

# GRANT FUNDING for SNOWMOBILE CLUBS and ASSOCIATIONS

*Where's The Money?*

Produced by the



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# Introduction

The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) has produced this resource guide to help local snowmobile clubs and state snowmobile associations with the many aspects of grant funding. Its purpose is to help local entities identify the most common sources of grant funds that can help them enhance snowmobile trails, facilities and access. It also provides guidance on how to successfully apply and compete for these funds.

There are many untapped opportunities for organized snowmobiling groups to fund projects that can enhance snowmobiling opportunities. While there are numerous grant programs that snowmobiling projects may be eligible for, this guide will focus on the three most common grant programs available to snowmobile clubs and/or associations. Many of the same principles and approaches to grant writing discussed in this resource guide will also apply to other grant programs.

The three most common grant programs available to snowmobile clubs and/or associations include:

- The **ISMA Grant Program** is operated by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA). Only state snowmobile associations are eligible for this grant program. State associations can receive a maximum of \$4,000 per request and apply for up to two grants per year. The objective of this program is to fund: safety and environmental projects, projects that increase or maintain land access, precedent setting lawsuits regarding land access issues, or projects that promote the ISMA GoSnowmobiling.org campaign.
- The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), commonly referred to as the **RTP Program**, is the single best opportunity for grants to fund recreational trails in the United States. It is funded by federal fuel taxes paid by motorized trail users, including snowmobilers. This program is administered nationally by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), but is operated locally typically by the state parks department, DNR agency, or transportation department. These state agencies set the annual application procedures, including minimum and maximum grant amounts. Nationally, there is \$70 million available for this program in federal fiscal year 2006. This funding will increase \$5 million per year until it reaches \$85 million per year in 2009. Snowmobile projects qualify for up to 70% of these grant funds under federal rules. 30% of the funds must be spent on motorized projects, which includes snowmobile, ATV, off-road motorcycle, and 4-wheel drive trail use. 40% of the funds must be spent on “diversified” or multiple use types of trail projects. This essentially means there must be at least two types of use allowed on the trail. Snowmobiling qualifies as one use, so this could be snowmobile and cross-country ski use on the same trail during the winter season, or snowmobile use during the winter and ATV and/or hiking use during the summer season. The other 30% of the funds must be spent each year for non-motorized trail projects.
- The **Transportation Enhancements** (TE) Program is also funded by the Federal Highway Administration and is administered locally by the state transportation department. While these funds are tougher to obtain and generally are used for bicycle and pedestrian trails, snowmobiles do qualify as an eligible “transportation” use under federal guidelines. TE is typically 10% of a state’s “surface transportation” highway funds, so it is a large pot of money. These funds are typically spent one of two ways by the state DOT agency: 1) “on system,” which means the project is in the right-of-way of a state or federal highway project, or 2) “local” projects which are not on or adjacent to a highway right-of-way. The most pertinent measure as to whether a snowmobile project might qualify is if the project provides a “transportation” element, i.e., does it provide transportation between point A and point B.

# The ISMA Grant Program



The ISMA Grant Program is operated by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA) to help state snowmobile associations (only state snowmobile associations are eligible for this grant program = no clubs) further their goals and to enhance and protect snowmobiling opportunities in their state. It is an easy program to apply for and every state snowmobile association should be taking advantage of this opportunity. Program guidelines are updated annually, but are generally as follows:

## Objective of this Grant Program

To provide grants to state snowmobile associations for:

- Promotion of the GoSnowmobiling.org campaign
- Safety and environmental projects
- Increasing or maintaining land access
- Precedent setting lawsuits regarding land access issues

## Grant Program Guidelines

Grant requests are typically due to the ISMA Office by August 1 and November 1. Applications are reviewed by the ISMA Communications Committee by the end of August and November. Notifications to associations are typically made 30 days after the end of the month of review. Grant checks are typically issued in September and December.

Grant funding is limited to a maximum of \$4,000 per request. State associations in good standing with ACSA may apply for up to two grants per year. First priority is given to projects that support the ISMA GoSnowmobiling.org campaign.

A Results Report is required to be submitted to ISMA as follow up to the project. All ISMA Grant Program projects from previous years must be completed, with a results/progress report submitted, in order for a state association to be considered for a new grant.

The association receives the grant funds as an “up front” payment from ISMA, with the exception that \$500 is withheld until receipt of a Final Summary Report. (Example: A \$4,000 grant is approved for an association in August. ISMA sends a check for \$3,500 to the association in September. ISMA pays the last \$500 to the association after the project is complete and a Final Report has been submitted by the association to ISMA.)

Matching funds for the project from other sources are an important criteria considered by the review committee. So if you have additional funds (association funds, other partner funds, etc.), it improves the chances that your grant request will be funded by ISMA.

You should provide layout and content information (storyboard, script, map, or some other visual representation of the project, as applicable) to help support the project application.

If the project is safety related, the “Safe Riders!” logo must be used prominently and the “Safe Riders!” position statement must be upheld (i.e., zero tolerance regarding alcohol).

All grant requests to fund video PSA's must be used for the promotion of the GoSnowmobiling.org campaign which is intended to target membership growth.

ISMA video footage and photos are available free of charge to be used in creating print or broadcast materials.

## **Information Needed to Complete the ISMA Grant Application**

Contact Information: The organization's name and address; the name of a Chairperson to receive correspondence for the project (this is important = someone needs to be in charge/responsible for the project); and a phone number, fax number and e-mail address for the point of contact.

Project Title: This is simply a short, concise description of the project. (Examples: Rabbit Ears Pass Environmental Assessment; Statewide Land Access Planning and Monitoring; Economic Impact Study of the South Dakota Snowmobile Industry; Go Snowmobiling Promotion and Membership Project; Snowmobiling Safety Trailer, Yellowstone Legal Defense, etc.)

Project Description: This should be a more specific description of the project. Most importantly, it should include background information as to **why** the project is important and why it is needed. It should also include **what** the project will do/its specific parts and contents (what is the overall "scope" of the project), as well as **how** it will be accomplished.

Project Benefit and Goals: Clearly and concisely, state what the goals of the project are and what the benefits of the project will be once it is completed. Will it increase, protect or defend snowmobiling access or will it promote snowmobiling safety, environmental stewardship, the image of snowmobiling, or membership in clubs and associations? Who exactly will benefit from the project and how long might the benefits last?

Project Timetable/Critical Dates: They want to know how quickly the project will get completed. Simply tell them when the project will start and when it will be done. The other critical dates may include: dates (months of the year) when certain parts of the project, if there are multiple parts in the project, may start or finish; dates when the project may reach a midpoint or some other benchmark for the project; dates when comments on a land use plan may be due or when a final decision on the planning process or lawsuit is expected; etc. These "critical dates" are not typically viewed as steadfast. Rather, they are used to see if the project sponsor is really prepared to take on the project and whether the sponsor has a realistic handle on what will be needed to successfully complete the project in a timely manner. (It is always good to be able to complete any project within a year or two – if you lay out a timetable that is much longer than two years, it probably means you're not ready for the project unless it is something like a lawsuit or a long, drawn-out land use planning process.)

Project Budget: While the ISMA Grant Program does not require a match, additional funds from the association or other partners in the project can help improve your chances to be approved for funding. Specify the total amount of funding you are requesting from ISMA. Specify the date by which you wish to have the ISMA funds (less the \$500 that will be held back until the final report is submitted). Specify the total of funds contributed from other sources, including a complete list of other funding sources for the project and the specific amount from each other source. Most importantly, include an itemized project budget that breaks the various costs down by itemized categories of your anticipated expenses (labor, supplies and materials, travel, equipment costs, consulting or contract costs, production costs, legal fees, advertising, etc., as applicable to the various components of the project). The project budget does not have to be exact (the final expenditures within categories may vary, but the total budget should remain the same), but it should equal the total of the grant funds being requested from ISMA plus the funds you say will be contributed to the project from other sources.

### **Contact Information**

ISMA Grant Program  
International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association  
1640 Haslett Road, Suite 170  
Haslett, MI 48840  
Phone: 517-339-7788  
Fax: 517-339-7798  
E-Mail: [www.snowmobile.org](http://www.snowmobile.org)

# The RTP Grant Program



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is the single best opportunity for grants to fund recreational trails in the United States. It is funded by federal fuel taxes paid on gasoline used in motorized trail vehicles, including snowmobiles, ATVs, off-road motorcycles, jeeps, and four-wheel drive light-duty trucks used in an off-highway setting. Snowmobilers are large contributors to this program. They are your funds, so you should be aggressively applying for grants from this program.

While the program is administered nationally by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), it is administered at the state level by a state agency designated by the Governor. Most often, RTP is operated at the state level by the state parks, recreation or DNR agency. It may also be administered by the state transportation department. Federal guidelines also require that a State Trails Advisory Committee or Council advise the responsible state agency regarding operation of the grant program. The state agencies and advisory groups who oversee these funds set the annual application procedures, which can be stricter than the federal rules. As a result, there can be differences from state to state as to what types of projects are ultimately funded. This requires that state-specific questions and issues must be deciphered dependant upon the state-specific guidelines. Therefore, this resource guide will focus on general federal guidelines for operation of the grant program. You will need to get your state's grant application and guidelines to see what specific rules and timelines have been set for your state.

Since this program is under the umbrella of the Federal Transportation/Highway Bill, it requires "reauthorization" by Congress every five to six years. The current program was most recently reauthorized during the summer of 2005 and runs through the end of federal fiscal year 2009 (September 30, 2009). Nationally, there is \$70 million available for this program in federal fiscal year 2006 which begins September 30, 2005. This funding will increase \$5 million per year until it reaches \$85 million per year in 2009. Prior to the 2005 reauthorization, the program was operated as a \$50 million per year program nationally. Therefore, there is tremendous opportunity for snowmobilers to tap into "new" funding in this grant program. Half of the funds are distributed to all states equally. The other half of the funds are distributed to states based upon estimates of off-highway fuel usage in each state. See Table 1 on the following page for a state-by-state breakdown of annual grant fund distributions.

Snowmobile projects qualify for up to 70% of these grant funds under federal rules. 30% of the funds must be spent on motorized projects, which includes snowmobile, ATV, off-road motorcycle, and 4-wheel drive trail use. 40% of the funds must be spent on "diversified" or multiple use types of trail projects. This essentially means there must be at least two types of use allowed on the trail. Snowmobiling qualifies as one use, so this could be snowmobile and cross-country ski use on the same trail during the winter season, or snowmobile use during the winter and ATV and/or hiking use during the summer season. The other 30% of the funds must be spent each year on non-motorized trail projects. (30-30-40 Rule) See Table 1 on the following page for a state-by-state breakdown of annual funds available in the "30% motorized use" and "40% diversified use" project categories.

As snowmobilers, you should be aggressively applying for a "fair share" of your state's RTP grant funds. What is your fair share? The answer depends upon what other motorized trail use is organized or is occurring in your state. How do your snowmobile registration numbers compare to wheeled OHV registration numbers in the state? Is it 50/50, or some other number? Collectively, the snowmobilers and the wheeled OHV riders are paying for 100% of the program even though Congress gave non-motorized trail users 30% of the pie. And states can spend up to 7% of the total funds for state administrative costs. So up to 37% of the funds are already gone before you get to the table. Are you content to simply share the 30% motorized category of funds with the OHV riders, or should you have a goal to also get a fair share of the diversified funds that you are paying for? When is the last time non-motorized users thanked you for funding their non-motorized projects or

allowed you to use their diversified RTP trail projects? You should approach this program with the mindset that the potential is that up to 70% of the funding can benefit snowmobiling projects, and not be content with a mere piece of the 30% motorized use category. The funds are yours. While Congress made the decision to give away the first 30% to non-motorized projects, you still have a say in how the rest of the funds are allocated. If you don't pursue grants from the 40% diversified funds, you have effectively chosen to give away 70% of the program to non-motorized users by your inaction. The choice is yours.

**Table 1 – Preliminary RTP Apportionments by State**

<b>State</b>	<b>FY 2003 \$ TEA-21</b>	<b>FY 2005 \$ SAFETEA-LU</b>	<b>FY 2006 \$</b>	<b>FY 2007 \$</b>	<b>FY 2008 \$</b>	<b>FY 2009 \$</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	<b>733,472</b>	<b>897,684</b>	<b>1,049,422</b>	<b>1,125,291</b>	<b>1,201,161</b>	<b>1,277,030</b>
30% Motorized	204,639	250,454	292,789	313,956	335,124	356,291
40% Diverse	272,852	333,938	390,385	418,608	446,832	475,055
<b>California</b>	<b>3,409,930</b>	<b>4,263,285</b>	<b>4,983,922</b>	<b>5,344,240</b>	<b>5,704,558</b>	<b>6,064,876</b>
30% Motorized	951,371	1,189,457	1,390,514	1,491,043	1,591,572	1,692,101
40% Diverse	1,268,494	1,585,942	1,854,018	1,988,057	2,122,096	2,256,134
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>1,227,636</b>	<b>1,118,110</b>	<b>1,307,108</b>	<b>1,401,607</b>	<b>1,496,106</b>	<b>1,590,605</b>
30% Motorized	342,510	311,953	364,683	391,049	417,414	443,779
40% Diverse	456,680	415,937	486,244	521,398	556,552	591,705
<b>Idaho</b>	<b>816,182</b>	<b>1,015,256</b>	<b>1,186,868</b>	<b>1,272,674</b>	<b>1,358,480</b>	<b>1,444,286</b>
30% Motorized	227,715	283,256	331,136	355,076	379,016	402,956
40% Diverse	303,620	377,675	441,515	473,435	505,354	537,274
<b>Illinois</b>	<b>1,211,415</b>	<b>1,545,017</b>	<b>1,806,176</b>	<b>1,936,756</b>	<b>2,067,335</b>	<b>2,197,915</b>
30% Motorized	337,985	431,060	503,923	540,355	576,787	613,218
40% Diverse	450,646	575,746	671,898	720,473	769,049	817,624
<b>Indiana</b>	<b>833,523</b>	<b>1,014,554</b>	<b>1,186,047</b>	<b>1,271,794</b>	<b>1,357,540</b>	<b>1,443,287</b>
30% Motorized	232,553	283,061	330,907	354,830	378,754	402,677
40% Diverse	310,070	377,414	441,210	473,107	505,005	536,903
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>826,142</b>	<b>1,007,437</b>	<b>1,177,728</b>	<b>1,262,873</b>	<b>1,348,018</b>	<b>1,433,163</b>
30% Motorized	230,494	281,075	328,586	352,342	376,097	399,853
40% Diverse	307,325	374,766	438,115	469,789	501,463	533,137
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>767,045</b>	<b>951,646</b>	<b>1,112,505</b>	<b>1,192,935</b>	<b>1,273,365</b>	<b>1,353,795</b>
30% Motorized	214,006	265,509	310,389	332,829	355,269	377,709
40% Diverse	285,341	354,012	413,852	443,772	473,692	503,612
<b>Michigan</b>	<b>1,498,963</b>	<b>1,779,215</b>	<b>2,079,961</b>	<b>2,230,335</b>	<b>2,380,708</b>	<b>2,531,081</b>
30% Motorized	418,211	496,401	580,309	622,264	664,217	706,172
40% Diverse	557,614	661,868	773,746	829,685	885,623	941,562
<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>1,163,133</b>	<b>1,369,462</b>	<b>1,600,946</b>	<b>1,716,688</b>	<b>1,832,430</b>	<b>1,948,173</b>
30% Motorized	324,514	382,080	446,664	478,956	511,248	543,540
40% Diverse	432,686	509,440	595,552	638,608	681,664	724,720
<b>Montana</b>	<b>863,640</b>	<b>1,031,856</b>	<b>1,206,274</b>	<b>1,293,483</b>	<b>1,380,692</b>	<b>1,467,901</b>
30% Motorized	240,956	287,888	336,551	360,882	385,213	409,544
40% Diverse	321,274	383,850	448,734	481,176	513,618	546,059
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>689,546</b>	<b>832,322</b>	<b>973,012</b>	<b>1,043,356</b>	<b>1,113,701</b>	<b>1,184,046</b>
30% Motorized	192,383	232,218	271,470	291,096	310,722	330,349
40% Diverse	256,511	309,624	361,960	388,128	414,297	440,465
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>636,962</b>	<b>785,661</b>	<b>918,464</b>	<b>984,866</b>	<b>1,051,267</b>	<b>1,117,668</b>
30% Motorized	177,713	219,200	256,252	274,778	293,303	311,829
40% Diverse	236,950	292,266	341,669	366,370	391,071	415,772
<b>New York</b>	<b>1,163,136</b>	<b>1,463,360</b>	<b>1,710,717</b>	<b>1,834,395</b>	<b>1,958,073</b>	<b>2,081,751</b>
30% Motorized	324,515	408,278	477,290	511,796	546,302	580,808
40% Diverse	432,686	544,370	636,387	682,395	728,403	774,411

State	FY 2003 \$ TEA-21	FY 2005 \$ SAFETEA-LU	FY 2006 \$	FY 2007 \$	FY 2008 \$	FY 2009 \$
<b>North Dakota</b>	<b>613,740</b>	<b>725,659</b>	<b>848,320</b>	<b>909,650</b>	<b>970,980</b>	<b>1,032,311</b>
30% Motorized	171,233	202,459	236,681	253,792	270,903	288,015
40% Diverse	228,311	269,945	315,575	338,390	361,204	384,020
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>1,164,535</b>	<b>1,392,085</b>	<b>1,627,393</b>	<b>1,745,047</b>	<b>1,862,702</b>	<b>1,980,356</b>
30% Motorized	324,905	388,392	454,043	486,868	519,694	552,519
40% Diverse	433,207	517,856	605,390	649,158	692,925	736,692
<b>Oregon</b>	<b>843,487</b>	<b>1,009,293</b>	<b>1,179,897</b>	<b>1,265,199</b>	<b>1,350,501</b>	<b>1,435,803</b>
30% Motorized	235,333	281,593	329,191	352,991	376,790	400,589
40% Diverse	313,777	375,457	438,922	470,654	502,386	534,119
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>1,167,635</b>	<b>1,436,026</b>	<b>1,678,762</b>	<b>1,800,130</b>	<b>1,921,498</b>	<b>2,042,866</b>
30% Motorized	325,770	400,651	468,375	502,236	536,098	569,960
40% Diverse	434,360	534,202	624,500	669,648	714,797	759,946
<b>South Dakota</b>	<b>621,947</b>	<b>742,538</b>	<b>868,052</b>	<b>930,808</b>	<b>993,565</b>	<b>1,056,322</b>
30% Motorized	173,523	207,168	242,186	259,695	277,205	294,714
40% Diverse	231,364	276,224	322,915	346,260	369,606	392,952
<b>Utah</b>	<b>815,904</b>	<b>1,017,629</b>	<b>1,189,642</b>	<b>1,275,648</b>	<b>1,361,654</b>	<b>1,447,661</b>
30% Motorized	227,637	283,919	331,910	355,906	379,901	403,898
40% Diverse	303,516	378,558	442,547	474,541	506,535	538,530
<b>Vermont</b>	<b>593,505</b>	<b>712,681</b>	<b>833,147</b>	<b>893,380</b>	<b>953,614</b>	<b>1,013,847</b>
30% Motorized	165,588	198,838	232,448	249,188	266,058	282,863
40% Diverse	220,784	265,117	309,931	332,251	354,744	377,151
<b>Washington</b>	<b>1,133,382</b>	<b>1,358,654</b>	<b>1,588,311</b>	<b>1,703,140</b>	<b>1,817,969</b>	<b>1,932,798</b>
30% Motorized	316,214	379,064	443,139	475,176	507,213	539,251
40% Diverse	421,618	505,419	590,852	633,568	676,284	719,001
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>1,122,199</b>	<b>1,297,511</b>	<b>1,516,833</b>	<b>1,626,494</b>	<b>1,736,156</b>	<b>1,845,817</b>
30% Motorized	313,094	362,006	423,197	453,792	484,388	514,983
40% Diverse	417,458	482,674	564,262	605,056	645,850	686,644
<b>Wyoming</b>	<b>780,152</b>	<b>930,372</b>	<b>1,087,636</b>	<b>1,166,268</b>	<b>1,244,900</b>	<b>1,323,532</b>
30% Motorized	217,662	259,574	303,450	325,389	347,327	369,266
40% Diverse	290,216	346,098	404,600	433,852	463,103	492,354
<b>FHWA Admin.</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>840,000</b>	<b>840,000</b>	<b>840,000</b>	<b>840,000</b>	<b>840,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 million</b>	<b>60 million</b>	<b>70 million</b>	<b>75 million</b>	<b>80 million</b>	<b>85 million</b>

NOTE: State Apportionments shown for SAFETEA-LU are from the Congressional Conference Committee Reports and are subject to slight changes upon implementation. The 30% Motorized and 40% Diverse estimates for each state assumes that each state will take the maximum 7% off the top for administrative costs, with the balance of the annual apportionment divided as per the 30-30-40 Rule. Actual amounts may vary.

Since states can set their own guidelines regarding eligible projects, match requirements, minimum and maximum grant amounts, timelines, etc., it is critical that you become familiar with your state's requirements and process. The following is a general discussion of the federal rules that govern this program:

### Program Requirements

States must meet minimum funding requirements (30-30-40 Rule) between motorized, non-motorized and diverse trail use. Grants must be distributed in each state as follows:

- 30% for motorized recreation
- 30% for non-motorized recreation
- 40% for diverse trail use (must have two or more trail uses allowed on the same trail – can be concurrent use in the same season or shared between different use seasons)

States cannot waive the 30% set-aside requirement for motorized use. (new with the 2005 reauthorization)



## **Projects Eligible for RTP Grants**

Several types of projects are eligible for funding by the RTP Grant Program. Categories include:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails. This includes snowmobile trail grooming, brushing and maintenance, culverts and grading, trail signing and bridge replacement. It can also include trail-related maintenance facilities such as groomer sheds.
- New trail construction (must be allowed by federal land use plans if located on federal lands, and a trail located on federal lands that was open to only non-motorized use in 1991 cannot be converted to a motorized trail)
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities. This includes parking areas, signing, toilets, warming shelters, groomer sheds, etc.
- Purchase or lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment (groomers, tractors, etc.)
- Acquisition of easements or property for trails or riding areas (must be from a willing seller, condemnation is prohibited)
- Trail-related safety and environmental education. This can include signs, maps, brochures, avalanche forecasting support or equipment, safety education training, education materials, etc. It can also include non-law enforcement trail patrols or trail host programs. (clarified with the 2005 reauthorization) Law enforcement cannot be funded. A maximum of 5% of a state's total allocation may be spent on education projects. Education projects count toward the 30-30-40 Rule according to what type of trail users they benefit.
- Trail-related training. This can include trail maintenance workshops, groomer training workshops, safety training, etc. (new with 2005 reauthorization)
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and for maintenance needs. (new with 2005 reauthorization)

## **Who Can Sponsor RTP Grant Projects**

The federal guidelines allow essentially anyone to apply for these grant funds. However, some states have set their eligibility rules narrower than the federal rules. For instance, California has placed restrictions on federal agencies applying for these funds. A few states do not allow nonprofit organizations such as snowmobile clubs and state associations to apply for these funds. In such an instance, you would need to find a state or local agency to sponsor your grant application. Sometimes the best "sponsorship" is to get the state agency who administers your snowmobile registration funds to integrate this grant program into how they administer your registration funds.

## **RTP Match Requirements**

The RTP grant program generally requires a 20% local match. However, there are some exceptions to this. The 2005 reauthorization provides a sliding scale for what are referred to as "public lands states." In these primarily western states where there is a large percentage of the state owned by the federal government, the match requirement is less. (Example: 50% of Wyoming is owned by the federal government. Consequently the federal match requirement for a grant project in Wyoming is slightly over 9%, rather than 20%, according to this sliding scale.) Other states require up to a 50% match versus the 20% allowed by the federal guidelines.

Federal guidelines allow either "cash" or "in-kind" match for projects. Cash match can include the value of employees paid with non-project funds to work on the project, in addition to strictly cash contributions to the project. In-kind match includes the value of donated materials, donated equipment (typically at a pre-determined rate), and volunteer labor (also typically at a pre-determined rate). However, not all states allow in-kind match for RTP projects.

Funds from other federal programs can be used as match for RTP grant projects. Likewise, RTP funds can also be used as match for other federal funds. However, 5% of the project match must be by non-federal funds, which requires that a federal agency must have a non-federal partner. States also have the ability to allow a programmatic match. (This means the grant sponsor could theoretically need zero dollars for their project match, as long as the entire state program meets the 80% federal share requirement.)

## **RTP Is Reimbursement Based**

The RTP grant program is reimbursement based. This means that the grant sponsor has to front 100% of the cost of the project and then apply for reimbursement once the project, or stages of the project, have been completed. This can be a stumbling block for some groups if they do not have sufficient cash flow to support the project prior to reimbursement, but it can often be addressed by partnering with other groups or agencies. A few states allow up-front funds for some projects.

Costs for a project must be incurred *after* the project is approved and all necessary paperwork has been signed by the grant sponsor, the administering state agency, and the FHWA state office. This means that you cannot receive funds for something you did last month or last year – the project can only start after the paperwork is done. The one exception to this, new with the 2005 reauthorization, is that project sponsors may now use preplanning costs (for master plans, etc.) incurred up to 18 months prior to project approval as part of their local match.

States typically allow project sponsors up to two years to complete their projects. Some also allow extensions beyond that for one to two additional years if there are extenuating circumstances.

## **Information Needed to Apply for RTP Funds**

While every state's application will vary, all will ask for similar information in varying degrees of detail. Information generally needed to complete a state's RTP grant application includes:

Contact Information: The sponsors/organization's name and address; the name of the contact person to receive correspondence for the project; and a phone number, fax number and e-mail address for the point of contact.

Project Name: This is simply a short, concise description of the project. (Examples: Lost Lake Trail Grooming, Red Rock Gap Shelter Restoration, Snowmobiling Safety Trailer, Statewide Snowmobile Trail Signing, Green Mountain Grooming Equipment, Trail Patrol Program, Big Hill Land Acquisition, etc.)

Location of Project: If it is a site-specific project, provide the exact location including county, city/town (or directions from nearest), and township range/section. Also attach a map of the project area. If it is a project to groom or sign a trail system, attach a trail map of the area. If it is a regional or statewide project, normally a written explanation of what areas of the state will be affected will be sufficient without attaching a map.

Project Schedule/Timetable: They want to know how quickly the project will get completed. Tell them when the project will start and when it will be finished. Typically, the concern is to ensure the project sponsor intends to complete the work within two years.

Type of Project: Some applications ask the sponsor to classify what "type" of a project it is. This simply refers to the various "categories of eligibility" that are outlined above. A project may apply to multiple eligibility categories, so you should check all that are applicable. If the project applies to multiple categories, it may be helpful (some applications require this) to breakdown the project in terms of "dollar amount" for each part/category of the project, as well as a "unit of measure" (miles of trail groomed or constructed, number of facilities built or refurbished, number of maps printed, number of safety education workshops, etc.) for each part/category of the project.

Project Overview/Scope of Work Statement: This important and should be a very specific, detailed description of the project's scope. It should include background information as to the who, what, where, why, when and how of the proposed project. **Who** are the sponsors and partners in the project, and also who will benefit from the project? **Why** is the project important and why it is needed? **What** will the project accomplish, what are its specific parts and contents, and what is the overall "scope" of the project? **Where** will the project be accomplished? **How** will it be accomplished? **When** will it be accomplished?

Sometimes applications will ask a series of questions to ensure these points are addressed individually. If not, be certain that you cover all points with your project overview/scope of work statement.

One key to successful grant writing is to ensure your scope of work targets what the project really hopes to accomplish, yet is broad enough to bring in your existing resources that may be important to being successful. A common example would be a project to purchase new trail grooming equipment: If you write your scope too narrow, you will just be able to purchase the equipment and also need a cash match for the project. If you broaden the scope of the project slightly, so that it includes purchase of the equipment *plus* operating the equipment for one season, you can typically use your operations budget (which you are spending anyway and already have in-hand) toward your cash match obligation for the project.

Types of Uses Allowed: This is typically a checklist of all uses that would benefit from your project. It will be a list that may include: hiking, equestrian, bicycling, cross-country skiing, dog sleds, ATVs, snowmobiles, off-road motorcycles, jeeps, etc. While snowmobile projects generally benefit lots of other trail users, there are two ways to approach this question, depending upon what pot of money you are after. If your target is the motorized category because you believe your odds are the best there, then check only snowmobile (if it is for grooming funds or equipment) or only snowmobile, ATV and motorcycle (if all uses are legal on the trail) if the project would build a trail or facility beneficial for all.

If you're trying to capture diversified category funds, broaden the approach. If it is a project requesting grooming funds or equipment, check snowmobile, cross-country ski, dog sled and hiking/snowshoe uses as applicable for use on the trail. If it is a trail or facility construction project for example, you may be able to check almost all of the uses (if the trail is open to summer motorized use), which will generally help you score more points in the competition for funding from the diversified category.

Ranking Systems: Many states use a Priority Ranking System of one type or another to help make selections as to which projects get funded. It is important to study this if your state uses one since it will provide clues as to which types of projects are most likely to be funded. The system may give points to different types of projects from the eligible categories. For instance, some states give a higher preference to trail maintenance/restoration projects versus trail construction projects or land acquisition projects. Ranking systems may also award higher points for more partnerships, cash match versus in-kind match, more uses allowed, higher cost benefit ratios, etc. The key is to know the rules and adjust the application (scope of work) accordingly.

Does Project Further the Goals of SCORP: The federal guidelines stipulate that RTP projects must further the goals of SCORP (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans). Each state is required to have a SCORP to remain eligible for various federal recreation funding programs. Some state SCORPs are better than others in regard to identifying state priorities for trails or snowmobiling. Your state RTP program coordinator should be able to provide you with SCORP information pertinent to your state. Some states list these goals in their grant guidelines. The bottom line is that all good projects normally further the goals of SCORP, so this should not be a concern.

Project Budget: A good project budget is critically important. It should break down the various parts of your project with a line item description. The description should list exactly what the item is (types of materials, equipment, labor, travel costs, etc., as applicable to the project components), the number of each unit, cost of each unit, and the total cost for that line item (number of units x cost per unit). Each line item should also state whether grant funds (often called Federal Share), local Cash Match, or In-Kind Match (if the item is a donation or volunteer labor) will pay for the item. The costs may be split between all three types of funding sources for the project. Oftentimes, the application will also request that the source of matching funds be identified on the budget sheet, along with estimated start and completion dates for each line item in the budget. It is important that you cover all expected expense items for the project budget. If you don't, items not listed in the budget are likely to be ruled as an "ineligible" project expense if you try to add them at a later date after the project has been approved and started. (Sometimes this can be done, but it requires a "change of scope" approved by the agency.)

Most states have rates for In-Kind match established and published with their guidelines. As an example, a state may state that volunteer labor is worth \$8.00 per hour, donated time for backhoe work is worth \$70 per hour, snowmobile mileage is worth \$0.25 per mile, car and truck mileage is worth \$0.40 per mile, etc.

Environmental Clearances: All RTP projects must be in compliance with all environmental and historic preservation laws. Some states handle this clearance or approval process for a project with a simple one-page checklist – as long as the answers indicate that there will be no new, adverse impacts, the projects typically get a speedy approval to proceed. Other states require a more intensive review which can add months to the approval process. You need to factor this into your proposed project timelines.

Approval from Landowner: RTP projects typically require that there is written approval from the landowner that the project may be constructed on their property. Oftentimes, this may be the official with jurisdiction over a public park, forest or recreation area. If the trail crosses private property owned by someone other than the sponsor, a letter of permission, lease or easement must be on file guaranteeing public access.

### **State Contact Information**

For information on state guidelines, applications, and timelines, contact your state's RTP program administrator. To find out who this person is and their contact information, see [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rtpstate.htm)

# Transportation Enhancements



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

The Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program is also funded by the Federal Highway Administration. It is administered locally by each state's transportation department. While these funds are tougher to obtain and generally are used for bicycle and pedestrian trails, snowmobiles do qualify as an eligible "transportation" use under federal guidelines. TE is typically 10% of a state's "surface transportation" highway funds, so it is a large pot of money (over \$700 million per year nationally).

Federal TE guidelines include twelve eligible categories. Snowmobile projects can sometimes be packaged to benefit from projects within three of these categories: pedestrian and bicycle facilities (in some cases, snowmobiles can legally be operated on bicycle/pedestrian trails built adjacent to roadways within the highway right-of-way); historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (for example, the restoration of a historic bridge that could be used on a snowmobile trail); and rail-trail conversions (if project sponsors agree to motorized use). These projects are often complex and require a large degree of technical assistance. Nonetheless, snowmobilers need to recognize that there may be great long-term opportunities to work with this program in their states.

These funds are typically spent one of two ways by the state department of transportation (DOT) agency:

## **On-System Projects**

"On-System" means the project is typically located within the right-of-way of a state highway, federal highway, or other transportation corridor managed by the DOT in your state. The state DOT has sole control over these projects. On-system TE projects typically occur when a section of highway is being rebuilt. TE project funds can be used to "enhance" features along that section of highway. Examples of projects that could benefit snowmobiles include: adding bicycle/pedestrian walkways to bridges, which could also serve as a winter "snowmobile lane" across the bridge; building a bicycle/pedestrian lane/corridor in the highway right-of-way, away from traffic, that could also serve as an improved location for a winter snowmobile trail; or adding a bicycle/pedestrian/snowmobile overpass or underpass across a busy highway. All projects could potentially be paid for 100% by state and federal transportation funds. These projects usually take many years and lots of coordination with DOT and other user groups to accomplish, but they can be extremely beneficial. So be patient, yet determined.

## **Local Projects**

"Local" projects are not typically located on or adjacent to a highway right-of-way. State DOT departments typically run an annual application period for TE projects, so you need to find out what your state's process and guidelines are. Often, the most pertinent measure as to whether a snowmobile project might qualify is if the project provides a "transportation" element, i.e., does it provide transportation between point A and point B, as well as does it meet requirements of one of the eligible categories outlined above.

## **State Contact Information**

For information on state guidelines, applications, and timelines, contact your state's Transportation Enhancements program administrator. To find out who this person is and their contact information, see [www.enhancements.org](http://www.enhancements.org)