



State of Alaska;  
Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic  
Development; Division of Community and Regional Affairs

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# Financial Management for Rural Utilities Syllabus

**Instructors**  
RUBA Staff

**Phone**  
(907) 269-4549

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(907) 269-4563

**Office Locations**

Anchorage  
Bethel  
Dillingham  
Fairbanks  
Juneau  
Kotzebue  
Nome

**Course Overview**

The course builds the skills and knowledge needed for the financial management of a small water and wastewater utility in rural Alaska. The instructors present seven lessons with topics that include governmental accounting, chart of accounts, budgets, rate setting, collections, financial reports, and managerial reports. See “Course Content” below for details within each lesson.

The course is 32 hours long and can be taught online using a learning management system or in person at one of our office locations. If the course is taught in person travel scholarships are available for those who successfully complete the class.

**Who Should Take the Course?**

Municipal clerks, utility clerks, treasurers, bookkeepers, managers, administrators, chiefs, mayors, and council members who are involved in the managerial and financial operations of the utility. In the RUBA program’s partnership with the Department of Environmental Conservation, water and wastewater operators can earn 3.2 core continuing education units (CEUs).

**Operations and Maintenance Best Practices**

The course qualifies for Operation and Maintenance Best Practices points used to determine eligibility and prioritization for community sanitation projects. Here is the link to more information about Best Practices.

[Operations and Maintenance Best Practices](#)

**Homework and Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend each day, read lesson materials before class, participate in discussions and lesson exercises take a pre-test and post-test, and draft action plans to take back to their communities.

**Additional Information**

Here is the link to more information about the RUBA program, our approach to helping communities, and class offerings.

[Rural Utility Business Advisor Program](#)

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**Course Content**

<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Lesson 1: Governmental Accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Welcome/Introductions</li><li>▪ RUBA Program Overview</li><li>▪ Financial Management for Utility Managers</li><li>▪ What is Accounting?</li><li>▪ Fund Accounting</li></ul>
Lesson 2: Chart of Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ What is Chart of Accounts?</li><li>▪ Creating Chart of Accounts</li><li>▪ Fund Accounting and Chart of Accounts</li></ul>

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Lesson 3:  
Budgets

- What is a Budget?
- Preparing a Budget
- Adopting a Budget
- Amending a Budget

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Lesson 4:  
Rate Setting

- What is Rate Setting?
- Rate Structures
- Building Reserves
- Rate Setting Information Sources
- Rate Setting Plan of Action
- The Mechanics of Rate Setting

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Lesson 5:  
Collections

- The Importance of Billing and Collections
- What to Include in Billing and Collections Procedures?
- How to Deal with Delinquent Accounts

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Lesson 6:  
Financial Reports

- Characteristics of Financial Reports
- Monthly Financial Reports
- Budget Versus Actual Financial Reports
- Annual Reports

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Lesson 7:  
Managerial Reports

- What is a Managerial Report?
  - Cash Flow Reporting
  - Operational Data versus Financial Data
  - Compare Data Over Time
  - Analyze Expenses by Function
  - Providing Options
  - Effectiveness and Efficiency
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