

Recreational Trails Grant Application Process

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated September 19, 2013

- **Do I have to fill out an Environmental Review Checklist? Yes.** Every applicant must fill out an ERC unless they have a “**categorical exclusion**” (see question below). This shows the reviewer that the applicant has gone through the process of thinking about the environmental impacts of their proposed project and has contacted all of the necessary agencies and acquired all necessary permits. Some answers on the ERC may be “not applicable” or “no” – this is OK.
- **What is a “categorical exclusion” and how do I know if my project qualifies?** Under “Grant Forms” <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/trails.htm> on the Trails Program web page, refer to both the [CFR 771.117](#) and the [Programmatic Agreement](#). If your project qualifies under Stipulation 1 **ONLY**, you have a “**categorical exclusion**” and will not need an ERC. If your project qualifies under Stipulations 2 or 3 of the Programmatic Agreement you must have a completed [ERC](#) to receive grant money.
- **Do I need new letters of support if I got them last year? Yes.** The circumstances or the stakeholders surrounding your project may have changed and those that supported last year may not support this year. You may have your supporters simply email an updated voice of support that can be attached to last year’s letter.
- **Can I just turn in last year’s application if I change the dates? No.** Please use the new and updated application form from the website available on or after August 15 of the year in which you are applying for funds. We will try to update and improve the application annually.
- **Must I have all my permits and authorizations final and included with my application?**
 1. All land use authorizations or letters of non-objection for land use must be included with the application. If your project doesn’t have permission from the land owner, it cannot move forward.
 2. All agency documents such as an Office of History and Archaeology inspection, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), or Fish Habitat Permit do not necessarily have to be finalized. These permits can cost money or take months to obtain

and, 1. If your project doesn't get approved for funding you will not need, and 2. You must only have them in hand before you break ground for the project.

- **If I include more match than required, does it reflect favorably on my application? No,** you will not receive a higher score for having more match than is required. Having more match could cause the federal share to decrease if the Federal Highways Administration determines there is less need based on more than the 20% match requirement. (the amount of donations or volunteers you secure on your own is your business as long as you document in your budget the minimum amount required in the application.)
- **Can my project be mainly for surveying, planning, research and assessments? No.** Recreational Trails Grants are intended to help initiate shovel-ready projects with tangible, on-the-ground results; i.e. a bridge across a creek on a ski trail, a new hiking trail, a bike pump park, motor-cross track improvements, etc.
- **Will any costs that I incur before the grant agreement is signed be allowable reimbursements? No.**
- **Can I just guess at how much it will cost to contract out a service? No.** Please contact contractors and collect their professional estimates or bids. Include those with your package.
- **Can I leave the explanation part of the budget sheet blank if I don't know the information? Please avoid this.** It will be returned to you and you will need to clearly justify all labor, materials and services with explanations of hourly /unit/other costs. (Example: If you enter *\$22,000 labor* as a line item with no or little explanation you are guaranteed to have your application returned.)
- **Once the grant agreement is signed, how long does it take for me to get my money?** The Recreational Trails Program is a reimbursable grant. You are expected to buy or pay upfront for services and materials and then submit your receipts with a reimbursement form for payment. There are no advances.
- **How do you figure the match percentage?** The Recreational Trails grants require a 20% match from the grantee. However, that percentage is based on the total project cost, not just the federal share. Therefore, the formula for determining match would be (federal share divided by 80%) x 20% = match requirement. An example is a grant that has a \$50,000 federal share would be \$50,000 divided by 80% times 20% = \$12,500. \$12,500 would be the match requirement.
- **How long do I have to complete my project?** Grant agreements are good for two years.

- **How much money is available for one project?** Currently \$50,000 is the maximum award.
- **Can I have more than one grant open at the same time?** You may have more than one grant open for different projects, and you may have one grant project contain more than one phase, but each phase will have to be completed before the next one can begin.
- **How are awarded projects selected?** Applications submitted on time are initially reviewed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, then forwarded to an advisory board (ORTAB) for scoring and recommendation. Once the scores and recommendations are received, the State Parks Director's office selects the grants to be awarded.
- **Do I have to own the land where the project will take place?** The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail related facilities developed or maintained with grant funds. If any portion of a trail project is on private land, the applicant must obtain documented permission from the landowner for public access for a minimum of 5 years. Projects on public land must have documented approval from the land manager and access assured for at least 10 years. The grant applicant must obtain these assurances prior to submitting an application. If the project is for winter access or trail grooming only, public access need only be assured for the life of the grant. Applications missing landowner permission to access will be considered incomplete and ineligible.
- **What is the current value of volunteer labor?** For 2013 it is \$22.14/ hr. This will change in the spring of 2014 and we will update this publication. For the purposes of your application fall 2013, use this figure.