

The Alaska University Transportation Center

Request for Proposal

A Review of Alternative Revenue Sources for Alaska's Transportation System

Maximum Funding: \$100,000

Match Requirement: None. However, these funds may be combined with other funds to enhance or expand the project.

Due Date: 5:00 pm, November 9, 2009

Eligible Participants: The Principal Investigator must be eligible to act as a Principal Investigator within the University of Alaska System. Team members may be from another institution, private sector or public sector consistent with University of Alaska procurement regulations.

Project Completion Date: The final report must be submitted no later than September 1, 2011.

Project Scope:

The funding climate for Alaska's transportation infrastructure is likely to change under the new Federal Highway Act. As written, the proposed legislation suggests that priority will be given to highly populated areas and to critical infrastructure. This priority will likely bias federal funding decisions against rural states such as Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Alaska. Under this approach, rural states will receive far fewer federal funds than in the past. Further, donor states, including New York, California and Texas, are facing financial crises that make them less likely to help fund the transportation infrastructure of rural states.

Looking further, revenues from fuel taxes are no longer capable of covering the cost of the nation's transportation systems. As a result, many states are actively looking at other sources of revenue such as user fees, tolls, and public-private partnerships to fund transportation.

This anticipated reduction in the federal funding upon which Alaska has depended to build and maintain its transportation infrastructure requires that Alaska, like other rural states, look for alternative revenue sources.

AUTC is commissioning this study to review a variety of potential alternative revenue sources and to assess the economic impact to the state of using those revenue sources. AUTC does not expect the researchers to recommend a specific course of action, but rather to develop an unbiased source document addressing potential alternative revenue sources that can be used as the basis of public debate on how Alaska will fund its future transportation infrastructure. The selected team of researchers should include but not be limited to: economists, transportation planners, transportation engineers, and specialists in freight logistics.

Proposal Requirements:

All proposals are due by 5:00 pm Alaska Time, November 9, 2009. Proposals must be submitted to **Jill Dewey-Davidson, AUTC Program Asst.** They can be submitted by email at AUTC@uaf.edu, or by mail or courier to:

The Alaska University Transportation Center
Room 245 Duckering, PO Box 755900
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-5900
Attn: Jill Dewey-Davidson

Proposals must use the template provided and shall be no longer than 25 pages, including budget and budget justification pages. Proposals must be reviewed and signed by the Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP). Failure to submit a proposal consistent with the University's guidelines will result in disqualification.

Selection Process:

Proposals will be reviewed by the AUTC Governing Board and scored based on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the project scope: 10 points
- Project team: 20 points
- Understanding of current trends: 15 points
- Research Plan: 25 points

The Governing Board may request the AUTC Director to negotiate changes to the successful proposal. If the director is unable to negotiate changes acceptable to the Board, the Director may disqualify the top proposal and begin negotiations with the PI with the next highest score. The Governing Board will approve the final proposal before the notice to proceed is issued by AUTC.

Additional Requirements:

Funding for this project is provided by a US DOT RITA grant. All funds expended on this project must follow the guidance of OMB Circulars A-21 and A-110.

Any questions regarding this RFP can be directed to Billy Connor, Director, AUTC. He can be reached by the following:

Phone: 907-474-5552

Email: bgconnor@alaska.edu

Proposal Guidelines

Organization

It is **mandatory** that the proposal contains the following sections and that it be presented in the following order:

1. Cover
2. Summary Page
3. Table of Contents
4. Problem Statement
5. Problem Background
6. Study Objectives
7. Research Plan
 - (a) *Introduction*
 - (b) *Research Approach*
 - (c) *Implementation Plan*
 - (d) *Applicability of Results to Practice*
8. Qualifications of the Research Team
9. Disclosure
10. Equipment and Facilities
11. Time Requirements
12. Cooperative Features (if appropriate)
13. Budget
14. Appendixes (if appropriate)

Details of Essential Content

1. *Cover*-- The cover must contain the title of the research project, name, address, and telephone number of the PI and associated agency submitting; the name and address of other agencies that are co-proposers; the amount of time required to complete the research as specified in the proposal; and the amount of funds requested.

2. *Summary Page*--The summary page must provide a description of the project, its goals and benefits and any other information necessary to describe the project. The information provided in this section of the proposal will be placed on the AUTC webpage. One appropriate photo or diagram which describes the project is encouraged.

3. *Table of Contents*--Self-explanatory.

4. *Problem Statement*--State the problem to be addressed in the proposed study as understood by the Principal Investigator. This should not be a simple repetition of the request for proposals, but should provide the preparer's insights as to what is needed by the AUTC and partnering organizations. If a recent and pertinent literature review has not been completed for the subject

area, including a review through the Transportation Research Information System (TRIS) database, the need for and the extent of the required literature search is to be addressed in the proposal and included in the cost.

5. *Problem Background*--Provide information on the Proposer's knowledge of the problem to be investigated, focusing on the "current state of knowledge". Describe the Proposer's understanding of how the problem affects the transportation community.

6. *Study Objectives*--State clearly the specific objectives of the study, including the technical questions it will answer. Include a description of the scope of the study to set limits on what is and is not to be included in the study.

7. *Research Plan*--The research plan shall detail completely the prosecution of the research, including the submission of an acceptable final report. The plan ultimately becomes a part of the contract by reference of the proposal; therefore, it should describe in a specific and straightforward manner the proposed approach and how this approach is expected to lead to the solution of the problem described in the RFP. Your approach should be concise, yet include sufficient detail to describe completely the approach to solution of the problem. Research methodology shall be described in sufficient detail to permit evaluation of the probability of success in achieving the objectives.

The research plan shall be subdivided into the following sections:

(a) *Introduction*. The introduction to the research plan should provide a concise overview of the Proposer's approach to conducting the research. It should describe the manner in which the expertise and experience of the proposed team will be used in the research, and the application of special data, facilities, contacts, or equipment should be presented. The introduction should highlight the linkages of the proposed team's capabilities to the project tasks and the manner by which the proposed plan will satisfy the objectives.

(b) *Research Approach*. This section will be used to describe how the objectives will be achieved through a logical, innovative, and rational scientific plan. The plan shall describe each phase or task of the research to be undertaken.

(c) *Anticipated Research Results*. The research plan for each proposal shall contain specific statements describing the anticipated research results. The results are expected to be presented in terms of the language and working tools of the practitioner or administrator so as to be immediately applicable to practice. Consequently, there must be specific statements of the manner in which the desired results would be reported, e.g., mathematical models, design techniques, field or laboratory test procedures, or recommendations for changes in AASHTO, FHWA, or standard highway specifications.

(d) *Implementation Plan*. Proposals and the project final report must contain an implementation plan for moving the results of the research into practice or how information will be used in future research. The plan describes activities to promote application of the product of this research. The Implementation Plan must describe, as a minimum, the following: (a) the "product"

expected from the research, (b) the audience or "market" for this product, (c) a realistic assessment of impediments to successful implementation, (d) the institutions and individuals who might take leadership in applying the research product, (e) the activities necessary for successful implementation, and (f) the criteria for judging the progress and consequences of implementation.

If the nature of a project is such that it is known initially that the results will not be amenable to immediate implementation into practice, the research plan must include recommendations for the additional work necessary to reach the implementation stage.

(e) *Applicability of Results to Practice.* The research plan shall include a section titled "Applicability of Results to Practice" that clearly describes how the anticipated research results can be used to improve transportation practices. Clearly indicate the expected audience for the research results.

8. *Qualifications of the Research Team.* Name, address, telephone number, and pertinent background information must be provided for the PI bearing primary responsibility for the project. The same information is required for other research team members participating to a significant degree. The proposal must describe how the research team members' academic, industrial, and/or research experiences relate to the project to be undertaken. This must not exceed one page per team member.

9. *Disclosure.* This item of the proposal must provide information relevant to the AUTC's need to ensure objectivity and to be aware of possible sources of significant financial or organizational conflict of interest in conducting the research must be presented in this section of the proposal. For example, under certain conditions, ownership of the proposing agency, other organizational relationships, or proprietary rights and interests could be perceived as jeopardizing an objective approach to the research effort, and Proposers are asked to disclose any such circumstances and to explain how they will be accounted for in this study. If there are no issues related to objectivity, this should be stated.

State or federal employees submitting or participating in proposals to conduct AUTC research must also include in this section a letter signed by appropriate authority stating that the employee's agency is aware of the proposal and approves of the employee conducting research.

10. *Equipment and Facilities.* This section shall include a description of the facilities available to undertake the research and an itemization of the equipment on hand considered necessary to complete the research. In the event that use of the facilities or equipment is conditional, the conditions should be described. In the event that certain facilities or equipment are considered necessary to undertake the research but are not on hand, that fact should be presented. The Proposer should identify any arrangements that will be made to borrow or rent necessary equipment. Letters of commitment should be included to indicate the availability of equipment. Rental rates should be included in the budget.

In the case where it is contemplated that additional equipment will be purchased under project funds, be certain that the budget item "capital equipment" indicates this and a quote is included in the proposal.

11. *Time Requirements.* The time required to complete the research project shall be specified. Proposals will be rejected if the proposed time does not match the time specified in the project statement. In addition, a schedule shall be included that shows each phase or task of the work, when that phase or task will begin, how long it will continue, and when it should end. The timetable should clearly delineate the points in time where project deliverables and reports are planned. Remember, quarterly reports are required.

12. *Cooperative Features.* If assistance in the form of personnel, data, or equipment is required from other agencies, public or private, describe the plans for obtaining such help or information. In the case where such cooperative features play an important part in the conduct of the research, a letter of intent from agencies agreeing to provide cooperative features must be included in the proposal. If there are no such cooperative features, it should be so stated.

13. *Budget.* The budget must contain all costs for the project. The budget must include a budget justification detailing the expenses. Any foreign travel or equipment must be highlighted. No foreign travel or equipment will be allowed until approval has been granted by the US DOT RITA.

14. *Appendixes.* This section is optional. The appendices may include such things as statements concerning previous work on this problem or related problems, abstracts of related projects, a bibliography or list of references, or descriptive brochures or materials describing the agency's organization and capabilities in general terms. Any other material not specifically mentioned previously and felt to be relevant for purposes of the proposal may be included as an appendix. **Proposers are cautioned that material that is not germane to the RFP will negatively impact the review of the proposal.**

In summary, it is expected that Proposers will have studied the foregoing instructions and will have complied fully with them. Failure to do so, if not warranting outright rejection, will certainly raise serious questions as to how well the agency would handle a complex research project and would, therefore, seriously jeopardize the chances of being selected to conduct the work. In matters of doubt, Proposers should make it a point to contact the AUTC office for assistance. The name and telephone number of the staff member assigned to each project is noted on the proposal cover page. Always feel free to contact the AUTC office for any questions at 907-474-7330.