

MPC Research Proposal Guidelines

The research proposal should be less than or equal to four single-spaced pages, with Times Roman 12 font. While succinctness is desirable, the proposal must be sufficiently detailed so that peer reviewers can assess its merits. The proposal must be submitted as a Word document and include the following sections:

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| Title | Provide a title that is descriptive of the project and includes key terms. |
| Universities | If the project is a multi-university proposal, list each university involved. |
| Principal Investigators | If the project is a multi-university proposal, list a principal investigator from each university, with the university affiliations denoted in parentheses. |
| Research Needs | Provide a statement of the important issues and problems that give rise to the need for the project, including a brief literature review (if appropriate) that summarizes the state of knowledge in the subject area and identifies the knowledge gaps the project seeks to fill. It must be clear from the description that there are compelling needs for the study and it will address issues of national and regional importance. |
| Research Objectives | Provide a clear statement of the research objectives, including any hypotheses to be tested. At least some of the objectives must be measurable—i.e., at the conclusion of the project, it must be possible to ascertain whether the stated objectives have been achieved. |
| Research Methods | Provide a sufficient description so that reviewers can assess the appropriateness of the research approach and methods and the quality and reliability of data, including descriptions of any mathematical, statistical, operations research, and simulation techniques to be used, as well as surveys, lab tests, and field data. |
| Expected Outcomes | Provide a description of the expected outcomes in terms of potential findings and impacts, including advances in modeling, practices, and procedures; implications for future research; and how the results of the project can be used by practitioners. Describe any tangible products beyond the research report, including prototype software, equipment, guidebooks, or instructional manuals that may emanate from the project. |
| Relevance to Strategic | Describe how the proposed project and its expected outcomes |

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| Goals | are related to one or more of the following goals: State of Good Repair, Safety, Economic Competiveness, Environmental Sustainability, and Livable Communities. |
| Educational Benefits | If applicable, describe how students will be involved in the project and any expected classroom or instructional uses of procedures, examples, or discoveries derived from the project. |
| Work Plan | Provide a description of the major tasks or steps in the project, along with an expected timeline. The tasks should be numbered and an expected completion date assigned to each one. Instead of calendar dates, the timeline should be expressed in months from the starting date. Typically, a work plan includes steps such as the completion (and testing) of questionnaires, lab tests, field tests or data collection efforts, input or focus group meetings, and critical steps such as the initial runs and calibrations of models. A draft report and other milestone events should be included, as well as a technology transfer plan that includes a research seminar via the Transportation Learning Network and/or plans to collaborate with an LTAP or TTAP center (if appropriate). If the research is basic in nature, other dissemination methods may be substituted for the TLN, LTAP, or TTAP distribution channels. |
| Project Cost | List the amount of MPC funds requested, the amount of the expected matching contributions, and the sources of the matching resources, including all agencies expected to contribute funds or in-kind resources to the project. MPC research projects require at least a dollar for dollar match. However, other federal funds (e.g., federal funds other than UTC funds) cannot be used as match, except for state planning and research funds and LTAP funds, which are eligible under exclusionary provisions of the authorizing legislation. The definition of “non-federal funds” is based on the original source of funds. |
| Potential Peer Reviewers | Provide the complete contact information of at least three persons who are qualified to review and critically assess the proposal, including the person’s name, position title and organization, street address, city, state, zip code, and email address. Please keep in mind that peer reviewers cannot have conflicts of interests, such as those that may arise if someone stands to personally or professionally benefit from the proposed project. Peer reviewers may include professionals at federal, state, metropolitan, or local agencies, as well as university and private-sector researchers. Given that at least three completed reviews are required for a proposal to move |

forward in the assessment process, the submission of more than three names may expedite the time frame for approval, in the event of one or more nonresponsive reviewers.

TRB Keywords

References

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

Two documents posted on the MPC webpage provide detailed descriptions of the five long term outcomes or strategic goals of the U.S. Department of Transportation:

- The United States Department of Transportation. *Strategic Plan FY 2010 – FY2015: Transportation for a New Generation*, Draft, April 15, 2010.
- Office of the Secretary of Transportation. Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Department of Transportation’s National Infrastructure Investments Under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations, Federal Register /Vol. 76, No. 156 / Friday, August 12, 2011.

In the FY 2010-2015 strategic plan, the U.S. DOT discusses each strategic goal, challenges to achieving the goal, and key strategies and performance measures. The second document—the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for National Infrastructure Investments—describes the benefits that would result from achieving the strategic goals and, in doing so, provides a clearer picture of the outcomes associated with each. You are encouraged to review these documents, as they may be helpful in relating your proposed project to USDOT’s strategic goals.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

If the proposed project involves surveys or observations of human or animal subjects that would trigger institutional reviews, it is the proposer’s responsibility to ensure that these university review requirements are met. An assurance may be requested if the project is selected for funding.