Request for Proposals
NITC Small Starts

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.

NITC is a Portland State-led partnership with the Oregon Institute of Technology, University of Arizona, University of Oregon, University of Texas at Arlington, and University of Utah.

Improving the 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.

1.1 Key dates

September 17, 2018	Proposals due
Sept - Oct 2018	Peer Reviews
Oct - Nov 2018	Project selection, Awards and Task Orders
Dec 1, 2018	Projects begin

1.2 What's new in this RFP

PIs should treat NITC similar to other external grants. We require PIs to follow their home university's process for submitting external grants. To prevent delays in awards, we will now require a Letter of Commitment from your home university's research administration office with each proposal. Please be prepared to submit your application package to your institutional research office for review and approval prior to submitting your proposal. PIs will still submit their proposal online. For further details, see Section 6 of this RFP.

2 Theme

The NITC theme connects directly with the U.S. DOT goal of **improving the 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.

3 Eligibility

Faculty members and research faculty must be from Portland State University, Oregon Institute of Technology, University of Arizona, University of Oregon, University of Texas at Arlington, or University of Utah to be eligible to serve as PIs and submit proposals.

4 SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF GRANT

Applications are due on **September 17, 2018 at 5pm PDT.** All proposals will be reviewed externally by at least three peer reviewers. The Executive Committee selects the final slate of proposals via consensus.

Funds will be available to successful applicants starting **December 1, 2018** and must be expended by **November 30, 2019.**

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 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.

5   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).

5.1   Proposal

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

5.2   Data Management Plan

The purpose of the Data Management Plan (DMP) 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. Be sure to incorporate the time to prepare your data for submission in your task schedule.

5.3 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 December 1st, 2018 and completed by November 30, 2019. 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.

5.4 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 must be included with the Proposal Form. Awards will not be finalized without confirmation of 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.

6 Institutional Approval

NITC grants should be treated similar to other external grants. Accordingly, at each institution, proposals should be reviewed and approved by their home institution's research administration office. A specific Letter of Commitment from the PIs home institution will acknowledge this approval. The letter must indicate the institution's total amount requested and the amount of match (including 3rd party) they will document. The letter must be signed by an institution's official authorized to obligate cost share. If applicable, 3rd party letters of intent or other documentation of match commitment should also be included with the Proposal Form. For Portland State University only, a Proposal Internal Approval Form (PIAF) will be submitted in lieu of an Institutional Letter of Commitment.

Proposals and budgets must be approved by the PI's home university research office prior to submission and will not be considered without their approval

Further questions regarding university approval should be directed to the home university research administration office or the home university Executive Committee member:

- **Oregon Tech:** Sponsored Projects and Grant Administration: 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://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/for-researchers
- **UO:** Apply through Electronic Proposal Clearance System (E-PCS) and Sponsored Projects Services: http://orsa.uoregon.edu/
- **UA:** Engineering Research Administration Services (ERAS) or Sponsored Projects & Contracting Services (SPCS): https://rgw.arizona.edu/administration/getting-started
- **UTA:** Office of Grants and Contract Services: http://www.uta.edu/research/administration/departments/gcs/university-process/index.php
- **UU:** UU Office of Sponsored Project: http://www.osp.utah.edu/

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 2018**' grant cycle, upload and submit your Proposal, Budget, and DMP.
- All documents are due **September 17, 2018 at 5:00 PM PDT** to qualify for funding. Incomplete or late application packages will not be considered.

8   Contact Information

For questions about research proposals, please contact Eva-Maria Muecke, Research Program Administrator, 503-725-2897, emuecke@pdx.edu. Each campus has a representative on NITC's Executive Committee who can discuss the process:

- **Oregon Tech:** Roger Lindgren, 541-885-1947, roger.lindgren@oit.edu
- **PSU:** Avinash Unnikrishnan, 503-725-2872, uavinash@pdx.edu
- **UO:** Marc Schlossberg, 541-346-2046, schlossb@uoregon.edu
- **UA:** Arlie Adkins, 503-880-3110, arlieadkins@email.arizona.edu
- **UTA:** Stephen Mattingly, Arlington, 817-272-2859, mattingly@uta.edu
- **UU:** Keith Bartholomew, 801-585-8944, bartholomew@arch.utah.edu

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

9   Proposal Checklist

- ☐ **Proposal document** (PDF). *Did you include the ORCID of all investigators? Are the preparation of your data package and its documentation included in your tasks?*
  Does the proposal include the following documents?

- ☐ Institutional Letter of Commitment – except PSU
- ☐ Proposal Internal Approval Form (PIAF) – PSU only
- ☐ If applicable, 3rd party match documentation

Proposals without university approval will not be considered.

- ☐ **Budget** (Excel file; current year form – old forms will not be accepted).
  Be sure to review all the instructions listed on the worksheets of the budget template. Work with your university research office to ensure the budget is correct.

- ☐ **Data Management Plan** (PDF). *Did you follow closely the guidance provided in the template?*

Please contact the following regarding Institutional Letter of Commitment for your institution:

- o **Oregon Tech:** Sponsored Projects and Grant Administration
- o **UO:** Sponsored Projects Services (SPS)
- o **UTA:** Office of Grants & Contract Services
- o **UA:** Engineering Research Administration Services (ERAS) or Sponsored Projects & Contracting Services (SPCS)
- o **UU:** Office of Sponsored Projects (OSP)