



Safe Ice Roads for Alaska (SIRA) Program Guidebook

For Communities

2025 UPDATE

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ACRONYMS

DOT&PF	Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GPR	Ground Penetrating Radar
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
NTP	Notice to Proceed
SIRA	Safe Ice Roads for Alaska
STBG	Surface Transportation Block Grant

1. OVERVIEW

The Safe Ice Roads for Alaska (SIRA) Program is a competitive access funding program for ice and seasonal roads using Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG)¹ funding. This funding aims to develop and maintain ice/seasonal roads that are significant in providing essential connections between rural communities. These connections promote routine travel for jobs, food, medical services, cultural preservation and development, and community events. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) planning staff will assist communities in preparing projects for submission by identifying needs through public outreach and involvement, evaluating, and scoring eligible projects against the specified criteria, and prioritizing and selecting projects to receive funding.

SIRA is a reimbursement-based program; once awards are determined, DOT&PF planning staff will continue coordinating with the awardees to review and verify documentation showing labor costs, maintenance costs, vehicle/equipment mileage, and ice road inspections. The responsibility remains with the awardee to provide accurate documentation and reporting, and to assist in that, templates are readily available to all awardees.

1.1. Program

DOT&PF administers the SIRA program to fund the routine and preventative maintenance and operations of ice/seasonal roads within Alaskan communities. Tribes, cities, boroughs, and local organized governments can nominate ice/seasonal road projects for funding from DOT&PF under SIRA.

Tribes and communities with experience developing and maintaining ice roads are encouraged to nominate projects for funding.

Applications and nominated projects receive scores using criteria established by an evaluation board.

Current Criteria Guidance is available here: [SIRA Criteria Guidance 2025](#)

¹ www.fhwa.dot.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/stbg.cfm

1.2. Funding

As SIRA funding originates from Federal STBG funding, the ability to provide this program is subject to change and will receive evaluation every award cycle. The fluidity of this funding means that only some award cycles will have the same overall award or the same maximum award amount. Award cycles align with ice/seasonal road maintenance and operation seasons; for example, the 2025 award cycle will provide funding for the 2025-2026 ice/seasonal road season.

It is important to note that this is an award for funding through **reimbursement, not a lump sum payment** to complete the project.

Awardees must complete and document the maintenance and operations of the ice/seasonal road and provide all required documentation to DOT&PF to receive adequate reimbursement for all eligible maintenance and operation activities related to the SIRA program.

All projects require a 9.03% local match. Meeting this match can be done by in-kind provisions (time and maintenance work on the ice road) or a cash match. Tribal transportation and/or Denali Commission dollars, if applicable, are eligible to provide the non-federal match. If using an in-kind match, the match must be approved by the Federal Highway Administration prior to authorizing your start date.

1.3. Eligibilities

ACTIVITY CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
Equipment	Documented equipment rates in your community's MOA.	Undocumented equipment usage or usage before receiving NTP. Equipment billed at a rate not using the pre-determined 'Equipment Rate'
Required Non-Federal Match	Required local match at 9.03% is CASH or IN-KIND.	Must equal at least 9.03% of the total project cost.
Planning (Current Season)	Route planning and selection. Selecting operations level. Determining signage and/or equipment requirements.	Planning activities focused on future ice/seasonal road. Undocumented planning activities or activities done before receiving NTP.
Surveying	Manual surveying. Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) surveying.	Undocumented surveying or surveying completed before receiving NTP. Surveying that is considered as ground-disturbing or touches the water column.
Route Selection	Route selection. Identifying access points.	Route selection for future ice road seasons. Undocumented route selection activities or activities done before receiving NTP.
Ice/Seasonal Road Establishment	Preparing travel lanes. Snow clearing. Ice strengthening This may also include surveying and using material to smooth uneven parts of the ice road, such as using donated rail decking.	Undocumented ice/seasonal road establishment efforts or efforts done before receiving NTP. Any activities that require permits are not reimbursable; all permits are the responsibility of the entities. Any activities that are considered ground-disturbing or touch the water column.
Signage	Placing construction signs. Entry signs. Regulatory signs. Advisory signs.	Undocumented signage efforts or efforts done before receiving NTP. Signage planning or efforts for any future ice road seasons. Placement of permanent trail markers on land .
Monitoring	Visual inspection. Surveying.	Undocumented inspections or surveying or activities done before receiving NTP. Inspections that are considered ground-disturbing or touch the water column.
Preventative Maintenance	Repairing cracks. Traffic control. Updating signage Snow clearing. Ice strengthening. Surveying.	Any preventative maintenance completed before receiving NTP. Undocumented preventative maintenance.
Snow Fencing	Construction of temporary snow fencing to prevent snow drifts.	Construction of a temporary snow fence that is ground-disturbing. Undocumented construction or construction before receiving NTP.
Administration	Controlling loads and speeds. Safety training, including training new staff on this season's ice roads.	Undocumented costs. Overhead costs. Costs before NTP. Office administration costs such as payroll.
Shutdown	Activities related to closing the ice road to public use.	Undocumented shutdown activities. Costs incurred after April 30 of the award season.
Access Improvement	Improvements to access the ice road within 300' of the waterway embankment are eligible.	Undocumented improvements or improvements before receiving NTP. Outside of 300' of the waterway embankment.

1.4. Use of Contractors

Applicants that intend to use contractors for services such as equipment rentals, trail marking, ice/seasonal road maintenance, or any other eligible SIRA program categories/activities must follow the procurement guidelines² established by the state of Alaska, and it must be included in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that they intend to perform these entities.

These guidelines can be found and reviewed in the [Alaska Administrative Manual \(AAM\) 81 Procurement](#).

2. PROGRAM PROCESS

2.1. Application & Award Process

2.1.1. Applications

A call for applications or project nominations will take place each season this year they will be on this site: [State Programs | Transportation Funding Opportunity Hub](#). An announcement will be made on the DOT&PF website as well as notification through other resources. ([Winter Rural Access Programs \(WRAP\)](#))

Communities/entities may be required to complete an application for each SIRA award cycle.

The application will prompt communities to provide project-related information, including some of the following:

- Ice/seasonal road information
 - The intended length of ice/seasonal road in miles.
 - Start and end points of intended ice road; GPS points are preferred.
- Identification of all intended project activity categories.
 - Assigning federal request and local match amount per each identified project activity category.
- Total costs and request
 - Total estimated federal request (the sum of each amount requested of each identified activity)
 - Total estimated local match (the sum of the local match identified for each identified activity)
 - Total estimated project cost (the sum of the estimated federal request and the total estimated local match)

²<https://doa.alaska.gov/dof/manuals/aam/resource/81.pdf>

- Safety
 - Identify the expected range of ice thickness in inches and the gross vehicle weight that will be driven on the ice road.
 - Provide list of intended safety activities and describe how those activities will be carried out.

Proposed benefits based on the following categories.

- Economic
 - Seasonal employment access.
 - Movement of goods and services.
 - Subsistence living support.
 - Support community connections.
- Air services
 - Ice road would allow the community to gain air service for essential purposes (medical care or vital goods) or improve access for standard/everyday purposes (connecting families/communities, procuring servicing, and accessing resources).
- Health & quality of life
 - Provide increased recreation and/or social, cultural, physical (sociocultural) opportunities.
 - Provide access to emergency services.
 - Enhances the overall well-being.
 - It could reduce the cost of living.

All information in the application is used to assist in the project evaluation scoring. **If you need additional space to answer the questions, please prepare a separate document and upload it with your application.**

Applications are limited to one funding request per community or tribe. DOT&PF will not fund more than one application for the same ice/seasonal road segment. Applicants should coordinate with neighbouring communities or tribes to ensure that ice/seasonal road segments do not overlap with another applicant's segment.

2.1.2. Criteria for Scoring Projects

The criteria evaluation process allows the Department to select projects considering safety for preserving life and other factors contributing to a community's health and quality of life. The Project Evaluation Board will evaluate and score each project against the following criteria:

- Safety – Inspections and Activities
- Economic Benefits
- Health and Quality of Life
- Access to Air Service
- Contributing Factors

2.1.3. Scoring & Awards

Scoring will be done to determine communities/entities that receive awards, and the amount awarded. Scoring is determined using information from the application and how closely they are related to the intended purpose of SIRA funding. Once scoring is complete, *applicants will schedule a two (2) hour pre-award conference* with DOT&PF Planning SIRA Team members.

This pre-award conference will focus on:

- Reviewing and discussing application information provided to verify award eligibilities, maps/ice road location, and determining final budgets and requests for funding.
- Discussing documentation requirements.
- Discuss equipment rate reimbursement and if any additional information is needed to determine the equipment rates.
- Match requirements, in-kind vs cash match.
- Review of a Plans, Specifications and Estimate document specific to the community's project.
- Reporting requirements.
- The paperwork process.
- Answering and discussing any remaining questions or concerns before awards are distributed.

Applicants will receive a link via email, with instructions to set up a pre-award conference.

Following the pre-award conferences, awards will be finalized and sent to the contact person listed on the application.

The award letter will contain information regarding the total amount awarded, the required match, the total project cost, and the post-award process.

2.2. Post Award Process

Before documenting ice road maintenance and operations, the awarded community/entity must receive a Notice to Proceed (NTP) from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). DOT&PF staff will work closely with awardees to produce a project start packet to send to FHWA for approval and a request for NTP to proceed with billable work. The packet will contain the following:

- ☐ Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)
- ☐ Waiver of Sovereign Immunity, if applicable
- ☐ Plans, Specifications, and Estimate (PS&E)
- ☐ Equipment Reimbursement Rate
- ☐ Map of Ice Road

2.2.1. Memorandums of Agreement

Applicants must fill out and sign an MOA with Alaska DOT&PF. The Memorandum outlines the roles, responsibilities, project management, scope, reimbursement information, schedule, and termination procedures between the parties. DOT&PF shall provide a template upon the award of funds.

2.2.2. Waivers of Sovereign Immunity

A limited waiver of sovereign immunity is required for a native village or tribe when receiving federal funding. This waiver is limited to activities arising from or in connection with the relevant ice/seasonal road maintenance and operations project work.

2.2.3. Reimbursement Rate for Equipment

The SIRA program does not directly cover routine maintenance, equipment storage or evening fuel costs. Instead, an equipment rate per hour (and daily rate) is developed for each vehicle that is inclusive of all these costs. The Department using State Equipment Fleet rates, EquipmentWatch (a federally recognized program), and an Equipment Rate Calculator to come to a mutually agreeable hourly and daily rate with each awardee. Rates consider the remote location and fuel costs of each community.

2.2.4. Map

Each community/entity awarded SIRA funding must provide a map of the intended ice/seasonal road work for the season. This map must be collected before the project packet is submitted to FHWA.

2.3. Notice to Proceed with Project Work

Communities that receive awards during the cycle will receive a Notice to Proceed (NTP) indicating that the community may now document their ice/seasonal road maintenance and operation activities for reimbursement. It is in the best practice for communities to begin to submit their documents for reimbursement to DOT&PF bi-weekly or at least monthly.

The season will require a cohesive program process and community coordination. The ice road season is short, labor-intensive, and critical to your community's infrastructure. Regular check-ins with DOT&PF and your community will be key for keeping up on invoices and eligibility.

2.3.1. Ice Road Design & Construction

The University of Alaska Fairbanks’s Institute of Northern Engineering has developed a Design & Operations Ice Roads Manual.³ DOT&PF encourages all ice road operations and maintenance staff to review the document before ice road work.

Design & Operations Ice Roads Manual Abstract: *This manual provides for the safe and efficient design, construction, maintenance, and operation of ice roads over freshwater. As such, it provides the parties responsible for the ice road guidelines for ensuring the safe operation of the ice road, including route selection, minimum ice thicknesses, repair strategies, maximum vehicle weights and speed, and proper signage. The information provided in the manual represents best practices compiled from existing literature and from those who have experience working on ice roads. While every scenario cannot be foreseen, the information in this manual should provide sufficient knowledge to extrapolate safe solutions that are not explicitly covered here.*

2.3.2. Reimbursement Process

Step One:

DOT&PF receives NTP for the awarded community from FHWA. DOT&PF will communicate this with the community contact person identified in the program application.

Step Two:

The community may begin documenting eligible maintenance and operations on their ice/seasonal roads as of the NTP date. DOT&PF has provided templates, but communities may also use any local form of documentation.

Documentation to include:

Timesheets	Proof of payment
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³ aidc.uaf.edu/media/1580/ice-road-manual_final.pdf

Work Logs	SIRA Reimbursement Workbook
Invoice	Photos

Step Three:

Communities/Entities will complete the SIRA reimbursement form.

Each entry should reflect the daily entry from the timesheet for hourly work completed by personnel. This will include the personnel's name, date worked, eligible activity category completed, eligible activity complete, hourly wage, and hours worked; columns are available to provide additional information via comments. The SIRA reimbursement form is formatted to calculate the total labor cost per entry automatically.

Each entry should reflect the daily entry from the work log for operating costs. This will include the piece of equipment operated, the operator, date operated, eligible activity category, eligible activity, starting odometer reading, and ending odometer reading. Total hours will be calculated based on the hours readings entered, and the total operations cost will be determined automatically.

The summary tab of the SIRA reimbursement form is an automatic calculation of the personnel costs and operating costs. The community/entity will not need to adjust the numbers on the summary sheet.

Hours should be broken out by personnel or equipment then summarized on the final tab for an invoice total.

Step Four:

Documents required to calculate reimbursement should be sent to the DOT&PF Project Manager and processing team. Please send the reimbursement request sheet and backup documentation to the following:

- **Rebecca Garrett**, Program Manager: rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov
- **Safe Ice Roads for Alaska** dot.iceroads@alaska.gov
- **Kendal Ramage**, Processing Team: kramage@dowl.com

Step Five:

The Reimbursement Request Form and backup documentation are reviewed. If there are any questions, the processing team will contact the community/entity.

Upon approval, the invoice and back-up are sent to Finance for payment. The Community is notified that the invoice has been submitted.

Step Six:

A check will be issued in approximately two to three weeks. Electronic payments are typically quicker. To confirm that you are set up to receive electronic payments, contact vendor self-service at doa.dof.vendor.helpdesk@alaska.gov or (907) 465-5555. **Include your vendor number on your invoice so that the correct vendor number is paid.**

2.4. Program Wrap Up

Upon depletion of funds or the termination date on June 30, 2026, the projects will be closed with FHWA. The DOT&PF processing team will compile any necessary closeout documents and coordinate with the community/entity on any additional documentation needed.

2.5. Frequently Asked Questions

EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE

What is my equipment rate and how is it calculated?

The equipment rate per hour/day is the rate at which equipment can be billed. The Department determines the rate for your equipment based on several factors using several tools. EquipmentWatch is a federally recognized program that has regional differentials built in across the state. There is the State Equipment Fleet rates and an Equipment Rate Calculator for pieces of equipment that don't appear in either system. These rates are inclusive of maintenance, lubricants, fuel, depreciation, storage, all costs of the equipment are rolled into the hourly and daily rate.

What kind of documentation is needed for the reimbursement?

Entities must submit photos of work being performed, work logs, timecards, and proof of payment to employees.

A lot of time goes into the preparation and maintenance of our equipment. Are those hours eligible for SIRA reimbursement?

Work that is not directly related to improving the safety and accessibility of the ice road or did not happen in the ice road right of way is not reimbursable. Hours spent performing routine or emergency equipment maintenance are not eligible for SIRA reimbursement. However, the cost to maintain and support the equipment is calculated into the equipment rate.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities eligible for reimbursement with the SIRA Program are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between your community and the Alaska DOT&PF, Section D.

ACTIVITY CATEGORY	ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES
Equipment	Documented equipment rates in your community's MOA.	Undocumented equipment usage or usage before receiving NTP. Equipment billed at a rate not using the pre-determined 'Equipment Rate'
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Monitoring	Visual inspection. Surveying.	Undocumented inspections or surveying or activities done before receiving NTP. Inspections that are considered ground-disturbing or touch the water column.
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Snow Fencing	Construction of temporary snow fencing to prevent snow drifts.	Construction of a temporary snow fence that is ground-disturbing. Undocumented construction or construction before receiving NTP.
Administration	Controlling loads and speeds. Safety training, including training new staff on this season's ice roads.	Undocumented costs. Overhead costs. Indirect costs. Costs before NTP. Office administration costs such as payroll.
Shutdown	Activities related to closing the ice road to public use.	Undocumented shutdown activities. Costs incurred after April 30 of the award season.

Access Improvement	Improvements to access the ice road within 300' of the waterway embankments are eligible.	Undocumented improvements or improvements before receiving NTP.
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REIMBURSEMENTS

What is the timeline for the reimbursement process?

You can submit reimbursement requests immediately and as frequently as possible after the NTP date. We will update you along the way by email as we process your request. Don't hesitate to get in touch with us with any questions or concerns at any time.

Where should invoices be submitted?

You are welcome to submit an invoice for reimbursements and supporting documentation weekly or bi-weekly for activities through April 30, 2025. When including photos, please include the community/entity name, photo location, and photographer name.

What documentation should be included?

Please include any documentation that supports your reimbursement request. Examples of documentation might include:

- Timesheets
- Proof of payment
- Inspection logs
- Meeting agendas
- Road work logs
- Daily logs
- Photos

Please submit invoices to the following:

- **Rebecca Garrett**, Program Manager: rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov
- **Safe Ice Roads for Alaska** dot.iceroads@alaska.gov
- **Kendal Ramage**, Processing Team: kramage@dowl.com

Note: If you need to adjust your MOA in any way, including time extensions, don't hesitate to get in touch with your Program Manager Rebecca Garrett at rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov.

Best practices for documenting mileage for work done?

It is best to provide whole numbers that can be supported by documentation.

What are the important deadlines for the season's SIRA Program?

DATE	ACTIVITY
April 30, 2026	Program Termination Date. All eligible expenses must be incurred by this date.
May 30, 2026	All reimbursement requests must be submitted to DOT&PF to qualify for this year's SIRA Program reimbursement.

EXTENSIONS

My community could not use any or all our awarded funds this season; how can we ensure those funds can be used next season?

Extensions can be requested by contacting the Program Manager, Rebecca Garrett, at rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov.

If granted an extension, how is my new program termination date determined?

The new termination date becomes the termination date of the upcoming award cycle.

With an extension, is my community eligible to receive any additional awards in funding?

Additional funds can be requested by contacting the Program Manager, Rebecca Garrett, at rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov.

WHAT TO EXPECT/HOW TO PREPARE

What additional paperwork is needed from my community for the upcoming season?

Below is a checklist of the documents you will have received and indicates the need for them to be signed and returned or filled out and submitted. Additional documents are provided as worksheets to assist in documenting the maintenance of the ice road in your community.

DOCUMENT CHECKLIST
<input type="checkbox"/> Signed and Returned Memorandum of Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/> Signed and Returned Limited Waiver of Sovereign Immunity (if applicable)
<input type="checkbox"/> Filled out and Equipment Rate Worksheet (must be updated annually)
<input type="checkbox"/> Received Timecard Worksheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Received Equipment Worklog Worksheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Received SIRA Reimbursement 2025
<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed Plans Specifications and Engineering (prepared by Program Manager)

<input type="checkbox"/> Received Eligible Activity Flowchart
<input type="checkbox"/> Received FAQ From Communities

2.6. Template Documents

Reporting documents can be found on our website at Safe Ice Roads for Alaska. These documents are designed to assist the community/entity and those performing any maintenance or operations on the ice road with documenting hours and inspections. DOT&PF will use these documents to calculate the reimbursement owed for the period provided. It is best practice to send timesheets, work logs, and inspection documents to DOT&PF weekly or bi-weekly to ensure timely reimbursements and accurate tracking of the award balance.

- **Rebecca Garrett**, Program Manager: rebecca.garrett@alaska.gov
- **Safe Ice Roads for Alaska** dot.iceroads@alaska.gov
- **Kendal Ramage**, Processing Team: kramage@dowl.com

UPRIVER MILEAGES

KWETHLUK	18
AKIACHAK	24
AKIAK	35
TULUKSUK	53
LOWER KALSKAG	98
KALSKAG	101
ANIAK	132



State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
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