

On Thu, Oct 30, 2025 at 12:18 PM Sarah Carter <scarter@alaskasnow.org> wrote:

The original CSO application for FY26 provided a budget and operating program aiming for sustainability in response to the NAC audit. Valdez Avalanche Center continues to commit to provide quality avalanche forecasts and educational outreach that Valdez residents and visitors can rely on. However, as the city council requested, Valdez Avalanche Center has revised and reduced our request to \$99,950. This value meets these goals:

- Closer to 65% of the total operating budget of \$137,579 that is needed to sustainably provide 5 day/week forecasts
- Includes \$20,000 to pay for the financial audit council requires for CSOs to request more than \$100,000 for FY27

We have adapted and decreased this budget projection in consideration of our operating season for this winter, and in the belief that solutions for the future can be created. (Attached pdf: two year comparison and revised request.)

We have stepped up our sponsorship/community partnership/membership drive goals to reflect the community and private sector support we require to provide 5 day/week forecasts. We are doing our best to utilize all fundraising sources and bring in additional funding, but there is a limit to what individuals and businesses are able to donate. There has been an outpour of public support for 5 day/week forecasts, but it is evident that without meeting and/or exceeding these increased fundraising goals and receiving more support the City of Valdez, Valdez Avalanche Center will not be able to provide 5 day/week forecasts.

Valdez is a uniquely situated municipality, surrounded by avalanche terrain that poses risk to the general public. Investment in avalanche information is required to keep the public safe. A solution for reducing the CSO reliance is for the City of Valdez to consider the avalanche forecast and education to be included as part of the main operating budget under public safety. It is not sustainable for VAC to fit under the CSO funding guidelines of 50-65% of program costs while providing 5 day/week forecasts. The yearly CSO application timing is very difficult for VAC, leaving our organization unsure of how we will be able to operate each winter based on the decisions of the City Council that often aren't decided as our operating season gets under way. We hope the City of Valdez will make it a priority to work with VAC and stakeholders to provide sustainable funding, otherwise Valdez is at risk of losing a functioning, respected avalanche center altogether. This is a pivotal moment for the avalanche center: Is it possible to operate as a sustainable avalanche center that is financially secure? We can, by finding solutions together. With the city's support, VAC's advisory board and staff are committed to serving the community.

Deliverables:

1. Five day per week avalanche forecasts for Valdez's three avalanche zones from Dec 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026
2. Issuance of special avalanche weather alerts to the public as appropriate
3. Provide one age appropriate avalanche education event at each Valdez City School. (This is already being planned, with Gilson Middle School's program set for Dec.17/18, and the other schools TBD.)
4. Continued professional exchange with other avalanche centers, including CNFAIC.