



Alaska Land Mobile Radio Communications System

Grant Guide

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Acronyms and Definitions

Alaska Federal Executive Association (AFEA): federal government entities, agencies, and organizations, other than the Department of Defense, that operates on the shared ALMR system infrastructure.

Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communications System: the ALMR Communications System, as established in the Cooperative and Mutual Aid Agreement.

Alaska Municipal League: a voluntary non-profit organization in Alaska that represents 165 cities, boroughs, and unified municipalities.

Alaska Public Safety Communication Services (APSCS): a State of Alaska (SOA) office in the Department of Public Safety (DPS) that operates and maintains the SOA Telecommunications System (SATS) supporting ALMR and providing public safety communication services and support to state agencies.

Department of Defense (DoD) – Alaska: Alaskan Command, US Air Force, and US Army component services operating under United States Pacific Command and United States Northern Command.

Department of Public Safety (DPS): a State of Alaska (SOA) department where the SOA Telecommunications System (SATS) and ALMR programs reside.

Executive Council: governing body made up of three voting members and two associate members representing the original four constituency groups: the State of Alaska, the Department of Defense, Federal Non-DoD agencies (represented by the Alaska Federal Executive Association), and local municipal/government (represented by the Alaska Municipal League and the Municipality of Anchorage).

Local Governments: those Alaska political subdivisions defined as municipalities in AS 29.71.800(14).

Member: a public safety agency including, but not limited to, a general government agency (local, state, tribal, or federal), its authorized employees and personnel (paid or volunteer), and its service provider, participating in and using the system under a membership agreement.

Municipality of Anchorage (MOA): the MOA covers 1,951 square miles with a population of over 300,000. The MOA stretches from Portage, at the southern border, to the Knik River at the northern border, and encompasses the communities of Girdwood, Indian, Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak/Birchwood, and the native village of Eklutna.



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Operations Management Office (OMO): develops recommendations for policies, procedures, and guidelines; identifies technologies and standards; and coordinates intergovernmental resources to facilitate communications interoperability with emphasis on improving public safety and emergency response communications.

P25 Radio: a Project 25 compliant control station, console, mobile, or portable radio assigned to the system that has a unique identification number.

SAFECOM: a communications program of the Department of Homeland Security. SAFECOM provides research, development, testing and evaluation, guidance, tools, and templates on interoperable communications-related issues to local, tribal, state, and federal emergency response agencies.

State of Alaska (SOA): the primary maintainer of the State's infrastructure system, and shared owner of the system. The State of Alaska sponsors local/municipal agencies onto the system.

State of Alaska Telecommunications Systems (SATS): the State of Alaska statewide telecommunications system microwave network.

System Management Office (SMO): the team of specialists responsible for management of maintenance and operations of the system.

User Council (UC): governing body responsible for recommending all operational and maintenance decisions affecting the system. Under the direction and supervision of the Executive Council, the User Council has the responsibility for management, oversight, and operation of the system. The User Council oversees the development of system operations plans, procedures, and policies.

User: an agency, person, group, organization, or other entity which has an existing written membership agreement to operate on ALMR with one of the parties to the Cooperative and Mutual Aid Agreement. The terms user and member are synonymous and interchangeable. All terms and conditions of the Cooperative and Mutual Aid agreement defined apply to local/municipal government agencies that are sponsored/represented by the State of Alaska.



1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the grant process and the resources available to assist user agencies operating on the Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communication System in obtaining grant funds.

1.1 Overview

ALMR was originally established under the SAFECOM program. SAFECOM is a federally funded program, which provides guidance on the recommended criteria that agencies should use when applying for federal grants or state/local level Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) for programs/systems. The mission of SAFECOM is to serve as the umbrella program within the federal government to help local, tribal, state, and federal public safety agencies improve their response to calls for assistance through more effective and efficient interoperable wireless communications.

SAFECOM defines interoperability as, *“the ability of public safety agencies to talk across disciplines and jurisdictions using radio communication systems, exchanging either voice or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.”*

Alaska’s geographic uniqueness poses obstacles other states and regions do not face. Inadequate and, at times, unreliable wireless communications have been problematic for many Alaska public safety organizations in the past. Some of the issues are:

- Limited and fragmented radio spectrum authorizations,
- Aging and incompatible communications equipment,
- Varying budget cycles and available funding within different levels of government,
- No reliable available funding source,
- Lack of inter- and intra-agency planning and coordination from those agencies that are developing communication systems.

Prior to ALMR, many of Alaska’s wireless communication systems that supported emergency response personnel had been funded and implemented to meet only the specific needs of each agency. While that approach supported the agency’s primary communication needs and functions, not having the ability to communicate with other agencies that responded to the same incident slowed down response, created confusion, and limited the ability to coordinate actions to meet the common goals of protecting the public and saving lives.

Without utilization of grant funding to acquire ALMR-compatible equipment, some agencies would not have otherwise been able to make such purchases. This equipment has substantially improved the coordination between responding agencies and ultimately improved the protection of lives and property.

2.0 Grant Seeking

2.1 Grant cycle

Actual dates for submission of proposals vary depending on the grant source. Always consult the funding source web site, or the administering organization, to obtain their funding schedule.

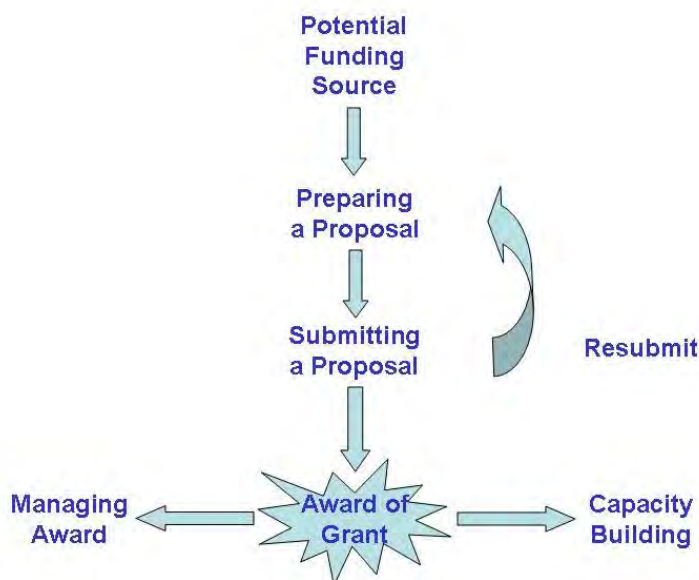


Figure 2-1. Typical Grant Cycle

2.2 Grant process

Grants are a key source of support for many agencies, particularly new organizations, or those starting new programs. Most grants have a specific timeframe for applications to be submitted, reviewed, approved, and then funded. Agencies seeking grants should set out a plan and timeline to ensure they meet established deadlines.

Steps to consider when beginning your grant process:

- Develop the proposal idea,
- Identify potential funding source(s),
- Develop a relationship with the funder (many funding agencies will provide notice if they fund projects similar to what you are seeking if you call or email them),
- Writing a compelling needs statement,
- Define clear goals/objectives,
- Develop the method you plan to use (this is not always applicable, especially when seeking equipment purchases),



- Prepare the evaluation component (how will you judge the success of your proposal).
- Develop sustainability strategies (look at long-term requirements such as maintenance and lifecycle replacements; how long will this solution be viable for your organization).
- Prepare the budget (provide details on exactly how the money will be spent). Some grants restrict activities and equipment to specific approved lists, verify that all budget activities are eligible.
- Provide your organization's background (this is your mission statement).
- Write the proposal.
- Assemble the package.

Your proposal represents your organization to the funder. You want to convey your need(s), but you also want to appear confident and competent.

- Write with effective style using correct grammar.
- Be clear, concise, and accurate.
- Substantiate all claims.
- Eliminate typos, incomplete sentences, and inconsistent fonts.
- Minimize organizational and excessively technical language.
- Do not make excuses or be defensive.

Lastly, have a disinterested party read your proposal. They will probably catch errors and omissions you may have overlooked. The bottom line is if they do not 'get it,' neither will the funder.

2.3 Funding

Funding can come from a variety of sources, both public and private. Agencies must do their homework to find sources which match their needs.

When applying for assistance with federal grant agencies, as well as for general funds through the local or state governments, it is important to fully understand and comply with the mandatory administrative instructions and/or requirements of that particular granting agency. It is also critical to submit your application prior to the established deadline set within the grant application instructions and submit accurate administrative data (i.e., addresses, points of contact, phone numbers). Administrative requirements may include registration in various systems such as Dun & Bradstreet and the System for Award Management (SAM), which may require manual verification and should be factored into your application timeline. In some cases, failure to meet any of the mandatory application instructions will result in your request being returned as non-responsive.



NOTE: In Alaska, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, under the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, is the administrative agency for receipt of all federal grants.

2.3.1 Sources

Examples of funding sources are:

- Businesses and corporations
- Foundations
- Gaming
- Government
- Individuals
- Planned gifts
- Unions and professional organizations
- Special events
- Endowments

2.3.1.1 Foundational grants

Many grant-making foundations exist specifically to assist non-profit agencies. A grant making foundation is a registered charitable foundation that makes grants to charities/organizations recognized by the federal government as 'qualified recipients.'

Foundations must disperse three and a half percent of their annual investment assets and 80 percent of their receipted donations for the previous years, except bequests and gifts with a ten-year hold placed on them. While this is one possible source for funding, agencies should not solely rely on specific foundations to fund them repeatedly.

2.3.1.2 Federal grants

Federal grants fall into two categories: 1) formula grants which reimburse agencies for services already performed and often are restricted to other government entities; and 2) project grants which are much more competitive and receive thousands of applications from across the country.

Federal grants are defined and governed by the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, as incorporated in Title 31 Section 6304 of the U.S. Code.

A federal grant is a "...legal instrument reflecting the relationship between the United States Government and a State, a local government or other recipient when 1) the principal purpose of the relationship is to transfer a thing of value to the State or local government or other recipient to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by a law of the United States instead of acquiring (by purchase, lease or barter) property or services for the direct benefit or use of the United States



Government; and 2) substantial involvement is not expected between the executive agency and the State, local government, or other recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement."

If you plan to apply for a federal grant, you should set out specific strategies to:

- Learn about the range of funding opportunities within government agencies.
- Develop projects that fit your organizational mission.
- Identify appropriate government funders for your project.
- Develop relationships with government officials/legislators.
- Get proposal guidelines and read them.
- Contact the funder for more information about the requirements.
- Organize and complete the proposal.

All federal grants are listed at www.grants.gov.

2.3.2 Criteria

- Competitive impact – will this have an adverse impact on an existing business. (Government departments are very concerned about bad publicity and they are ultimately responsible to an elected official. Therefore, each application is examined for its potential for impacting an existing business.)
- Net economic impact – will your proposal create new jobs and wealth in the local labor market. (You must demonstrate how your proposal will benefit the local economy by its uniqueness in products/services or due to sufficient demand for products/services the market warrants additional entrants in the marketplace.)
- Economic viability – sales and associated costs must be realistic, sustainable sales volumes and financial background of applicant.
- Sustainable employment – demonstrate ability to maintain revenue to sustain projected employment levels.

NOTE: In the instance of public safety/non-profit agencies, economic viability may be related to community benefits versus business profits. Always contact the funding entity for clarification.

2.3.3 Multiple funders

If your project can be divided into phases/categories, you may be able to secure separate funders for each phase/category (program, capital, etc.).

Types of funding support could include:

- Annual campaigns
- Building renovation
- General/operating support
- Internship funds



- Capital campaigns
- Conferences/seminars
- Consulting services
- Continuing support
- Curriculum development
- Emergency funds
- Employee matching gifts
- Equipment
- Endowments
- Exchange programs
- Fellowships
- Land acquisition
- Matching/challenge support
- Project grants
- Program grants
- Program-related investment/loans
- Publication
- Research
- Scholarship funds
- Seed money
- Technical assistance

2.3.4 Categories

Usually, an organization would seek support in one or more of the following categories:

- Operating support – funds used to cover the cost of running an organization.
- Projects – monies that are restricted by a funder for starting a new program or expanding an existing program.
- Capacity building – funds to enable non-profits to increase administrative and program capacity.
- Endowments – funds that are held as a long-term investment for the organization and the income is used each year for operating needs.

2.4 Proposal Process

The key to a successful proposal is developing a clear program plan, researching funders thoroughly, building relationships with funders, targeting your proposal carefully, and writing a concise proposal.

Funders may receive hundreds of requests. You are responsible for reading the criteria and completing all the requirements. Some questions have multiple parts; ensure you answer all parts of every question.

Most foundations and government funders are relatively clear about what they wish to fund. This information is easily attainable via the web. Gather basic information from the web site, then call or email the contact and ask for any information not available (annual report/list of recent funded grants, grant guidelines including what they don't fund, an application form if applicable and deadlines for receiving proposals or meeting dates).

2.4.1 Letter of Intent/Proposal



Many funders request that you send them a letter of intent before they consider a proposal. If you are asked to send a letter of intent, it should include the following information:

- Your organization's mission and related programs.
- The need your organization strives to meet (this is your justification).
- The outcome expected from your organization's project.
- General details of how your organization will conduct the project.
- The fit that you see between the funder and your organization.

2.4.2 Proposal Components

The major components of a proposal are:

2.4.2.1 Cover letter

2.4.2.2 Summary. The summary should be a big picture view of who you are, where you are located, what amount you are seeking, what it will be used for, who it will serve and how it will benefit your area. A sample summary statement is provided at Attachment 1.

The summary at Attachment 2 provides specific language for applying for TDMA-compliant replacement technology.

2.4.2.3 Needs statement. A needs statement describes a critical condition, set of conditions or a social need affecting certain people or things in a specific place or at a specific time. This component answers the question of what need is to be addressed and is the heart of your case for support that motivates funders.

There are several major points to keep in mind when developing your needs statement:

- The need to be addressed should have a clear relationship to your organizational mission and purpose.
- Focus on the needs of those individuals the organization serves, not the organization.
- Support the assertions with evidence (statistical facts, surrounding terrain, closest full-time support agency, is your agency the sole provider of this service in this area and so on).
- The need should be consistent with your organization's ability to respond to the need.
- The need statement should be easy to read; eliminate jargon.

2.4.2.4 Goals and objectives. A goal is a broad-based statement of the ultimate result of the change being undertaken and may not be reachable in the short term. An



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objective is more narrowly defined; it is a measurable, time-specific result that an organization expects to accomplish as part of the grant.

When developing your goals and objectives statement, you want to provide clear and accurate information. Consider the following:

- What is/are the key area(s) you are seeking to change?
- What segment of the population will be involved? (i.e., receive a benefit)
- What is the direction of change?
- What is the degree/amount of change?
- What is the deadline for reaching that degree of change?

These considerations should propose how meeting the need will help your agency reduce, increase, decrease or expand areas surrounding the need. Ensure you include all relevant parties in the target population.

Examples of agencies that may apply to your jurisdiction:

Police	Fire	Emergency Medical
Volunteer Fire	Health Services	Emergency Ops Center
Schools	Facilities Mgt.	Fleet Maintenance
Building Safety	Libraries	Public Works
Port	Info Systems	Electric Utility
Water Utility	Risk Manager	Solid Waste Services
Traffic/Signals	Animal Control	Streets Maintenance
Mayor	Sports Facilities	City/Borough Manager
Safety Officer	Cultural Services	Communications Shop
Public Transportation	Hospitals	Airports
Red Cross	Salvation Army	Search Teams
Natural Gas Company	Oil Companies	Commercial Utilities
Commercial Ambulance	University Police	Commercial Telecom Providers

Allow plenty of time for the objectives to be accomplished and determine how you will measure the success of the change (e.g., reduced response times, expanded coverage areas, etc.).

2.4.2.5 Evaluation. Depending on the project, you may have to show a level of success through verified data collection.

When evaluating your project, you want to look at several criteria.

- Did the proposal do what was expected?
- Were objectives met?
- Was an impact made to the need identified?
- Feedback from target groups or others
- Was control maintained over the project?



- Were adjustments required to increase project success?

Several methods for determining the success of your projects are tests, participation, performance, financial reports, data collection (surveys, questionnaires, checklists) and subjective (clippings, journals, testimonies).

Data collection can be either quantitative (units that can be counted) or qualitative (direct contact with people involved in the program).

2.4.2.6 Sustainability. Sustainability is a collaboration of focus (your strategic plan), human resources, and funding.

If your project is long term, or is being developed in phases, you must learn ways to find future funding to sustain your project after the initial funding is finished. Small grants can be requested for a specific piece of a larger project, but you still must locate the funding sources for the remaining components.

There are many resources available to your organization to keep its programs running. Some sources for sustainable funding are:

- Continuation grants
- Annual campaigns
- Fees for services
- Sales of items/activities

Do not rely solely on grants for long-term endeavors. Develop partnerships with others in your field, develop sources of income (unrestricted cash) such as earned income (teaching classes, selling products specific to your organization, member dues) and charitable donations.

Depending on your organization and project, sustainability may not fit the scope of your request/need.

2.4.2.7 Organization background. This paragraph should include a brief history of your jurisdiction or organization. Basically, this is your history and mission statement combined.

2.4.2.8 Budget. Key to any proposal is the budget for the project. It is the plan you have devised, expressed in the language of dollars, and it is your best guess of the expenses you anticipate you will incur.

Depending on the funding source, you may be asked either for a very detailed budget or for a general outline of income and expenses. Usually, government funding sources require considerable detail and provide budget forms; foundations and corporations typically require less detail.



A budget may include:

- Project or program budget
- Agency budget
- Detailed or justified budget
- In-kind contributions

2.4.2.8.1 Budgeting Process

To develop the budget component of a proposal for a specific project, you should:

- Establish the budget period - the length of time the budget covers.
- Estimate expenses; obtain cost estimates as necessary.
- Decide whether or how to include overhead costs, if applicable.
- Estimate the donated goods and services that will be used, if applicable.
- Estimate anticipated revenues for the project, if applicable.
- Check to ensure the budget makes sense and conveys the right message to the funder.

2.4.2.8.2 Basic components and parameters

Areas to consider:

- Duration.
- How much are you asking the funder to support?
- Level of resource commitment from your organization.
- Number, identity, and level of commitment of collaborating organizations.
- Keep it simple.
- Detail commitments of partners.
- Be specific.
- Create reasonable forecasts.
- Anticipate change.
- Be consistent.

3.0 Available Resources

Information for applicants to use when drafting grant applications and for seeking additional funding sources can be obtained on the web. A listing put together by SAFECOM in cooperation with agencies that provide grant funding, as well as other additional resources, as they become available, are posted to the ALMR web site (<https://alaskalandmobileradio.org/membership/grant-information/>).



4.0 Follow-up Actions

An agency's responsibilities do not always end once they receive a grant. Many funders require periodic reports on the progress of the project. Depending on the scope of your project, you may only have one report. Whether you do one report, or several, be timely and responsive. Note that failure to meet these reporting requirements may disqualify you from future grants from that agency.

Lastly, always remember to thank your funding agency. You want to establish a relationship for the long term.

5.0 Conclusion

The UC shall be responsible for the formal approval of the Grant Guide, and any substantial revisions hereafter.



Attachment 1 Sample Summary Statement

The (City of, Borough, State Agency), Alaska is located in the (general area of the state) and is seeking \$ (amount of money required) to purchase ANSI/TIA/EIAA-102 Phase II (Project 25) standards based interoperable two-way radio equipment (“equipment” is an example only for use in this sample). If approved, we intend to cut-over our public safety and emergency response agencies police, fire, EMS, public works, and Emergency Operations Center to the statewide interoperable system known as Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) Communications System.

(City of, Borough, State Agency), Alaska is responsible for serving a population of (your estimated population) of () that represents a service area encompassing () miles. (Present here your area’s strategic importance, economic and transportation strengths, i.e., airport, military presence, tourism, seaport, oil/pipeline, etc. or what service you are providing that the State would otherwise be responsible to provide). Our jurisdiction has grown over the years in one of the world’s harshest environments. To many, this area is still considered a remote “frontier” with limited access. As we continue to expand and diversify, the responsibilities of our public safety, first responders and emergency management personnel must keep pace. With growth and change, our ability to effectively communicate with each other becomes extremely important. As a result, we are aggressively seeking ways to meet the varied communications needs of our workforce and provide reliable, functional, and interoperable wireless communications to our public safety agencies and to those supporting key services to the citizens of (City, Borough, State) in cooperation with ALMR. Through proper planning, further development of our intra-agency partnerships with all levels of government, adequate funding, and continued guidance/support from the ALMR Operations Management Office and System Management Office, we will be able to better support mutual Homeland Security initiatives and respond to natural or manmade disasters. By replacing our aging, incompatible two-way radio equipment, we will improve our operational capabilities through faster, coordinated interoperable communications and enhance the safety of (City, Borough, State), our neighbors, as well as our State and Department of Defense partners.



Attachment 2

Sample Statement for TDMA Phase II Subscriber Equipment

The (City of, Borough, State Agency), Alaska is seeking to replace legacy radio equipment with radios to be compliant with the modern standard known as TDMA Phase II. As members of the Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) system, we must transition to this technology as a requirement of continued membership. Additionally, future software updates to the system will no longer support non-TDMA radios.

TDMA Phase II is a component of the Project 25 (P25) radio standard that will allow for modern technology and features to be utilized by our *(first responders, agency members, etc.)*. The transition will allow for increased capacity within the system, which will provide for increased system reliability, access to additional radio resources, and a more reliable infrastructure for our *(department/agency)* members.

Acquiring P25 compatible radios will ensure continued membership with the ALMR system, which provides interoperability at all agency levels within our area. Neighboring *(departments/agencies/mutual aid partners)* are also on the system, which provides shared costs and infrastructure that are not left to the individual agency to build or maintain. In addition, these radios meet the public safety standard for P25 interoperability and provide the appropriate level of functionality and security for our needs into the future.

*(*optional)* Our current *(make/model)* radios have been deemed end of life by the manufacturer and are no longer supported for service or repair. The proposed replacement to *(make/model)* radios will ensure support in the future. We will be able to perform the necessary preventative maintenance and future replacements as we have identified funding via *(normal annual budget/fundraising/savings account/etc.)*.

The membership requirement from ALMR for the radio replacement is based upon continued improvements to the system and requirements for upgrades by the vendors. The use of two-way radios is required due to the public safety nature of our work. Other tools such as cell phones are not built to the same public safety grade standards as the ALMR system, which is built for resilient and reliable communications despite weather conditions, power failures, and other events.