



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Policy and Safety First Research Programs

Request for Proposals

FFY 2026

Research and Implement Best Practices

for Piloting Roadway Improvements

Request for Proposals Timeline and Information

February 18, 2026

Issue Date of this Request for Proposal (RFP). This RFP has been posted at: <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals>.

Please read the [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#) as this document has been updated recently and contains important information, including tables and templates, necessary for writing a proposal for submission.

March 4, 2026
4:30 PM (CST)

Questions regarding this RFP are due by this date and time. Questions need to be submitted electronically with the project name to: research@dot.wi.gov. Questions received after this date and time will not be considered.

March 16, 2026
4:30 PM (CST)

Responses to Questions will be posted on the WisDOT Research and Library website at: <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/rfps-and-proposals>.

March 30, 2026
12:00 PM (CST)

Proposals are due by this date and time. Proposals must be submitted electronically in a PDF version to: research@dot.wi.gov. Proposals received after this date and time will not be considered.

May 29, 2026

Award and Deny letters will be sent by email to all proposal submitters (only lead investigator will be notified).

Project Budget and Schedule

\$100,000.

Project Budget shall not exceed this amount. Matching funds will not be considered in the proposal evaluation process. Proposals which exceed this amount will be disqualified.

12 Months

Period of Performance / Duration of Project

August 1, 2026

Anticipated Start Date of Project

June 1, 2027

Researcher's Final Report due

July 31, 2027

Anticipated End Date of Project

Safety First

WisDOT Research Program

For more information regarding this RFP contact the WisDOT Research Program at: research@dot.wi.gov.

NOTICE: Submission of a proposal does not guarantee an award. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received; however, in the event WisDOT does award a project, such award will be based on uniform evaluation criteria.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Policy and Safety First Research Programs Request for Proposals

Research and Implement Best Practices for Piloting Roadway Improvements

Acronyms and Definitions

COP – Close-Out Presentation

DMP – Data Management Plan

FDM – Facilities Development Manual

HSIP – Highway Safety Improvement Program

PI – Principal Investigator, lead researcher

POC – Project Oversight Committee comprised of subject matter experts who are the main point of contact with the PI.

RFP – Request for Proposal

R&L – WisDOT Research and Library Unit providing administrative support

TEOpS – Traffic Engineering, Operations and Safety Manual

WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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Background and Problem Statement

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) has limitations in its process for the rapid deployment of new and innovative safety treatments at a scale sufficient to support meaningful post implementation evaluation. Under the existing safety engineering framework, treatments and countermeasures must demonstrate quantified benefits derived from established data driven methodologies. Emerging and innovative treatments often lack robust datasets, which WisDOT relies on to determine whether such measures should be adopted.

Other state Departments of Transportation have established processes that permit the piloting of new or experimental engineering solutions. This project seeks to development a model capable of quantifying the safety benefits of innovative treatments and countermeasures. Establishing a standardized process and promoting its adoption across WisDOT will enable more consistent implementation, improve resource allocation, and ultimately reduce both the frequency and severity of roadway crashes.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this project are:

- Research best practices and funding sources from other state transportation agencies and federal programs on how to pilot new and innovative roadway safety improvements.
- Identify potential WisDOT funding sources, including but not limited to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), that can be used to implement pilot treatments/projects/programs.
- Develop a process from those best practices that works within existing WisDOT procedures to implement pilot treatments/projects/programs.
- Develop a process to evaluate the pilot projects and use these evaluations to inform design decisions for inclusion in WisDOT's Facilities Development Manual (FDM) or Traffic Engineering, Operations and Safety (TEOpS) Manual.
- Promote consistency across the WisDOT that ensures that all regions and divisions follow the same process for evaluating and implementing new safety measures.

Research Approach - Scope of Work/Work Plan/ Experimental Design

3.1 Task 1: Literature Review

Conduct a comprehensive literature review of other state transportation agencies and federal programs to identify the current practices and processes used to quantify the benefits of pilot countermeasures and innovative engineering solutions. Identify best-practices and funding solutions, including any state or federal grants and applications that Wisconsin could utilize at either the state or local level.

Deliverable: Literature review and a short 3-4 page executive summary will be submitted to the Project Oversight Committee (POC) for review. The PI and POC will discuss and determine which states proceed to Task 2.

3.2 Task 2: Survey of State DOTs

3.2a Task 2a: Develop a Survey

Researchers will create a survey for state DOTs requesting information on the policies, funding mechanisms, and evaluation processes used by other state DOTs.

Deliverable: Survey for state DOTs requesting information on the policies, funding, and evaluation processes for pilot projects. A draft of the survey questions will be provided to the POC for review.

3.2b Task 2b: Conduct a Survey and Analyze Results

Survey state DOTs from Task 1 identified by the POC as similar to WisDOT. Researchers will analyze the survey results and compare the external state practices to WisDOT practices.

Deliverable: Summary of the survey responses, including a matrix showing the funding source, the application process, the evaluation metrics, and project timelines. The summary should be provided to the POC for review.

3.2c **Task 2c: Develop a Resource**

Develop a resource using the survey analysis and literature review from Task 1 that shows the different avenues for moving a pilot project forward. This resource should include the funding source, the application process, the evaluation metrics, and a project timeline.

Deliverable: Technical memorandum and summary of evaluation processes which will be provided to the POC for review.

3.3 **Task 3: Application Development**

Based on the findings of the literature review and survey, develop a WisDOT application and application process framework for piloting countermeasures and treatments.

Deliverables: Application template and a technical memorandum summarizing the WisDOT application process which will be provided to the POC for review. Comments from the POC on these deliverables will be incorporated into the final report (Task 5).

3.4 **Task 4: Method Development**

Based on the findings of the literature review and survey, develop a method and process for evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot treatment(s). This method should identify ways to evaluate effectiveness that don't rely on crash data, which could include but is not limited to: speed, near miss, video analytics, telematics, and number of conflict points. The evaluation process should also identify how to assess the effectiveness for pilots that range from one location to many locations of deployment. Goodness of fit and other performance measures should be documented and explained. Any tools developed for this task shall be made available to WisDOT to own and modify.

Deliverable: Technical memorandum and summary of the evaluation process which will be provided to the POC for review.

3.5 **Task 5: Project Final Report**

The research team will prepare and submit a Final Report following the timeline and requirements detailed in the [Final Report and Close-Out Presentation \(COP\) Information](#). This document contains important information for the Final Report and COP process.

The Final Report will include a summary of the project background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project as well as a discussion of implementation options.

The POC members will review this report. Questions and comments will be submitted to the researcher and will require edits and revisions, or a response and explanation in a Summary Report. The Final Report will be considered complete and approved when the POC chair accepts all revisions and responses. Any data files collected from the lab and/or field testing/survey should be included for future use, analysis, and interpretation.

3.6 **Task 6: Close-Out Presentation (COP)**

The research team will have a 1-hour meeting to present a 30-45 minute PowerPoint presentation followed by discussion. The presentation includes a summary of the background and problem statement, research objectives and approach, best practices, recommendations, and interpretations developed during the project.

4 Required Testing/Equipment/Materials

N/A

5 Required Travel and Meetings

WisDOT will only fund travel expenses if they are included in the research project proposal budget.

5.1 **Travel for Tasks and/or Field Work**

N/A

5.2 **Meetings**

A kick-off meeting, periodic progress meetings, and a close-out presentation are required. Meetings are anticipated to be virtual. Please see the [Policy and Safety First Meeting Information](#) for additional information.

5.3 **POC Meetings**

At the start of the project the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L will determine points in the project where discussions and decisions are needed. One hour to 1½ hour-long meetings will be set for the full POC, the researchers, and R&L staff at those times, based on meeting needs. The researcher will typically have a short presentation with relevant information and progress updates.

5.4 **Check-In Meetings**

If there are gaps of more than eight weeks between meetings, check-in meetings of 20-30 minutes may be scheduled for the POC Chair, lead PI and R&L staff. A presentation is not expected at check-in meetings.

5.5 **Close-Out Presentation (COP)**

WisDOT welcomes a virtual Close-Out presentation; however, the researcher may present the results in person, paid by contract funds, if included in the project budget.

5.6 **Conferences – N/A**

WisDOT/POC Contribution

WisDOT will provide the following support through the Project Oversight Committee (POC) to support the successful completion of the project:

- Work will be conducted with project oversight by WisDOT staff and the Project Oversight Committee (POC). The POC members support the successful completion of the project.
- The research team may assume that WisDOT staff/POC members can contribute a maximum of 40 hours over the project's duration.
- The research team will not assume the availability of WisDOT staff or equipment in the proposal. If WisDOT or another entity donates equipment or staff time, a commitment letter must be included in the proposal.
- The POC will coordinate access to WisDOT materials used in laboratory test programs, if needed.
- The POC and POC will also coordinate access to WisDOT databases, if needed.

Design and Traffic Manuals

WisDOT will provide access to its design and traffic manuals, which are publicly accessible at:

- FDM: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/eng-consultants/cnslt-rsrcses/rdwy/fdm.aspx>
- TEOpS: <https://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/doing-bus/local-gov/traffic-ops/manuals-and-standards/teops/default.aspx>

Traffic Control (if needed)

N/A.

Deliverables – Required Project Documentation

8.1 Quarterly Progress Reports (QPRs)

A 1-2 page summary of project activities, next steps and expenditures for the quarter. WisDOT will provide the QPR template. See [WisDOT Research Quarterly Progress Report Information](#).

8.2 Quarterly Invoices

Invoices are submitted quarterly. See [WisDOT Research Program Invoice Information](#).

9.1 Meeting Updates & Interim Reports

Meeting updates are typically short PowerPoint presentations.

Interim reports may include the Literature Review and others as designated. Interim reports are flexible in format and length. These may be papers, graphs, tables, surveys, or other formats. The POC and researcher will determine what format and length is most appropriate for each report.

9.2 Project Final Report Requirements, Process and Timeline

The Final Report for the research project will go through three stages as it is reviewed by the POC and edited by the researcher(s): Project Report, Revised Report and Approved Final Report. For full details please see Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information.

9.3 Research Data

All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan (section 16).

Reports, Presentations and Deliverables

Researcher, please keep this table in the Proposal.

Task	Report / Presentation	Description of Deliverable
All	POC Meeting Updates	Throughout the project, PowerPoints, interim reports and meeting updates are requested to be emailed to R&L 1 week before POC meetings for POC review and preparation for meeting discussion.
1	Literature Review and Summary	Literature review and a short 3-4 page executive summary will be submitted to the Project Oversight Committee (POC) for review. The PI and POC will discuss and determine which states proceed to Task 2.
2a	Develop Survey	Survey for state DOTs requesting information on the policies, funding, and evaluation processes for pilot projects. A draft of the survey questions will be provided to the POC for review.
2b	Conduct Survey, Analyze and Summarize Results	Summary of the survey responses, including a matrix showing the funding source, the application process, the evaluation metrics, and project timelines. The summary should be provided to the POC for review.
2c	Develop a Resource, Technical Memorandum and Summary	Technical memorandum and summary of evaluation processes which will be provided to the POC for review.
3	Application Development and Technical Memorandum	Application template and a technical memorandum summarizing the WisDOT application process which will be provided to the POC for review. Comments from the POC on these deliverables will be incorporated into the final report (Task 5).
4	Technical memorandum and summary of evaluation process	Technical memorandum and summary of the evaluation process which will be provided to the POC for review.
5	Project Report	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L See Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information
5	Final Report and Summary document	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L
6	COP Presentation	See Policy and Safety First - Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information

WisDOT seeks to fund research with high implementation potential. Implementation potential will be tracked throughout the lifecycle of this research project and may include changes to expected implementation. The research plan must include specific statements describing anticipated research results and an assessment of implementation potential.

10.1 Research Results

Proposals should detail the research results in terms of a specific deliverable(s).

10.2 Implementation Plan and Deliverables

This section also includes an implementation plan to address the planned implementation type(s) indicated in the RFP. While the plan may change as the research progresses, at a minimum the proposal should indicate:

- The product expected from the research.
- The stakeholder or intended audience that will most likely be impacted by the research results.
- Potential impediments to implementation.
- Activities necessary for successful implementation.
- Implementation deliverables
- Measures of success
- Data collection requirements

Please see the [Proposal Preparation Instructions](#) for specific directions related to Research Results and Implementation including completing the table below.

Researchers are invited to suggest deliverables as well as provide information regarding the deliverables included in the Implementation Plan and Deliverables table.

Implementation Plan and Deliverables

Researcher, please add and describe implementation plans and keep this table in the Proposal.

Successful implementation of this research will be achieved through the development of the following items:

Implementation Type	Description	Researcher's Anticipated Deliverables/ Products/ Activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inform Policy:	Provide information, resource availability, and best practices. Create a framework that can be adopted by WisDOT.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Guidance:	Update policy language and organizational workflows	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Develop a Model:	Evaluation criteria. Develop a model to determine the effectiveness of improvements.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:	Framework evaluation by testing on WisDOT project.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Revise a Specification:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform Policy:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

11 Project Schedule

The duration of the research project is provided on page 2 of this RFP. The researcher will provide a work schedule which should be based on the assumed contract start date.

11.1 **Summary of Hours**– The proposal must include template [Summary of Hours](#).

11.2 **Gantt Chart** - The project schedule must include a Gantt chart.

12 Budget

12.1 Budget Worksheet

The researcher will completely fill-in the Excel [Budget Worksheet](#) template.

12.2 Budget Justification

The researcher will provide a detailed description of costs related to travel, materials and supplies and other direct costs. See Proposal Preparation Instructions for details.

13 Qualifications of the Research Team

The proposer will provide information on the qualifications and background of the research team.

14 Other Commitments of the Research Team

The proposer will complete the **Summary of Commitments** in [Commitments of Research Staff](#).

15 Facilities and Information Services

The proposer will provide their laboratory and technical certifications for project related activities.

16 Data Management Plan

The research team will include a Data Management Plan (DMP) documenting all field/laboratory data and analyses to ensure accessibility and transparency of research data as required by the USDOT per the Public Access Plan (<https://ntl.bts.gov/ntl/public-access/creating-data-management-plans-extramural-research>). All research data will be identified and made available per the Data Management Plan. See Proposal Preparation Instructions for details.

17 References

The proposer will provide references of the research team.

18 Proprietary Information in Proposal

[DOA-3027 Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information Form](#)

Any restrictions on the use of data contained within a proposal must be clearly stated in the proposal itself. Proprietary information submitted in response to a request will be handled under applicable Wisconsin procurement regulations and the Wisconsin public records law. Proprietary restrictions usually are not accepted. However, when accepted, it is the proposer's responsibility to defend the determination in case of an appeal or litigation.

Any material submitted in response to this request that the proposer considers confidential and proprietary information, and which qualifies as a trade secret, as provided in s. 19.36(5), Wis. Stats., or material which can be kept confidential under the Wisconsin public records law, must be identified on a Designation of Confidential and Proprietary Information form (DOA-3027).

Proposal prices cannot be held confidential.

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Public Records

WisDOT intends to maintain an open and public process in the solicitation, submission, review, and approval of procurement activities. Notwithstanding the foregoing, records may not be available for public inspection before issuance of the award of the proposal.

The proposer shall retain all records produced or collected under an awarded contract for five (5) years following final payment under the contract and allow access to such records in accordance with requirements established under 49 Code of Federal Regulations 18.42, subch. II of Chapter 19, Wis. Stats. and Chapter 16, Wis. Stats.

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Evaluation Criteria

The Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Matrix are in the Proposal Preparation Instructions.

End of Request for Proposal