

May 12, 2025

Subject: ADVANCED NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY (FY2026)
Iowa State Recreational Trails Program (SRT)

Iowa DOT is now accepting applications for the FY2026 State Recreational Trails Program (SRT) and potential applicants are invited to prepare applications in anticipation of the FY2026 SRT funding cycle application deadline. Eligible project activities are limited to the acquisition, construction or improvement of recreational trails open for public use or trails that will be dedicated to public use upon completion.

Program intent: The intent of the SRT program is to provide funds for the establishment of recreational trails in Iowa for the use, enjoyment and participation of the public. Projects likely to be competitive in the SRT program will fulfill a recreational need identified through a planning process, enhance tourism, leverage other secured funding sources, and are anticipated to be complete within 2 years. Eligible activities and eligible project sponsors are identified in the program administrative rules available on the program website.

Anticipated funding available: \$2.5 million (pending Legislative appropriation for FY2026)

Review of applications: Complete applications will be evaluated and assessed based on the following criteria:

- Need for the Proposed Project (16 points)
- Recreational Benefit of the Project (16 points)
- Project Readiness (12 points)
- Leverage of Other Funding Sources (12 points)
- Enhancement of Economic and Tourism Benefits (10 points)
- Connectivity and Completion of Trail Linkages (10 points)
- Alignment with Local, Regional, or Statewide Planning Documents (8 points)
- Improvements to Accessibility (8 points)
- Long-Term Maintenance Plans (8 points)

Award process and funding availability: SRT program awards will be made by the Iowa Transportation Commission upon recommendation by Iowa DOT. Awards are anticipated in October 2025. Funds are available for reimbursement of eligible costs following award and execution of a project funding agreement and subject to compliance with all applicable rules and program requirements.

Cost reimbursement and required match: Funds awarded through the SRT program are provided to project sponsors on a reimbursement basis and are not provided as a lump sum or cash payment in advance of costs being incurred. All projects require project sponsors to pay 100 percent of project costs up front. SRT program funds may reimburse for up to 75 percent of eligible project costs or up to the approved grant maximum, whichever is less.

Project requirements: Projects funded by the SRT program will be carried out under the rules and procedures required of state-assisted projects administered through Iowa DOT. Subject to the program administrative rules, eligible project costs and contracts must be procured in compliance with state requirements but may be

let locally. Recipients shall use positive efforts to solicit bids from and to utilize Targeted Small Business (TSB) enterprises as contractors in accordance with Iowa Code 19B.7.

Application: The program administrative rules and application materials are available on the program website. All of the following application components must be submitted in the form prescribed:

- Application Form Parts A through E (Word document)
- Part F Checklist and Certification (pdf): The checklist and certification is a separate item from the application form because it is intended to be signed by an authorized representative of the project sponsor and then submitted as a pdf. This checklist has been provided to assist with compiling complete applications, but the certification should be reviewed in detail prior to signature.
- Form 105101 Minority Impact Statement (pdf)
- Additional Attachments (pdf preferred)
 - Detailed map: A detailed map identifying the location of the project is required. The project scope should be clear and the map may also include other important information referred to in the narrative such as important transportation linkages, clearly marked completed or future project phases, etc. More than one map may be submitted if the scope of the project is such that the desired detail is not feasible to be included on just one map. Limit map sizes to no larger than 8.5-by-11-inches.
 - Sketch plan and cross section: If the application is for a construction project, a sketch plan (including cross section for bicycle or pedestrian facilities) is required. If the cross section of your facility varies across the project (width, number of lanes, etc.) include a cross section for each situation and identify its location.
 - Digital photographs: A maximum of five digital photographs that will help to explain the existing site conditions of the proposed facility are required. It is not necessary to include photographs of all aspects or the entire route of a project. The photos submitted as part of the application should be representative of the project as a whole or should support any particularly compelling or complex description that has been included in the narrative responses in the application form.
 - Itemized breakdown of total project costs: Beyond the cost table provided in the application form, an itemized breakdown of the total project costs is required. This itemized breakdown does not need to be a detailed or formal engineer's opinion of probable cost though that is preferred. It is the responsibility of the applicant to explain the rationale and source of the assumptions used to develop the cost breakdown to allow a reviewer to have confidence in their accuracy. The cost breakdown must accomplish two objectives: 1) it must show the method by which the cost estimate was prepared; and 2) it must enable a reviewer to determine if the cost estimate is reasonable. The way these objectives are achieved may vary widely depending on the type, scope, and complexity of the project. Any contingencies included in the estimate should be identified and reasonable.
 - Official endorsement (resolution): An official endorsement of the project from the project sponsor confirming responsibility for the project's maintenance and operation is required. For cities, counties, or other political subdivisions, this should be in the form of a fully executed resolution by the elected body or board, as applicable. The project sponsor must provide written

assurance it will adequately maintain the completed project for its intended public use following project completion. For most construction projects, this will be a minimum of 20 years. The endorsement must also acknowledge the intent of the project sponsor to provide the match funds required for the project.

- Iowa DOT District Letter of Consent to Submit (if applicable): If the project will encroach on Primary highway System right-of-way, a letter of consent to submit the application from the Iowa DOT District Engineer is required.
- Funding source documentation for each funding source identified as secured by the applicant: If the application identifies any funding source as secured, documentation confirming the commitment of funds by the funder must be provided for each funding source identified as secured.

Complete applications are due **by email to scott.flagg@iowadot.us before 5:00 pm CST on JULY 1, 2025.** The email subject line shall be **SRT Application – Applicant Name**. Emails greater than 20 MB will not be received. Attachments may be zip files. If sending multiple emails due to size restrictions, indicate sequence in the subject line e.g. 1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc. Applications received after the deadline will be deemed ineligible and will not be reviewed. Incomplete applications may be disqualified from consideration. Iowa DOT is not responsible for any errors or delays caused by technical difficulties resulting from the emailing of applications.

To learn more about this funding opportunity and how to apply visit <https://iowadot.gov/modes-travel/trails/federal-state-recreational-trails>. You may direct any specific questions to Scott Flagg at scott.flagg@iowadot.us or (515) 239-1252.