

**Building Connections: How the Denali Commission
Supports Rural Alaska Transportation**
February 9, 2026

Denali Commission

Alaska's Independent Federal Regional Commission

Mission: Promote economic development with a focus on critical infrastructure and workforce training for **rural communities** in Alaska.

Transfer and Gift Authority

- Authority to accept funds from both non-federal and federal sources
- Registers funds as expended, eliminating risk of “sweep-back”
- Becomes Commission funds with statutory flexibility

Non-Federal Cost Share Match

- Ability to match funds with other federal agencies
- Acts like private or state funds

No-Year Funds

- Does not expire at end of fiscal year
- Allows for long-term capital “banking”



Recent Milestones

- Base FY26 \$18M Appropriations Approved (Public Law No: 119-74)
- Transportation \$20M Appropriations Approved (Public Law No: 119-75)
 - \$15 M Surface
 - \$5 M Waterfront
- Commission's 2026 Workplan approved and available for comment on the [Federal Register](#).
 - Roads, Boardwalks, Ports, Waterway Facilities, and Intermodal Connections
- 5 Additional Staff Hiring Approved by OPM



Highlights & Approach

333 projects
since 2006

196 communities
served
2006 – 2025

\$193 Million
Commission
Funding

\$735 Million
Matching or
Leveraged
Funding

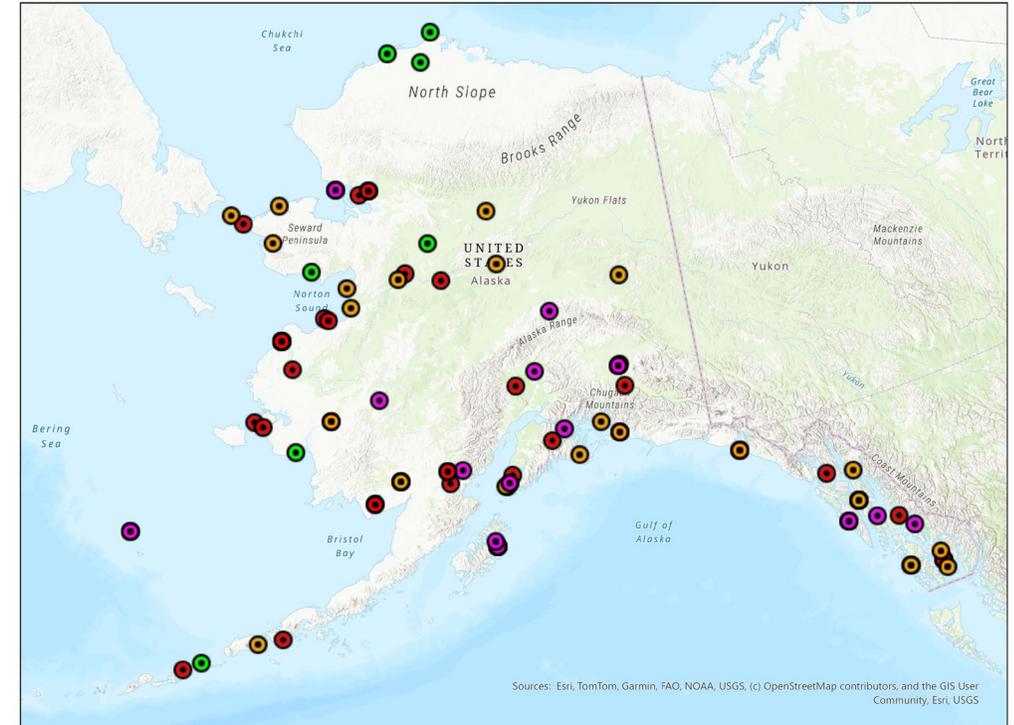
\$80.6 Million
Programmed
Funds
2020 – 2025

95 projects
funded
2020 - 2025



Highlights & Approach

- Funds awarded through competitive funding opportunities
- Projects evaluated by Transportation Advisory Committee, approved by Federal Co-Chair
- Projects located in communities identified in **2024 DOL&WD Distressed Communities Report** and **2019 Statewide Threat Assessment** are prioritized in project review
- Projects that repair and maintain transportation infrastructure, community health and safety, connectivity are prioritized



Waterfront Program

Improvements to small dock facilities, small harbor replacements and upland facilities, barge landings, and mooring points.



Surface Transportation

Local roads and drainage improvements, board roads & boardwalks, trail markers, bridges, rural transit & pedestrian facilities, bridges, etc.



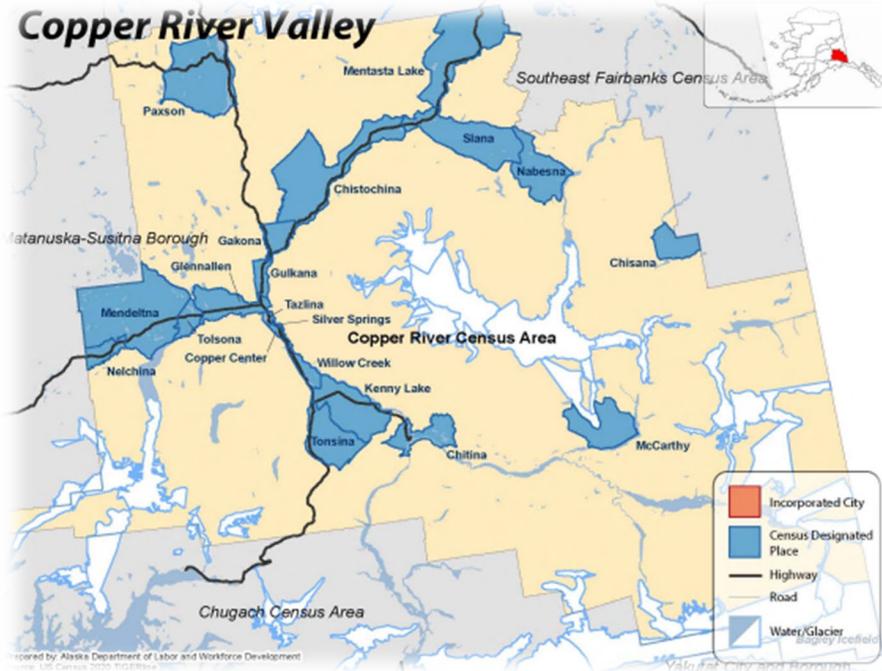


Recent Partnerships and Initiatives

- Tribal Travel Support with Alaska Tribal Administrators Association and Alaska Tribal Transportation Working Group for 2026 Alaska Tribal Transportation Symposium
- National Guard Innovative Readiness Training Program Collaboration on Projects – NVE and SIDCO AS
- TCC Partnership project on Dust Control Training & Demonstration
- Collaboration with DOT and AML Partnership Projects
 - Statewide Boardroads Guide
 - Alaska Community Connectivity Action Plan



Regional and State Partnerships



Copper Valley Development Association (CVDA)'s Rural Planning Organization Pilot Program with DOT&PF – Developing Long Range Plan

- Foster coordination of local planning, land use, economic development, regional and local coordination



Regional Projects with Kawerak

- Winter Trail Marking project along Nome-Teller Highway, Wales to Brevig Mission
- Golovin Subdivision Relocation Design Study
- Wales to Tin City Road
- White Mountain Community Streets

2026 Statement of Interest –Rural Match/Gap Transportation Program

- **\$5 Million Available**
- Match and gap funding assistance (up to 30% or \$1 Million max) for rural transportation projects
- Must be construction ready - transportation improvement projects (ie. NEPA and bid-ready documents near completion partially funded)
- Have demonstrated need for gap funding for an existing project that has other committed program funds
- Have applied or received other funding which requires a local match

Eligible Entities

- Municipal, borough, and tribal governments
- Indian Tribes as defined by Title 25 US Code § 5304 and regional tribal non-profit organizations
- non-profit organizations



February 13
Statements of
Interests Closed



2026 Statement of Interest –Rural Match/Gap Transportation Program

Surface Transportation

- Road safety improvements including resurfacing, dust control, and drainage improvements.
- “Board” roads and All-Terrain Vehicle trails, seasonal roads and signage enhancements, multi-use trails and walkways for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Rural transit activities including facility improvements and limited duration operation/maintenance of transit services and vehicles,

Waterfront Transportation

- Improvements to rural port and harbor facilities including floating dock and moorage systems.
- Boat launch ramps, barge landings, storage and laydown areas, and other adjacent support facilities.



February 13
Statements of
Interests Closed



Invited to Apply

Evaluation Criterion	Maximum Score (points)
Distressed Communities and/or Disadvantaged Communities Proposed projects benefiting distressed communities and/or disadvantaged communities	10
Statewide Threat Assessment Grouping Proposed projects benefiting environmentally threatened communities will receive up to 10 preference points. For projects that benefit more than one rural community, preference points will be averaged by community designation	10
Community Background	5
Project purpose, need, and impact	20
Scope of work and schedule	20
Organization, capacity, and delivery method	10
Partnerships	15
Budget/resources	10
Total	100



End of February
 Notification for Letters Sent out

Late March/Early April
 Deadline for Invited Applications

2026 Statement of Interest – FY26 Rural Match/Gap Transportation Program

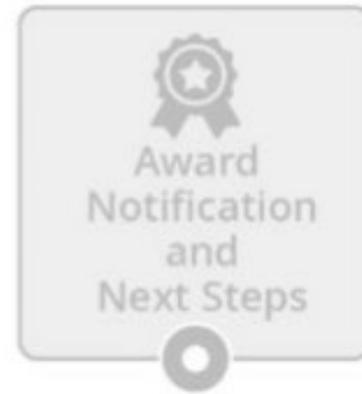


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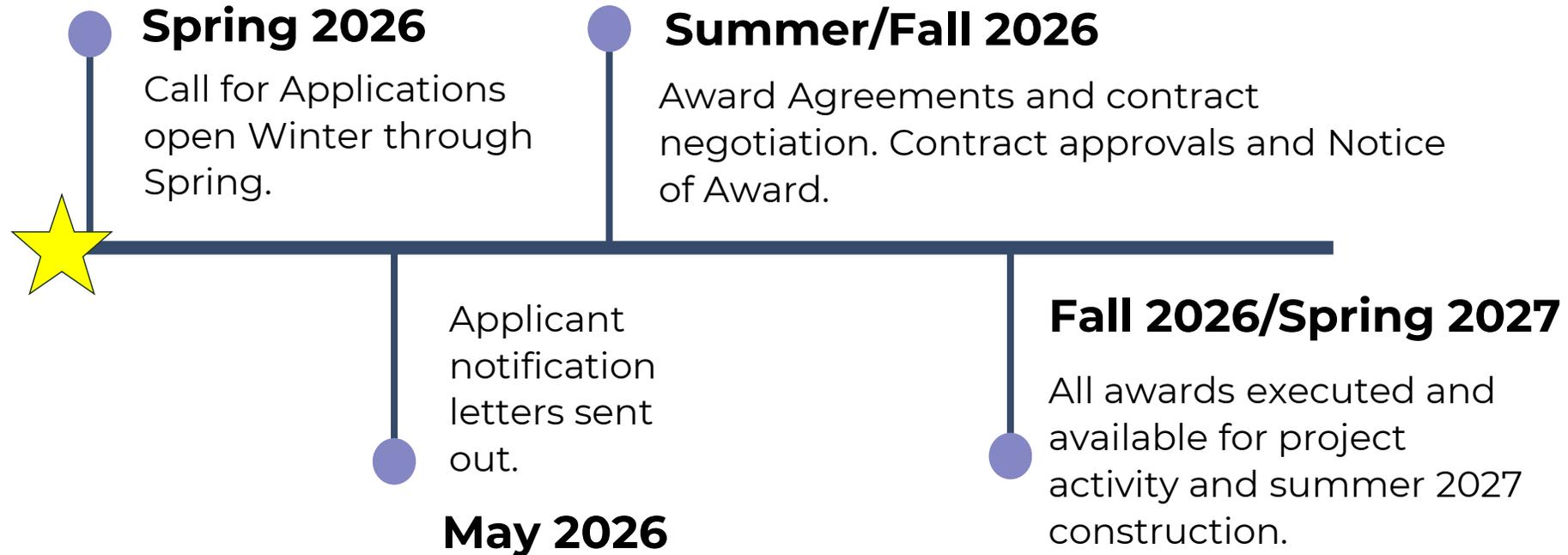
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Deadline for Invited
Applications



Early May
Notification Letters Sent
out
Award Agreements to
be drafted



2026 Statement of Interest – Rural Match/Gap Transportation Program





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