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| IMG_0478 | Request for Proposals**NITC Small Starts** <http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/> |

# Overview

The **National Institute for Transportation and Communities** (NITC) is a program of the [Transportation Research and Education Center](http://trec.pdx.edu/) (TREC) at Portland State University. NITC is one of the U.S. Department of Transportation’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.

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.

## Key dates

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| September 13, 2019 | Proposals due |
| Sep - Oct 2019 | Peer Reviews |
| Oct - Nov 2019 | Project selection, Awards and Task Orders |
| December 1, 2019 | Projects begin |
| May 31, 2020 | Progress reports due – PPMS |
| October 31, 2020 | Draft final reports due |
| November 30, 2020 | Final reports due |

# Theme

The NITC theme connects directly with the U.S. DOT’s 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.

# 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 the University of Utah to be eligible to serve as PIs and submit proposals.

# SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR AWARD OF GRANT

Applications are due on **September 13, 2019 at 5pm PDT**. All proposals will be reviewed externally by at least three peer reviewers. The Executive Committee selects the proposals to be funded. Awards are cost-reimbursable. The funds will be available to successful applicants starting **December 1, 2019** and must be expended by **November 30, 2020**.

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) is 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 progress reports in PPMS by May 31 and November 30. These reports 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 FHWA’s FAST Act.

# Application Materials

All proposers must submit a proposal, a Data Management Plan, and a detailed budget. Forms and supporting materials are on the NITC website (<http://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/for-researchers>).

## Proposal

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

## Data Management Plan

Submitting your project’s data with your final deliverable is required. NITC’s [Data Management Guide](https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/sites/default/files/Data%20Management%20Plan_PI_Guide_04.10.2019.doc) helps you create your DMP through introducing the required template and going over the points you need to include. Be sure to incorporate the time to prepare your data for submission in your task schedule.

## Budget

Applicants must use the [NITC Budget Form](https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/sites/default/files/NITC%20Budget%20Template%20as%20of%2001-31-2019.xls). Your proposal budget should:

* Follow guidelines for indirect cost rates, allowable expenditures, etc. In general, faculty salary (summer or academic year), student support, and tuition/fee reimbursement are allowable expenses. Tuition is not subject to indirect costs.
* Be cost-effective and based on reasonable estimates of necessary expenses.
* Include federal indirect costs (overhead) specific to each NITC university and OPE (fringe benefits).
* Funding for salary that goes beyond normal academic or summer compensation will not be allowed.
* Projects should be budgeted to begin on or after December 1, 2019 and completed by November 30, 2020.
* NITC reserves the right to request reductions or other changes to budgets of submitted proposals.

## 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](https://nitc.trec.pdx.edu/for-researchers).

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.

# Institutional Approval

NITC grants should be treated similar to other external grants. Prior to submission, proposals, including budgets, must 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 without required documentation will not be considered.

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/sites/default/files/NITC%20PIAF_March2019-rs.pdf>
* **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/>

# How to Apply

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

* Complete the required forms and include your [Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID](https://orcid.org/)) 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 Proposals & Projects Management System online (<http://ppms.trec.pdx.edu>).
* Select the ‘**Small Starts 2019**’ grant cycle, upload and submit your Proposal, Budget, and DMP.
* All documents are due **September 13, 2019 at 5:00 PM PDT** to qualify for funding. Incomplete or late application packages will not be considered.

# Contact Information

For questions about research proposals, please contact Brendan Williams, Research Program Administrator, 503-725-2863, brendan.williams@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, 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/.

# 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?*

