly *motorized*, 30% on projects that are strictly *non-motorized*, and to encourage projects that provide for multiple uses, 40% to 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 projects and it is up to the state to make this decision.

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, 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.
- Despite ORTAB recommendation and *tentative* approval, there is *no guarantee* that your project will be funded until you have a signed grant agreement with DNR DPOR.
- Please limit the length of your “Project Narrative” to one page. Keep your description concise - 400 words or less, explain what is being constructed, rehabilitated/repared and/or acquired.
- This program is intended for projects that are shovel ready. **If a project still needs a cultural resources survey and is depending on the RTP to pay for that survey or plans to use the RTP to pay for a contractor to do a trail prescription or layout, such project is not ready for the RTP.** We will no longer be allowing projects to be approved and broken into phases that include planning and then execution. These steps must be complete prior to federal approval. If you completed a cultural resources survey within 18 months of project approval, it may be used as match on the project, but no longer be paid for from the federal share, or the reimbursable part of the grant.
- All Environmental Review Checklist (ERC) documentation must be completed prior to federal approval. Federal approval occurs prior to obtaining a grant agreement with DNR.
- RTP projects must be self-sufficient. All expenditures must be paid upfront prior to getting reimbursed. No funding advances are allowed.
- Current grantees may not have two grants open concurrently with the same scope of work or exact title; however, 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 if the project scopes were sequential phases of the same project. These phases may not be open at the same time.
- At the time of submittal, the applicant must have, or be in the process of obtaining, (ex: DNR 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. These authorizations must be presented at the time of tentative approval or risk disqualification.
- Per 23 U.S.C 206 all RTP 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 (SCORP) 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 or government, Community Council, Municipal or Borough Assembly, area Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB), 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 *without* breaking it down into "Labor", "Materials" etc. This line item in the budget must exactly match the bid.
- 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 subject in more detail. Do *not* submit signed form-letters.

Reasons for Application Denial

The following are reasons that your application may be denied. If you have questions about other circumstances, please contact the State Recreational Trails Program (RTP) 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. This means, a project that doesn't have a plan, layout, cultural resources survey, alignment, or other essential elements already complete.
- Project does not adequately benefit the public (see *Public Benefit* section on page 8 for more details).
- The budget lacks a thorough explanation and breakdown of estimated costs (please use excel spreadsheet download from DNR DPOR webpage).
- The budget contains lots of inaccurate calculations.
- The budget numbers do not match the ones on the quotes or bids. These numbers must match exactly. Please do not average the three quotes or bids - submit all three quotes 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.
- Public Notice requirements are not met.
- Public or private controversy over the project has been identified and is in the process of being managed but is not resolved.
- Project is predominantly for planning, assessment, evaluating, or surveying. RTP money is intended for on-the-ground trail work.
- If you identify future, unconfirmed, volunteer work as a 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 on or before **August 1, 2024**, at this location: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>. Please use new and updated documents. (This *DOES NOT* mean you should start the application process on this date. There are many tasks you can start earlier. If you have questions about this, contact the State Recreational Trails Program office.)
- Mandatory public notice posting deadline: **September 30th, 2024**.

- Applicants must submit their application to the State Trails Program Grants Administrator electronically or by mail. All applications must be received electronically (by email, jump-drive, CD, etc.) by *midnight* on **October 31st, 2024, or postmarked by October 31st, 2024.**
- Applications sent to ORTAB mid-December 2024.
- ORTAB meeting for final scoring of qualified applications is scheduled in mid-January 2025.
- Notification to applicants about their tentative award will be sent in January – February 2025.
- Agency Review: February – March 2025.
- Grant Agreements: dependent on agency review and federal approval, April – August 2025.

Community Involvement

Before applying for a grant, it is important to spend some time discussing project needs, goals, and expectations with your local trail's community. Gather user support, a little pre-planning will pay off 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 resource 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 are available for technical assistance until the application deadline. Contact information is 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 award 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 for details.

Only One Application Choice

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment projects, and Safety & Education projects use the same application. If you are applying for a Safety & Education project, please check the appropriate box in Section II, 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 open and available to the public, or targeted to a broad segment of the 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 always be open for public use or view and when visitors are likely to be on location.

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 opportunity. Therefore, the DNR reserves the right to disqualify proposals in which:

- Costs exceed the public benefits.
- The project only benefits a small number of people.
- The project is not shovel-ready. This means, a project that doesn't have a plan, layout, cultural resources survey, alignment, or other essential element already complete.
- The site requires intensive and high-cost future management.
- Any other situations where the public benefit will not justify the federal investment.
- Adequate control and tenure of property is not provided.
- The project manager failed to post the mandatory public notice or get public support.
- There is significant public dislike or concern about the project.

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 via email.

Permissible uses

Trail Development, Maintenance, Acquisition and Assessment

- Maintenance and 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 and compliance with the Buy America Act*)
- Construction of new recreational 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 or maintenance.

Safety 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 is limited to 5 percent of the State's apportionment, but not required. Please be aware that because of this limitation, the competition is generally very high in this category.

These projects must offer training or materials either free to the public, or at a very minimal cost (see *Public Benefit* section above). 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 used for 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 if those costs are incidental to one of the permissible project types listed above. The rule of thumb is that the intent of a federal grant is to use funds on the ground in the form of a recreational trail asset. If a project can be simply 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 (think DOT rights-of-way), 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 use of grant funds. The one exception is food for *remote* or “*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). 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.

Common items found on spike camp food receipts that are NOT eligible for reimbursement include newspapers, magazines, prepared coffee/tea (think Starbucks), tobacco, alcohol, toiletries, and personal hygiene products.

Part B. Application Process

Application Submittal

Trail Development, Repair, Acquisition, and Assessment projects, and Safety & Education projects use the same application.

Please use the *updated (NEW)* application and instruction manual available each year after **July 15th**. The link to the fillable .pdf application is available on the DPOR website:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> .

1. If an applicant is submitting a paper-copy application, please exclude large reference documents, and consider keeping one complete copy for your files. ****Please do not put pages in protective sleeves or binders, staple, or add tabs, paper clips, or flagging. This makes it very labor-intensive to reproduce if necessary.*
2. If an applicant is submitting an electronic copy of the entire application, each document should be in its original format (Word, Excel, etc.). Exclude 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 Grants Administrator prior to the due date to arrange submission of application files. In all cases you are encouraged to send all parts of the application on a thumb drive to avoid size issues for email accounts.

3. After submission of your application, make sure you have received a confirmation email that your application has arrived in a readable format by the due date. Applications submitted in an unusable format will NOT be considered for consideration. If there are any questions about submitting the application, please contact DPOR staff.
4. Each application should include all pages and all necessary supporting documentation, in the correct order and clearly labeled as outlined in the *Application* form, page 2. Please clearly label with the 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. Please adhere to directions about abbreviation of document titles (see *Application* form). Many people submit documents that cannot be opened electronically because their **titles are too long**. These documents will not be accepted.
5. Submitting your application with these criteria will allow for the application and approval notification timelines to be met as quickly as possible. Each year, there are commonly over 50 RTP applications the ORTAB and DPOR staff are required to review and score, so please adhere to these requirements, 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 50 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: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200>. The new general guidance from this CFR is interspersed throughout this instruction manual. If you have specific questions about how this may affect your project, please contact the DPOR Grants Administrator Office.

Grant Agreement

After FHWA approval of the project, DPOR will execute a grant agreement with each successful applicant, and the grant agreement will set forth terms and conditions of the funding award. Upon this agreement, DPOR will reimburse a grantee for eligible expenditures that meet applicable laws and regulations. Eligible expenditures must have been included in the approved budget prior to those costs being incurred. All eligible project costs must be incurred after the federal project approval date.

Reimbursements will only be made for costs occurring 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.

Exception: Costs incurred prior to federal project approval that may be eligible for retroactive reimbursement include architectural/engineering, archaeological literature search or cultural resources site inspection, or environmental review permits (such as a SWPPP or MLW land use permit). To be eligible, these items must be identified 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's terms and conditions. A grantee must comply with all applicable ordinances, laws, and regulations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review 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.

Period of Project Performance

This program is intended to fund “ready-to-go” projects. The grantee's agreement with DPOR has a maximum two (2) year term, unless otherwise specified or amended. However, to avoid appearance on the FHWA “*Inactivity*” list, there must be at least one significant project billing that includes match within 8 months of FHWA grant approval (please keep in mind that the date FHWA signs the agreement is **NOT** the same date that you sign the agreement with DPOR). A grantee should avoid being placed on the Inactive list because FHWA views it as the first step toward de-obligation of project money. Please plan your project accordingly. If you have questions, or need clarification, please contact DPOR Grants Administrator Office.

According to 2 CFR 200, the applicant must choose a project end date for the approved grant agreement with FHWA and DPOR. This date will be final unless there is significant scope change or serious circumstances out of the grantee's control (major earthquake, flooding etc.) and NOT simply leftover funds or poor planning. Any significant changes that require an official amendment from FHWA will trigger a new modification of a federal aid package.

To establish a project's end date, the applicant is required to break their project schedule down into tasks based on the project's major milestones.

A Final reimbursement request must be submitted to DPOR within 30 days of the project end date. DPOR will request reimbursement from FHWA and *90 days after the final project completion date, no more reimbursements 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 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 Statutes 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. *If the applicant/grantee works for a state agency, they must follow the State of Alaska procurement procedure and law. This is the responsibility of the grantee.* The applicant 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 DPOR Grants Office.

General DNR Procurement Requirements

****Reminder: If you violate the rules, you will be held accountable in accordance with DNR policies and procedures and Alaska Statute 36.30, the State Procurement Code, [AS 36.30.930](#)*

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➤ Choose lowest acceptable quote.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Verbal orders OK➤ Delivery Order (DO) required for "class A" property — see your Property Custodian➤ Copy of DO to DNR/SSD/Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Coded and approved invoice listing items and costs
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.

Equipment Purchase:

Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than five years and with an acquisition cost that exceeds \$5,000. For equipment purchased with federal funding the State is responsible to maintain accurate equipment records and conduct annual inventory *beyond the performance period of the grant*, continuing to the end of the equipment life cycle. Equipment purchased with grant funds must continue to be used for the purposes specified in the grant agreement. The grantee is responsible for adequate maintenance procedures 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.

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 [Disadvantaged Business Enterprise \(DBE\) Directory, Civil Rights Office, Transportation & Public Facilities, State of Alaska](#).

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) 269-0845.

RTP Reimbursement Process

Successful applicants must execute a Grant Agreement with DPOR **prior** to beginning the project. Expenditures 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. Proof of payment, such as paystubs and receipts (not just 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 or public land, the applicant must obtain documented permission accompanied by an easement or other legally binding agreement such as a permit, from the landowner, allowing public access for a minimum of 5 years *past the time of application*. Consult with the landowner to find out what kind of authorization is necessary. The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to applying. The exception is for winter grooming operations. Winter grooming operations on private land must include an easement or legal agreement that will allow for winter grooming

for a term of at least five years. **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.

Environmental Review

Every applicant must fill out an Environmental Review Checklist (ERC) **unless** your project fits only into Stipulation 1 of the Programmatic Agreement (see below). This checklist is a part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and is required by federal law. This document provides the reviewers a proof that the applicant has gone through the process of considering the environmental or cultural resource impacts of their proposed project, has contacted all necessary agencies, and has acquired or begun the process to obtain, all necessary permits or authorizations. Some questions on the ERC may not be applicable to your project.

Stipulation 1 of the Programmatic Agreement includes:

- 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 to make them accessible to people of different abilities.

FHWA and DPOR have developed a Programmatic Agreement, which categorically excludes identified projects from the NEPA process. Under “Grant Forms” on the DPOR web page, <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>, refer to 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 grant.

Applicants must have initiated *current* communication for required permits, determinations, and authorizations from all 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.

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. 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 earlier in the process. See *Appendix A* for DPOR contact information.

Grantee Performance Standards

To comply with 2 CFR 200.205 *Federal Awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants*, reviewers use performance standards in their evaluations. These standards will be shared with all grant application reviewers to assist with the decision whether to fund a grantee in the future. Applicants who do not follow directions or perform to acceptable standards will face significant consequences. These include, but are not limited to, projects being de-obligated and future applications being denied. Performance standards include the following:

- 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 (ORTAB)

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 under RTP projects. ORTAB nominates, reviews, and comments on 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 in which it belongs. The Director then may 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
- Project Description, Scope of Work
- Detailed timeline of project tasks and the resulting project end date

- Proposed Budget
- Project Funding, Sponsor Support, and Sponsor Match
- Public Benefit
- Community Support

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 2.

Application Sections

Section I: Applicant Information

This section requests the project title, applicant contact information, type of organization, and tax identification or EIN number. **You will need an EIN number to be reimbursed if your project is funded.** If your organization has received grants through RTP in the past, you need to provide a list of current and previous grants within the last five (5) years to demonstrate your experience.

Section II: General Project Information

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. Do **not** include in this section information about the project background, the benefits, the funding, or anything other than the actual work to be accomplished. Please save that for the Detailed Project Narrative section.

Project Category:

Grants are available in the four categories. Please mark one category which your project fits best. 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.

Types of Trail Use

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

Miles Proposed for Project

Indicate the number of miles of trail the project will encompass.

Project Timeline

Indicate project's estimated start and end dates.

Tasks and Completion Timeline

Provide a schedule of planned tasks or milestones and associated timelines that includes a brief description of the activities to be completed. Assign a number of weeks to each task that is necessary to complete it. You may include additional weeks for contingencies to account for weather, winter months, labor shortages, supply chain issues, communication, or other potential delays.

Below is an example each application is required to follow:

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.

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

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.

Project Stipulations

Please refer to *Appendix A: Project Stipulations* section of the application to fill out this section. If DPOR later determines that additional stipulations need to be listed, our office will contact you.

Appraisals, Property Acquisitions, and Easements

Land acquisition projects often experience significant delays and go over the budget. Therefore, an application for property acquisition is conducted in two different stages - appraisal and acquisition. Each phase must be a standalone project which will be awarded separately. Phasing the project allows for longer than anticipated time needed for the appraisal process, which otherwise makes it difficult to comply with FHWA reporting requirements.

Any acquisition of real property with RTP funds or as part of an RTP project, whether through purchase, donation, easement or lease, must comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs Act of 1970 (Uniform Act).

Before initiating negotiation with the landowner, the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (UASFLA), also commonly referred to as the “Yellow Book” appraisal and review appraisal must be completed.

If the application is to purchase property, your application must include:

- legal descriptions of the property to be acquired,
- a plat or map of the property clearly showing the location of the intended acquisition,
- names of property owners whose property is to be acquired,
- a letter from property owners indicating their willingness to sell, and
- a timeline for acquisition.

If the grant is approved for acquisition, additional coordination will be required.

Project Narrative, Photographs, and Maps.

Develop a workable project. Be sure the narrative answers these questions: Why is this trail project important? Is it feasible? Is it ready-to-go? 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.*

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.

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.*

Maps:

Two maps are required of the project area: a vicinity map and a site-specific map. Land ownership and the location of the proposed trails, facilities, all adjacent property lines, and access points 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”.

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

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 impact.

Provide as much visual and narrative detail as necessary to help evaluators understand your project. Please consider your audience - be brief while still being thorough.

Section III: Qualifying Criteria and Public Benefits

#1: Check the box indicating your organization's type.

#2: Check the box for the applicable supporting Land Management Plan and provide documentation (pertinent excerpt) showing that your project is included in, or is consistent with, local land-use plans and priorities.

#3: The following information is required 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.

#4: Include three (3) letters of support from organizations that have interest in your project. However, if applicant is Alaska State Parks, and the project is in a designated State Park or State Recreation area then you only need one letter from the Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) stating that that project is a priority.

#5: Before applying, you must provide public notice within the vicinity of the project location. 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. Club email listservs and club social media pages are a fine way to get the word out, but typically serve only a club's members. They are NOT considered truly public and will not count toward the public notice requirement.

A copy of your public notices 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 opposition to the proposed project:

- What are the concerns from 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.

#6: 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. Either an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use is required. The following are the requirements regarding landowners:

- If any part of the project crosses private or public land, an easement or written agreement from the landowner allowing public use for at least five (5) 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.

#7-12: 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 because 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 experiencing disabilities?
- Will your project utilize youth development groups to provide labor or assistance?

Section IV: Budget Information: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

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 public use or viewing at all times and when visitors are likely.

Project cost information is by far the most troublesome part of the application for many applicants. Please take extra care in preparing and checking the Proposed Budget section.

Amount of Funding Requested:

This section identifies 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 in the application document.

Suggestions for a successful Proposed Budget:

- Please use the budget sheet in Excel format available as a download from the DPOR web page: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>. Grantees may expand the Excel table or include additional budget sheets as necessary.
- Please make sure the math is correct; check the math with a calculator or in Excel.
- The total matching share plus the total grant share **MUST** equal the total project cost.
- Please calculate (*Match Ratio for All Applicants 90/10*) match correctly:

$$\$75,000 / 90\% = \$83,333(\text{total project cost})$$

$$\$83,333 * 10\% = \$8,333 (\text{match})$$

- Clearly identify match sources. cash (from where? how much?); confirmed volunteers to perform tasks included in the scope of work; third-party donations (from whom? how much?); in-kind resources (what?), etc.
- Include 3(three) competitive quotes for equipment or single item purchases over \$1,000.00. This includes groupings of things such as >\$1,000 of 2x4 lumber, or >\$1,000 of railroad-ties etc. A lumber or tool package may be entered as a single line item matching the quote exactly. Please don't break these apart within the Excel budget but do provide detailed backup for the single line item.
- Contracted Labor only needs one quote, and it should be entered in the budget as a single line in the "Contractual" section, item matching the quote exactly.

- USDOT finalized the Public Interest Waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants. The final waiver can be viewed here: [Public Interest Waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants](#)
- All items identified in the budget must be in the scope of a work statement. *Example:* 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 as match. This is a common cause of disqualification. Please ask DPOR Grants office for clarification if there are specific questions.
- Important: Please specifically identify all budget items. Avoid words like “supplies” or “materials”, or “etc.” Instead use specifics, like “work gloves, hard hats, 100 feet of poly rope, 5 boxes of 2” galvanized nails.”
- 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 choose one bid ahead of time based on your organization’s criteria and use the chosen bid amount in your budget.
- Please be sure to include all quotes from contracted services and provide a brief 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 “Contractual”. Do *not* break it down into “Labor” “Materials” etc.
- When submitting documentation for reimbursement, the grantee must ensure that the expenditures are within the project scope and on the approved budget. Paystubs and receipts, invoices, or copies of checks, will be required.
- Direct administrative labor costs such as, but not limited to grant administration, reimbursement – paperwork, billings, payroll, volunteer recruiting/ management/ training/ supervision, project management, project “wrap-up” related to this specific application, etc. can be charged for a total up to 10% of the federal share. *These costs are allowable if* the proper backup is supplied, and all costs are detailed in the application budget. NOTE: you are not required to utilize this option.

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

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. Match items should be categorized as Sponsor Funds or In-Kind Contributions, according to the descriptions below.

Sponsor Funds: The cash an entity has guaranteed to spend on the proposed project, including materials and salary it will use on the proposed project. Partner organization materials and salaries are also considered sponsor funds.

In-Kind Contributions: The value of volunteer labor, donated professional services, donated materials and services at fair market value, etc. All volunteer hours used as match must be documented using the most current RTP log (which requires details including volunteer and volunteer manager signatures). Volunteer hours will not be accepted as matching funds if documentation is missing from the RTP volunteer logs.

Federal agencies applying for grant funds must provide a 5% non-federal match of the total project cost.

Match Formula:

Grant Funds Requested (divided by) 90% = Total Project Cost

Total Project Cost (times) 10% = Match Requirement. *Please be certain your match amount is correct on your budget sheet.*

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%, $\$55,556 \times 10\% = \$5,556$.

Therefore, this project's total project cost = \$55,556. The match requirement = \$5,556, and grant funds provide \$50,000 of the project.

IMPORTANT:

- 1) If you are using **volunteer hours for a match**, the work those volunteers do must be included in the scope of the proposed project.

For example: Your project includes repairing a section of trail requiring 2 new chainsaws and 2 new brush-cutters and volunteer labor. This volunteer labor **MUST** be within the written and approved scope of work if you are going to use those volunteer hours as a match. If you do not have any project work identified in the scope of your project and it is just to buy equipment for future trail work, the match must be cash. If volunteer work is not clearly identified as a valid match source for equipment in your application, it will not move forward to the next stage of review.

- 2) Please refer to <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/> to see labor value for an adult volunteer. *The current Estimated National Volunteer Hour is **\$35.51***
- 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.

Budget Narrative

A budget narrative, also known as a budget justification, exists as a part of the proposed budget. When applying for a grant, include a budget narrative 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

Several common items in grant proposals may necessitate a budget narrative. *For example:* this grant 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.

Educational Materials:

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

Educational materials developed with grant funds become the property of the State of Alaska. Any materials developed with grant funds must also identify 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. Developed products will also be posted on the DPOR web site.

Equipment:

Attach photos, drawings, or specifications of equipment proposed for purchase. Any equipment over \$1,000 will require 3 (three) quotes. Please include these with the 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.*

Bridges or Culverts:

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

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 standard dimensions for bicycle facilities and trails.

Winter Trail Marking:

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

Program Recognition:

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

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 (90/10) 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 DPOR Grants office if you are considering matching with federal funds.

Section V: Required Reading

ADA Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people based on 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.

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: <https://www.access-board.gov/ada/#>

- 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.

Compliance with ADA requirements:

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.

Alaska Human Rights Commission

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ensures that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination, including sex, age, disability, low income, or Limited English Proficiency (LEP) discrimination, under any program or activity for which the Recipient receives Federal financial assistance.

The Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 clarified the original intent of Congress, with respect to Title VI and other Non-discrimination requirements (The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) by restoring the broad, institutional-wide scope and coverage of these non-discrimination statutes and requirements to include all programs and activities of the recipient, so long as any portion of the program is federally assisted.

The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights is the state agency that enforces the Alaska Human Rights Law, [AS 18.80.220](#).

In Alaska it is illegal to discriminate in:

- Employment
- Places of Public Accommodation
- Sale or Rental of Real Property
- Financing and Credit
- Practices by the State or its Political Subdivisions

Because of:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- National Origin
- Physical or Mental Disability

And in some instances because of:

- Age
- Marital Status
- Changes in Marital Status
- Pregnancy
- Parenthood
- Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity or “expression”

Grant Fraud

A grant agreement is a legally binding document; 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 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/>

Buy America Act:

The public interest waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants is for projects funded under DOT-administered financial assistance programs for iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials under a single financial assistance award for which:

- The total value of the non-compliant products is no more than the lesser of \$1,000,000 or 5% of total applicable costs for the project*; or

- The total amount of Federal financial assistance applied to the project, through awards or subawards, is below \$500,000.

**This bullet does not apply to iron and steel subject to the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 313 on financial assistance administered by FHWA. The De Minimis threshold in 23 CFR 635.410(b)(4) continues to apply for steel and iron.*

The waiver is applicable only to awards that are obligated or sub-awards that are made on or after the effective date of the waiver, August 16, 2023. The waiver is applicable to sub-awards only if the sub-awards are made by a pass-through entity for a specific project. Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers continue to be subject to the FHWA Buy America EV Charger Waiver

Get more information about the Waiver at: [Public Interest Waiver for De Minimis Costs and Small Grants](#).

Disclosure of proposal content

All proposals and other material submitted become the property of the State of Alaska and may be returned only at the State's option. [AS 40.25.110](#) requires public records to be open to reasonable inspection. All proposal information, including detailed price and cost information, will be held in confidence during the evaluation process and prior to the time a Notice of Intent to Award is issued. Thereafter, proposals will become public information.

*NOTE: Applicants must comply with these regulations and be aware of how they pertain to federal awards. Check the box **"I have read the required information above and will comply with these regulations."** This signifies the applicant's understanding and assertion to follow the regulations and policies outlined. Failure to do so will result in disqualification from grant consideration.*

Section VI: Acknowledgement

To be considered for the award, this application and its supporting documents must be submitted by *Application Due Date*.

Applications must be **signed** by an authorized individual to be valid. By signing this application, the signer attests that they are authorized to request grant funding on behalf of the applying organization. Furthermore, the signer validates that all information in this application and the required attachments are true and correct. The signer also acknowledges that they and their organization will be held responsible for misused grant funds and will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law in the event of fraud or misuse of federal grant funds.

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

Submission of Application Package

Please consider your audience: the application reviewers.

Please make sure that documents are signed, and you have included all required attachments. Label each file with the abbreviated content title (EX: *budget, maps*, etc.) so it can be easily identified by the reviewers:

RTP25_(Project Name)(Attachment Name)

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 clearly label all emails pertaining to your project and application in the subject line with RTP(YY) and the project name. **Do Not** simply write “RTP grant” in the subject line of an email. This may be your only RTP grant application and that label makes sense to the applicant, however, DPOR Grants office may have over 50 RTP grants open at any one time.

Please make sure any photo-copied documents are straight, legible, clear, and large enough 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.

Please be thorough but succinct.

Whether you plan to transmit your application electronically, or by mailing a paper package with USB drive, **do not** combine everything in one big file. Reviewers find it very difficult to scroll through a lengthy document when looking for one item. After receiving your grant application in the DPOR office, the Grant Administrator will notify you, via email, of receipt of the application.

Please keep in mind that Outlook limits the size of combined files to 20 MB. You might consider other options for transmitting large files:

1. You can send files by compressed (“zipped”) folder, or
2. You can send files via ZendTo: <https://drop.state.ak.us/drop/>

Permits and Authorizations

Applicants are required to fill out the Environmental Review Checklist and contact necessary agencies 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 prior to project commencement. Indicate the permits and/or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents required for ground disturbing projects, if applicable. Permits may not be applicable for safety, educational, or non-ground disturbing projects.

Grant Management and Administration

Grant Agreement

Upon award, a grant agreement is prepared by DPOR with input from the applicant. The grant agreement contains several 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. Please refer to the *Project Period of Performance* in Part B, page 13 of these instructions for more details.

Extensions

If circumstances arise and extensions are requested, they must be fully justified in writing, illustrating unavoidable delays, and for circumstances beyond a grantee's control, before the original, approved, end date. When determining the timeline to complete the project, an applicant should take delays into consideration caused by winter weather and the fire season, shipping delays or personnel issues, etc. Grantees requesting an extension must satisfy the information listed, but not limited to, criteria below.

- Requests for extensions must be received by the Grants Administrator before the expiration date of the grant. Requests for extensions after the project end 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 cannot guarantee requests for extensions will be approved by FHWA. Extensions will not exceed a total of four years beyond the grant start date as specified in the original Grant Agreement. Please also refer to the *Period of Project Performance* section in Part B, page 13 of this document.

Terminating a Grant

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

- The grantee requested or agreed to terminate the grant agreement.
- The grantee intentionally submitted fraudulent documents or engaged in other fraudulent activities involving the approved project.
- The grantee failed to acquire permits required to implement the approved scope of work.
- The grantee's 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.
- The grantee is non-compliant with federal billing requirements and FHWA de-obligates the project funding. (See *Period of Project Performance* section for more details).
- 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.
- The grantee has not complied with the requirements outlined in the grant agreement.

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

For application assistance, and programmatic questions, general questions regarding an existing grant, or reimbursement status contact:

Grants Administrator
(907) 269-8733
natalya.fomina@alaska.gov

Mailing Address:

Alaska State Trails Program
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1380
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561
Fax: (907) 269-8907

Appendix B: Contacts for the Environmental Review Checklist (ERC)

Please note as staff changes, the contact information below is 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 whether a permit or authorization is required if the proposed project is on state lands.

For projects in:

Southcentral: 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 900C
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-8503

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

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

Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR):

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/>

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):

Contact LWCF State Liaison Officer to determine whether your project will affect an LWCF project site.

Mailing address:

550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1380,
Anchorage, AK 99501;
(907) 269-8694.

Office of History and Archeology (OHA):

Contact this office to determine whether your project will affect historic-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 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 historic and/or cultural properties are affected, the applicant must specify a plan to mitigate any of 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. Applicants must submit a letter addressing the project's detailed scope of work, site location, the Area of Potential Effect (APE), 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 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310,
Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-87210

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 the Division of Water to see if you need to complete a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. (SWPPP).

For more information, go to <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/wastewater/stormwater/>

Contact:

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 who propose to work within a designated State Game Refuge, Critical Habitat Area, Special Use Area or Sanctuary should contact the following offices. ADF&G may be able to provide information on other state's land as well.

Division of Wildlife Conservation (within ADF&G):

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

Contact: Fish and Game Coordinator
333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, AK 99518-1599
(907) 267-2354

Division of Sport Fish (within ADF&G):

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

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 proposing to use contractual labor must comply with all State and Federal requirements for wage rates. For questions and project determinations, 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
<https://labor.alaska.gov/lss/whhome.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 DPOR Grants Office.

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 Manager, 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 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 to make them accessible to the elderly and handicapped individuals.

United States Army Corps 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 July 2024

- **What is a public project?** All projects using federal grant funds must have significant public benefit, be accessible, open and available to the public, or targeted to a broad segment of the 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 public use or viewing at all times when visitors are likely.
- **Do I have to fill out an Environmental Review Checklist?** Every applicant must fill out an ERC **unless** they have a **project that fits into Stipulation 1 of the Programmatic Agreement (see question below)**. This shows the reviewer that the applicant has considered the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all the necessary agencies and acquired all necessary permits. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no”.
- **My project requires completion of the Environmental Compliance Review. I'm aware that the ECR must be submitted as a separate document. Would I submit the ECR to the same email address as the RTP Grant Application or would I send it to a separate email?** The Environmental Review Checklist is part of the application packet, and it is a stand-alone document with its own attachments. That means you cannot use the same attachment for the application and ERC; each document must have its own attachment and you will see some duplication there. The ERC is reviewed by an Environmental Impact Analyst, and it needs to be a separate document. You need to submit your ERC with attachments at the same time you submit your application. It is shown in a checklist of required attachments on page 3 of the application form.
- **What is the “Programmatic Agreement”?** Under “Grant Forms” <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> on the Trails Program web page, refer to the CFR 771.117, 2 CFR 200, and the Programmatic Agreement. The Programmatic Agreement is a document developed between DNR and FHWA to establish procedures for the RTP projects pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771. If your project qualifies *under Stipulation 1* of the Programmatic Agreement ONLY, you will **not** need 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 receive grant funding.
- **Can I just give an approximate estimate about my project’s schedule? I’m not sure how it’s going to work out.** **No.** The project’s components must be broken down into Tasks or Milestones and numbers of weeks for each, all leading up to a hard-completion date. This date will be on the final federal approval and after that date nothing more may be charged to the project. See the Application Instructions for details and ask DPOR Grants office staff if you have additional questions.
- **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 statement of support that can be attached to last year's letter. Please include any letters of opposition and provide explanation on how you will manage it.

- **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 July 15 of the year in which you are applying for funds. DPOR updates the application package annually.
- **Must I have all my permits and authorizations final and included with my application by the deadline?** 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 landowner, it cannot move forward. 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 be costly or take months to obtain and, **1)** If your project doesn't get approved for funding, that permit is unnecessary, **2)** You must only have them in hand before you break ground for the project.
- **Our project includes multiple multi-day expeditions into remote trails. On each trip, the crews typically take a day to get to their camp and a day to get back. From the budget standpoint, how can I calculate all the hours that the staff and volunteers spend getting to and from the remote locations?** The hours spent by employees to get to/from the project site cannot be considered as Labor Cost. Technically, employees are in travel status, however, if there will be a cost for transportation of employees by transportation company (typically by aircraft or by boat), the estimated cost for such services can be included in your budget line item under Travel/Services.
- **Do we have to include 10% of our total grant amount as an Indirect Cost in the Budget?** You do **not** have to include Indirect cost. Indirect cost is allowable under federal regulation 2 CFR 200 and that means you have an option of including indirect cost in your RTP project budget. These costs are not directly assignable to a specific project, but necessary for organization and performance of the project, such as administrative salaries. Indirect costs get allocated based on an established federally approved indirect cost rate, negotiated indirect cost rate, or de minimis rate (10%). Please see page 18 of the Application form for guidance on indirect cost.
- **In the budget spreadsheet, I can't decide whether to put the taxes associated with the labor of the employees in the labor tab or in the indirect costs tab.** All associated labor cost is shown in one spending category for Labor. The main criteria in application of labor cost to a federal award is whether the services are related to activity funded by the federal grant. Indirect costs are those costs that are incurred for common or joint purposes but benefit more than one program and such costs get allocated based on your indirect cost rate.
- **Are non-participating costs being included with "indirect costs" of a project? If not, what is an example of indirect cost?** **Non-Participating Costs** are any costs associated with the project, but not eligible for reimbursement and which don't count towards the match requirement. Any extra costs that may have come up during the project – specifically required to complete all tasks of the project – must be documented and reported. **Indirect costs** are the costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to project costs but are necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the project. For example, costs associated with operating and maintaining facilities, depreciation, and administrative salaries are usually treated as indirect costs. The main difference between non-par cost and indirect cost from a budget point of view is that non-par costs are **not** included in the reimbursement process. Indirect cost, if budgeted and approved, can be reimbursed.

- **What are non-participating costs and how are they accounted for?** Non-Participating Costs are not affiliated with the Federal Award or Match Requirement but are additional funds that the grantee has outlined to spend on the project. Non-participating costs associated with the authorized phase of work may result from ineligible work or a determination by the recipient to not use Federal funds for a portion of the project. These charges should be reported separately, be readily identifiable to a reviewer who is not familiar with the project and included in the total project cost for applicable phases. Although the Total Cost recorded in the project agreement includes non-participating costs, the Federal pro rata share (%) is based only on participating costs.
- **Do prevailing wages apply to this grant?** **Yes.** Prevailing rates are established to ensure that contractors and construction workers are paid a fair wage when working on government projects. These rates are based on craft and location. Employees may be eligible for prevailing wages if they work on federal or state government or government-funded construction projects or perform certain federal or state government services. For more information about prevailing wages, refer to the following resources:
 - Alaska Laborers' & Mechanics' Minimum Rates of Pay: <https://labor.alaska.gov/lss/pamp600.htm>
 - Davis-Bacon and Related Acts: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/construction>
 - McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act (SCA): <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/government-contracts/service-contracts>
- **Can Match all be in-kind or does some of it have to be cash?** The Common Rule regulations, 49 CFR 18.24 provides information regarding Matching or cost sharing. The basic rule is that contribution of cash funds, the fair market value of materials, services (including volunteer labor), or lawfully acquired new rights-of-way can be used toward the matching share. You may choose to provide Matching share as cash, in-kind (services or materials), or as a combination of both.
- **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 Highway Administration determines there is less need based on more than the 10% match requirement.
- **Our company carries liability insurance to operate its youth wilderness expeditions. Since we are intending to incorporate RTP trail work on 7 out of 9 expeditions in the next two years, can we include 7/9 of the cost of our liability policy in the RTP grant?** **No.** Insurance policy costs represent a regular expense of doing business. The purpose of purchasing this insurance policy is not directly related to the project funded by RTP grant and it is not non-traditional or unusual because of the special risks peculiar to the project. General insurance is usually treated as overhead and for that reason it is an ineligible cost.
- **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. Our rule of thumb is, any project that can be put in a binder on a shelf and forgotten or left until there is further interest or funding, typically does not fit this program.
- **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 for reimbursements? No.**

See Application Instructions for one [exception](#) on page 12.

- **Can I just estimate how much it will cost to contract a service? No.** Please collect contractors' professional estimates or bids for each service. The RTP only requires one contractor bid for each service to be included with the budget as back up; however, state procurement law (for State of Alaska government projects) requires multiple bids for anything over \$1,000. Please make sure you are following the correct rules for your institution. For more information, please see the Application Instructions.
- **Once the grant agreement is signed, how long does it take for me to get the money?** The Recreational Trails Program is a reimbursable grant. You are expected to buy or pay upfront for services and materials that have been included in your approved budget, and then submit your receipts with a reimbursement form for payment. There are no advances.
- **How do you figure the match percentage?** Match ratio for all applicants is 90/10. 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%, $\$55,556 * 10\% = \$5,556$. Therefore, this project's total project cost = \$55,556. The match requirement = \$5,556, and grant funds provide \$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 that includes match within the first 8 months after FHWA approval, AND a minimum of twice a year, or risk federal de-obligation of your project. Please plan accordingly and see Application Information and Instruction Manual for more information.
- **If I am hiring a contractor to do the work, what period of time should I plan for if I am not on their schedule yet?** If you are planning to use a trail contractor, please plan a minimum of a year for your project. The few trail contractors that are available in Alaska fill their schedules fast. It is better to plan more time, than modify your grant.
- **Can I have more than one grant open at the same time? Yes.** You may have more than one grant open for *different projects*. You may have a project that contains more than one phase, but each phase must be completed before the next one can begin. If you have specific questions, please ask DPOR Grants Administration staff.
- **Is it useful if I put only "RTP grant" in the email subject line when communicating about my project? No.** Please include the name of your project (**appropriately abbreviated**) in the subject line of every email about your project, however, please do not make document titles so long that they can't be saved. We have up to 50 RTP grants open at any one time, and this helps us to keep track of each specific grant and backup documentation. If you label your email "RTP grant" it is not specific enough. Please see Application Information and Instruction Manual for more details.

- **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 that will move forward toward approval. Finally, the tentatively awarded project packages are sent to FHWA for final approval. It is highly recommended to review the score sheet used by reviewers so you know how your application will be graded.
- **May I build a trail project on private land?** 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 or public land, the applicant must obtain documented permission accompanied by an easement or other legally binding agreement such as a permit, from the landowner, allowing public access for a minimum of 5 years (into the future). Consult with the landowner to find out what kind of authorization is necessary. The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to applying. If the project is for winter access, atop frozen ground, or snow, without disturbance to the land or vegetation, 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 adult volunteer labor?** For 2023 the value of volunteer labor for Alaska is **\$35.51 / hr.**
- **I think my project might qualify under the Safety, and Education apportionment. How do I know?** Safety and Education projects are limited to 5 percent of a state's apportionment. They are for the development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to the use of recreational trails. They also support non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs and provide trail-related training. These projects must offer training or materials either free to the public, or at a very minimal cost. All reimbursable expenses must be allocated to educational materials. Also see definition of "public project", and other details in the Application Instruction and Information Manual.

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More information:

DNR, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/index.htm>

Recreational Trails Program: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm>

Recreational Trails Program staff: Natalya Fomina natalya.fomina@alaska.gov