



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY
BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS
SNOWMOBILE PROGRAM
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0022

INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES
MUNICIPAL / COUNTY GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM

RE: Administration of Grants-In-Aid to Municipalities & Counties for Snowmobile Trails and Facilities, M.R.S.A., Title 12, Chapter 220, Subchapter 8, §1893-3.

By signing the application you are acknowledging that you have reviewed, understand and agree to manage your trail system in compliance with these guidelines.

This package helps to explain the Municipal and County Grants-In-Aid Program for snowmobile trail development and maintenance with the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office, Snowmobile Program. Under the terms of the municipal grant program, the State can cost share up to, but not exceed 50% when the trail system is solely within the municipal or town boundaries. In the event that two or more municipalities or counties work together in developing and administering a trail system, or when a municipality or county assumes responsibility for a trail system that extends beyond its boundaries or crosses multiple townships and the trail system is determined by the director of the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office to be of regional significance and contributes to the overall objective of developing a high quality main artery trail connecting one community with another, the project may be considered for up to 70% State assistance if adequate funds are available. All trail project descriptions will require approval by the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office which will determine the appropriate State share. The approved percentage may change annually depending on funds available to the program, but will not exceed 70% of the approved cost.

All applications for winter trail grooming assistance during the snowmobile season must be submitted to the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office no later than **December 1**.

Included is the Application/Agreement to be completed and a sample project description, worksheets, proof of payment, and reimbursement request forms. Also included is a land use permit form, which may be used to obtain authorization to cross public or private property. This form will meet the program's requirements when requesting Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office assistance.

The Applicant shall not be entitled to any reimbursement hereunder with respect to any proposed trail unless the entire trail plan shall have been approved in advance as hereinafter provided by the director of the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office.

I. PROCEDURES FOR APPLYING FOR A GRANT

The following materials must be submitted when requesting assistance for a municipal snowmobile trail project. All materials must be original documents (no fax or email documents accepted) except the map showing the project location.

A. Application / Agreement – Completed and signed by the county/municipality and person authorized as the Project Director.

1. The estimated costs specified on the application may include minimal administrative labor costs incurred preparing grant material and reimbursement requests. May also include land use permit and administration fee,

remote radio costs, trail liability insurance, Secretary of State Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions' corporation fee for club, and Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC)/Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permit fees. See the Allowable Grant Expenses (attached).

2. We have eliminated all other costs such as PO Box fees, paper, ink, website management, cell phones, club house insurance, electric bills, sewer bills, and water bills.

3. Some maintenance of facilities such as plowing remote parking lots open to the public for snowmobile trail access may be an eligible expense, but not plowing club, town, business or groomer parking, no bathrooms, porta-potties or landscaping allowed.

4. Cost of maintenance of existing trail including winter grooming of the trail, erection of trail signs, bridge maintenance and cutting brush is a priority for limited state aid funding. We have adjusted the large equipment grooming rates to reflect increased real costs.

- B. Project Description - A detailed description of the proposed project must be submitted before project funding can be considered. The description must include all work to be funded, including the type and cost of necessary equipment, the personnel required and resources available for the project. It must also include a breakdown of the material costs, estimated number of hours for labor and equipment and the hourly rate to be paid. If the winter grooming phase of the project is to be contracted, the contract should specify the responsibilities of the contractor, the method of payment including the maximum amount and a copy forwarded to this office. We require an hourly rate for contracts and services in our rate guidelines or use Maine Department of Transportation (MDOT) rates for private equipment. The construction of bridges and other work adjacent to waterways require written permits from or notification to DEP or LUPC depending on the location and the landowner. **DEP regulations require all work in the Shoreland Zone be performed or supervised by a DEP certified contractor/project manager, and in compliance with established trail Best Management Practices (BMP). Copies of these notices or permits are required if state funding assistance is sought.** Any project single trail maintenance item over \$5000 must be pre-approved or is not eligible for reimbursement.

The work may include the following:

★ **Review the Trail Maintenance Labor / Equipment Reimbursement Rate Guidelines and Allowable Grant Expenses.**

- C. Map - A detailed map of the proposed snowmobile trail project must be submitted. The map should be a topographical map or copy of equal quality. The map must show the proposed trail, water crossings, available parking lots, the relationship with existing trails in surrounding areas and the number of miles in the project. Club and municipal trails on the same map is okay, but they must be distinguishable by different colors or type.
- D. Landowner Permission - If the request for financial assistance is strictly for winter grooming, a list of landowners for the trail system must accompany the request. In the event that the application is requesting financial assistance for replacing a bridge or use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers/excavators landowner permission must be in writing for the entire area to be improved or repaired.

II. REIMBURSEMENT

A request for reimbursement may be submitted on a monthly or quarterly basis or at the end of the season, whichever suits the municipality/county. It may be advantageous to the municipality/county if the requests are submitted monthly because they will not need to have funding for the entire approved project. This is a reimbursement for expenditures made, for

example, the program funds a \$5,000 project up to \$3,500. Requests submitted monthly for \$1,000 will, for example, keep reimbursement funds flowing back to the municipality each month. **The final trail maintenance reimbursement request must be postmarked no later than May 15 of the following year in which the project was carried out.**

Reimbursement requests postmarked after **May 15** of the year will be reduced by 10% of the approved grant or eligible reimbursement, whichever is less per day beginning on **May 16**. Items not approved by the program on the Project Description or by an amendment will not be reimbursed. The method of filing for reimbursement is as follows:

- A. Submit one completed copy of the Request for Reimbursement form. The reimbursement request must be signed by the person the municipality/county gave the authority to submit the application requesting financial assistance.
- B. Submit copies of all receipts substantiating payment of expenditures reported or a copy of the town warrant on which the payment was made or an invoice marked "paid" for all reimbursements. Worksheets are not considered invoices or receipts.
- C. The worksheets provided by the program must be completed by the Project Director and trail crews as work is performed or purchases made. A copy of the worksheet must be completely filled out and forwarded to the program with the reimbursement request. The worksheet briefly describes where the work was done by site location or trail number, date of work, and the number of hours the work was performed per day. Do not lump time on one line for the month or season.
- D. Upon receipt of the reimbursement request, the director of the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office will review the request to ensure compliance with the terms of the approved project description. Reimbursement will be made on the basis of the previously approved cost share percentage for the work performed between the dates covered by the reimbursement request. All expenses incurred during the period covered should be included on the appropriate request for reimbursement and not carried over to a later request.

The Applicant shall retain for three years and make available to the State, all records relating to receipts and expenditures of funds under this Agreement.

The State of Maine shall not assume any liability for any expense incurred by the Applicant; (I) which expense was not expressly approved in writing in advance by the director of the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office or, (II) after depletion of the grants-in-aid funds available for the allocated to any given trail. All obligations of the State hereunder are subject to the availability of funds in the Snowmobile Trail Fund.

III. SNOWMOBILE TRAIL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

A. Recommended Trail Guidelines

1. Snowmobile Trails

- a. If there is a "one-way" trail designation, the minimum trail width should be 6 feet, unless where specifically restricted by landowners or authorized by the program.
- b. If there is a "two-way" trail designation, the minimum trail width should be 8 feet, unless specifically restricted by landowners or authorized by the program.
- c. Brush should be cleared from an area 1 foot beyond the edge of the trail.
- d. The minimum turning radius for a one-way trail is 20 feet; for a two-way trail it is 30 feet.

e. Branches, limbs, and brush should be cleared to a height of 8 feet above the trail.

f. Sustained grades and slopes should not exceed 20%.

g. All signs should be those provided by the program or of the same design as those provided by the Off-road Recreational Vehicle Office. Since we provide signs at no charge, reimbursements for sign purchases are not allowed.

2. Snow banks at road crossings should be cut back to provide adequate visibility in both directions. Snow banks should be kept low at trail crossing points to permit easy exit and entrance to the trail. Warning signs may be installed on the trail at a sufficient distance from the road crossing to allow snowmobilers to stop. Maine Department of Transportation warning signs should be installed on controlled access highways and major interstate highways to warn motorists of the snowmobile trail crossing. Requests for crossing signs along the highway will follow the policy established by MDOT. The applications are available at the program's Snowmobile Program office or on our website www.parksandlands.com.

3. When approaching or leaving a slope or grade, the trail should be straight for a sufficient distance to permit a safe transition.

4. It is extremely important to maintain the trail for the use and enjoyment of the intended user. Periodic grooming is needed to eliminate moguls. It is recommended that heavily used trails be groomed as soon as possible after each new snowfall. It is of the utmost importance that a snow base be established as early as possible in the season. Once a base is established, it is much easier to maintain a smooth trail. It may be impossible to have a regular maintenance schedule and abide by it. The frequency of grooming will depend on the amount of snowfall and snowmobile traffic on each particular trail each day. During the peak of the use season (mid-January to mid-March) nighttime grooming is much more effective because of reduced traffic and air temperatures. Nighttime grooming also improves the safety of the groomer operator and riders. We strongly recommend all groomer operators successfully complete our groomer awareness safety DVD.

Certification of completion is required for all groomer operators for participation in the Capital Equipment Reimbursement Grant.

5. Snowmobile trails should not be routed over lakes, streams or other bodies of frozen water. If stream or river crossings are necessary, provide bridges at least 5 feet wide or wider if large grooming equipment is to be used. Permits or notifications may be required by LUPC or DEP to build bridges over navigable streams. Consult our trail Best Management Practices manual for guidance.

6. Trails should not be routed along steep side slopes or inclines.

7. Trails should be laid out so they avoid conflicting uses or any areas of potential conflict such as tree plantations, nurseries, conflicting uses or other areas where trail development or use might cause damage.

8. Best Management Practices, published by this program, must be followed at all times during trail rehabilitation or maintenance.