NITC Small Starts
Request for Proposals

For more information, visit: **http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/**

1   Overview

The National Institute for Transportation and Communities (NITC) is a program of the Transportation Research and Education Center (TREC) at Portland State University. NITC is the U.S. Department of Transportation's national center for Livable Communities and one of the U.S. DOT's national university transportation centers for Improving Mobility.

NITC is a Portland State (PSU)-led partnership with the Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech), University of Arizona (UA), University of Oregon (UO), University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) and University of Utah (UU). NITC's theme is:

Improving mobility of people and goods to build strong communities

The purpose of Small Starts grants is to assist researchers who are interested in transportation but have not had an opportunity to undertake a small project that fit the NITC theme. Awards will be no larger than $20,000.

The following are examples of some of the kinds of activities we hope to support but are not meant to restrict proposals:
- Demonstrate a proof of concept aimed at additional research.
- Activity aimed at assisting local agencies in implementing research results.
- Release time for a faculty member to work on research.
- Preliminary data collection to support research concept.

Items that will not be supported by this initiative:
- Travel not essential to conducting research or performing project tasks.
- A student-led activity or research.
- Equipment over $5,000.
- Long-term personnel support.

2   Eligibility

Faculty members and research faculty eligible to serve as Principal Investigators (PIs) at Portland State University, Oregon Institute of Technology, University of Arizona, University of Oregon, University of Texas at Arlington and University of Utah may submit proposals and serve as PIs with NITC.

3   Theme

The NITC theme connects directly with the U.S. DOT priority of improving mobility of people and goods to build strong communities. All proposals must be consistent with this theme, as defined below:

- **Increasing access to opportunities.** Well-connected regions and communities can improve social equity by providing access to jobs, services, recreation, and social opportunities. Research should examine barriers to access, including the connections between transportation, land use, and housing. It should look at how to overcome these barriers and improve accessibility, affordability, and equity in our communities.
- **Improving multi-modal planning and shared use of infrastructure.** Improved mobility requires a range of options for moving people and goods. As concepts of mobility evolve, research is needed to understand how people and firms make mode choices so that we can design better multi-modal systems. Research should examine how different modes can share our infrastructure safely. It should look at how cities and regions can better plan for and prioritize multi-modal transportation, integrated with land use.
- **Advancing innovation and smart cities.** The growth of urban areas of all sizes requires the innovative use of technology and new mobility options. Smart cities research should examine the feasibility of integrating connected and automated technologies in our cities and overcoming the social, political and economic barriers to implementation. This includes ensuring that smart cities improve access for all people and modes.
- **Developing data, models, and tools.** Our complex transportation system demands better data and tools for decision-making. Research is needed to develop tools to collect and analyze multi-modal data from a variety of sources, aimed at optimizing the use of the system. These new models and tools should examine the implications of changes to the system on a range of outcomes including mobility, economic equity, the environment, and health.

4 SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF GRANT

Applications are due on **September 15th, 2017 at 5pm PDT**. The NITC Executive Committee and a subset of the Advisory Board will review the proposals. Funds will be available to successful applicants starting **November 1, 2017** and must be expended by **October 31, 2018**.

The selection of Small Starts grants will be based on the following criteria:

- Clarity and intellectual merit of research focus, project description and timeline
- Fit with NITC's theme of Improving Mobility of People and Goods to Build Strong Communities
- Probability of success
- Priority (not exclusive) will given to:
  - Faculty who have not received a NITC grant in the past
  - Untenured faculty, or
  - Interdisciplinary projects

5 OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS
- A deliverable, such as a final report or comparable product that summarizes research findings.
- The deliverable will be sent for external review by NITC staff, and PIs are responsible for incorporating peer-review comments into the final report.
- Submission of a data product that accompanies research findings.
- NITC support must be acknowledged in all work that results from NITC funding. The ORCID and that of all other authors must be included as well.
- Student contributions to research should be recognized in publications via acknowledgement, footnote, or co-authorship.

- Award recipients must submit bi-annual progress reports. These reports will support NITC's federal reporting responsibilities.
- Electronic copies of all papers submitted to journals or conferences that are based on the project research should be provided to NITC.
- Other requirements as outlined in the PI Handbook and/or are required by NITC's funder.

6   Application Materials

All proposers must submit a proposal, a Data Management Plan, and a detailed budget. Relevant forms and a Data Management Plan Guide that includes a template can be found on the NITC website (http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/for-researchers).

6.1   Proposal

The proposal outlines the general research agenda including your general methodology, task schedule and the qualification of your research team.

6.2   Data Management Plan

The purpose of the Data Management Plan is to plan for submitting your project's data with your final deliverable, which is required as part of this grant. The Data Management Guide is available on the NITC website and includes a detailed template that walks you through the points you need to include in your plan. We ask you to use this template to generate your DMP. We also encourage you to incorporate time to prepare your data for submission in your task schedule.

6.3   Budget

Applicants must use the NITC Budget Form to outline detailed budget items. Proposal budgets should be conservative and cost-effective. In general, faculty salary (summer or academic year), student support, and tuition/fee reimbursement are allowable expenses.

Federal indirect costs (overhead) specific to each NITC university and OPE (fringe benefits) should also be included in the budget. *Tuition is not subject to indirect costs.*

Funding for salary that goes beyond normal academic or summer compensation will not be allowed. In addition:

- Projects should be budgeted to begin on or after November 1st, 2017 and completed by October 31st, 2018. Please plan to submit the draft final report or deliverable no later than one month prior to the project end date.
- NITC reserves the right to request reductions or other changes to budgets of submitted proposals. Budgets should be justified and cost-effective, and should follow all budget guidelines for indirect cost rates, allowable expenditures, etc.
- Awards are cost-reimbursable.

6.4   Matching Funds

All awards require 100% match. PIs should use the Budget Form to indicate match commitment. Letters of intent or other documentation of match commitment, signed by an institutional official authorized to obligate cost share, must be included with the Proposal Form; *awards will not be finalized without confirmation of the match commitment*. Sample match commitment letters can be found on the NITC website.

NITC follows the rules set forth in [2 C.F.R. 200.306](), , for the use of in-kind and cash contributions as matching funds. In general, federal funds cannot be used as match. Exceptions include funds under U.S.C. Title 23, Sections 503, 504(b), or 505, which refer to technology deployment, local technical assistance, state planning and research (SPR) programs and national cooperative highway research program (NCHRP) managed by the Transportation Research Board. The start date of matching funds is November 30, 2016.

7 How to Apply

Applicants must submit their application package to the online project management system (PPMS). To apply, complete the following steps:

- Sign up for an Open Researcher and Contributor ID or [ORCID](). Please include the ORCID number on your application form.
- Save the proposal form and DMP as a PDF and the budget form as an Excel spreadsheet
- Create an account and/or sign in the project management system online (http://ppms.trec.pdx.edu).
- Select the '**Small Starts 2017**' grant cycle, upload and submit your Proposal, Budget, and DMP.
- All documents are **due September 15, 2017 at 5:00 PM PDT** to qualify for funding**.** Incomplete or late application packages will not be considered.

Proposals, DMPs, and budgets must be approved by the PI's home university research office prior to submission and ***will not be considered without their approval.*** PIs must follow their university's requirements for approval of proposals, including match commitment and use of human subjects (if applicable). Further questions regarding university approval should be directed to the home university research administration office or the home university Executive Committee member:

- **Oregon Tech**: Office of Strategic Partnerships: http://www.oit.edu/faculty-staff/sponsored-projects-grants-administration
  Preliminary approval form: http://www.oit.edu/docs/default-source/spa/proposal-approval-form.pdf?sfvrsn=4
- **PSU**: Proposal Internal Approval Form (PIAF):
  https://sites.google.com/a/pdx.edu/research/lifecycle/proposal/psu-proposal-approval
  Note that an additional NITC-specific form will also be required and sent to PIs after they submit their projects abstracts.
- **UO**: Apply through Electronic Proposal Clearance System (E-PCS) and Office of Research Services and Administration: http://orsa.uoregon.edu/
- **UA:** Research, Discovery & Innovation: http://research.arizona.edu/
- **UTA:** Research Administration: http://www.uta.edu/uta/research.php
- **UU**: UU Office of Sponsored Project: http://www.osp.utah.edu/

8 Contact Information

For questions about Small Starts proposals or the data management plan, please contact Eva-Maria Muecke (emuecke@pdx.edu), Research Program Administrator. Each campus has a representative on NITC's Executive Committee, who can discuss the process:

- Marc Schlossberg, University of Oregon, 541-346-2046, schlossb@uoregon.edu
- Keith Bartholomew, University of Utah, 801-585-8944, bartholomew@arch.utah.edu
- Roger Lindgren, Oregon Institute of Technology, 541-885-1947, roger.lindgren@oit.edu

- Avinash Unnikrishnan, Portland State University, 503-725-2872, uavinash@pdx.edu
- Arlie Adkins, University of Arizona, 520-626-7727, arlieadkins@email.arizona.edu
- Stephen Mattingly, University of Texas, Arlington, 817-272-2859, mattingly@uta.edu

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