



Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Policy and Safety First Research Programs

Request for Proposals
FFY 2026

Improving Rural Pedestrian Safety
through Engineering Countermeasures

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	
\$200,000.	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.
18 Months	Period of Performance / Duration of Project
August 1, 2026	Anticipated Start Date of Project
December 1, 2027	Researcher's Final Report due
February 1, 2028	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

Improving Rural Pedestrian Safety through Engineering Countermeasures

Acronyms and Definitions

COP – Close-Out Presentation

DMP – Data Management Plan

GIS – Geographic Information System

PI – Principal Investigator, lead researcher

PIRSI – Performance Improvement, Research, and Strategic Initiatives (Division of WisDOT)

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

WisDOT – Wisconsin Department of Transportation

1 Background and Problem Statement

While most pedestrian deaths occur in Wisconsin's urban counties, rural pedestrian deaths remain a persistent issue, encompassing approximately 15 percent of pedestrian deaths from 2019 – 2023. During that time period, an average of 11.2 pedestrians died in Wisconsin's rural counties each year. Furthermore, pedestrian crashes that occur in rural counties in Wisconsin are more likely to be fatal. Of deadly crashes in rural counties, 50 percent occurred on state roads, making this a key area where the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) can intervene and save lives.

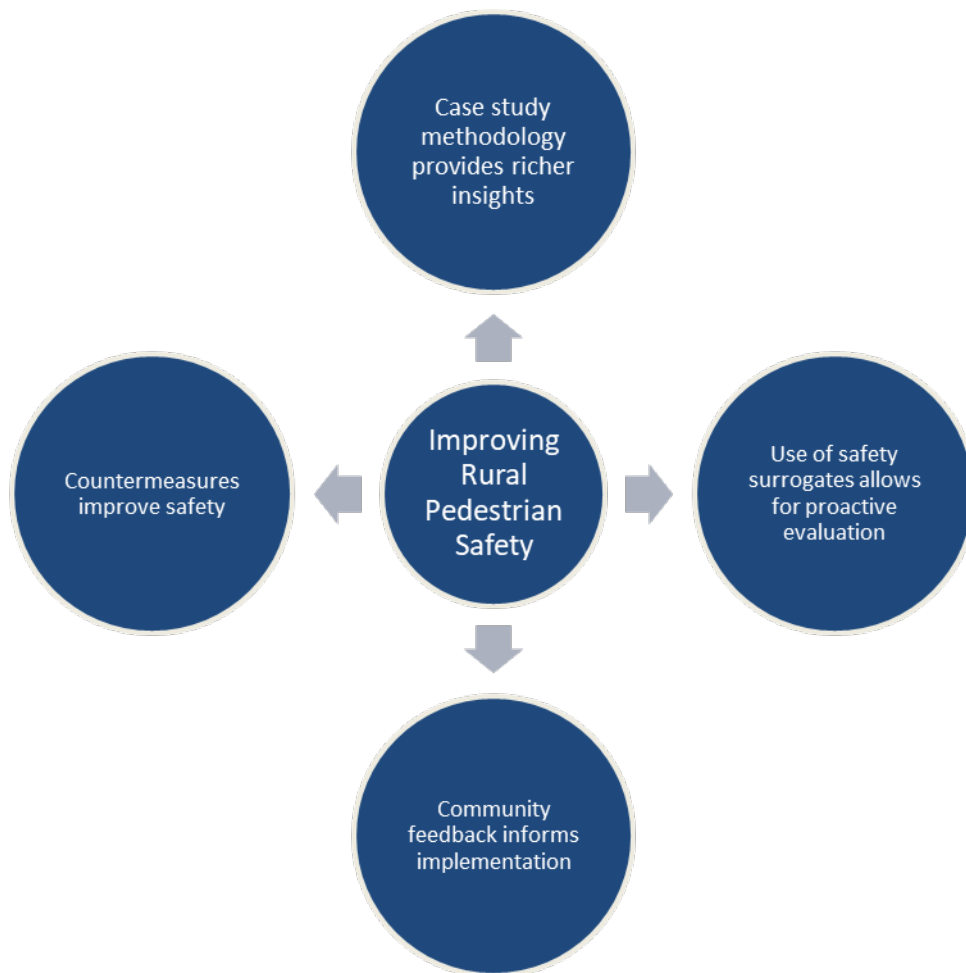
Many factors may contribute to rural pedestrian crashes, including issues like impaired or distracted driving and lack of infrastructure. Drivers in rural areas may not expect the presence of pedestrians, and sidewalks and controlled midblock crossings may be absent.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) reviews crash data and trends, but aggregate data may miss the specific nuances of a given crash, especially when detailed information is not available at the aggregate level. For example, a high-level data analysis may not include information about the quality of lighting or street design. Additionally, rural areas may struggle to implement pedestrian safety countermeasures due to lack of funding, workforce issues (e.g., staff

may not have time or technical knowledge to apply for grants), and a misperception that people in their community drive rather than walk, despite the fact that an estimated 31 percent of Wisconsinites are non-drivers.

To address these concerns, this study would use case study methodology to identify common factors that contribute to pedestrian crashes in Wisconsin's rural areas, then implement and test countermeasures. The study would use video footage and surrogate safety measures, such as post-encroachment time (PET), to assess the efficacy of countermeasures, which is notable because most of WisDOT's existing pedestrian safety work relies on metrics like crashes. It would incorporate community feedback to understand rural residents' response to such interventions.

Figure 1. Key Research Components and Primary Goal



Research Objectives

The goal of this research is for WisDOT to better understand pedestrian safety issues in Wisconsin's rural areas and how they can be addressed. The research should use methods of analysis new to WisDOT (e.g., case studies, use of camera footage and safety surrogates, etc.) to identify locations with safety concerns and test countermeasures. The study aims to incorporate community feedback and better understand rural residents' perceptions of interventions for pedestrian safety.

Research Objectives:

- Use case study methodology to identify common contributing factors involved in rural pedestrian crashes.
- Explore the use of video footage and PET and/or other safety surrogate measures in evaluating the efficacy of safety interventions.
- Evaluate possible countermeasures to improve pedestrian safety in rural areas.
- Review community feedback to assess how WisDOT can make safety improvements in partnership with local residents.

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

3.1 Task 1: Literature Review

Researchers will conduct a literature review on the issue of rural pedestrian safety, including common challenges, long-term trends, and state and local interventions intended to improve pedestrian safety. The Literature Review will be submitted with a presentation to the Project Oversight Committee (POC).

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a written literature review along with a presentation summarizing the results.

3.2 Task 2: Case Study Analysis

Researchers will use case study methodology to review 3-5 years' worth of rural pedestrian crashes to identify common contributing factors, including both driver behavior (distracted driving, speeding, etc.), pedestrian behavior (crossing mid-block, walking while impaired, etc.), and roadway design (lighting, number of lanes, etc.). At a minimum, case studies should make use of crash reports, news articles, and Google Maps Street View to identify contributing factors and roadway design. The goal is not to conduct a statistical analysis of how the relevant factors contribute; rather, it is to identify the common issues so that some of the respective factors can be addressed through roadway design.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a case study document discussing the process and results and 1–2-page executive summary of key findings. The document should analyze the contributing factors and offer takeaways relevant to WisDOT. Although roadway design will be addressed later in the study, including takeaways related to driver and pedestrian behavior is also useful.

3.3 Task 3: Identification of Testing Locations

Based on the case study findings, and with input from WisDOT staff, researchers will identify 3-5 locations with a crash history in which roadway design was a potential contributing factor (i.e., sites with poor lighting, lack of safe crossing options, etc.). Because the case study analysis relied on fatal crashes, researchers should review other crash history at that location.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a list of proposed sites and rationale; the POC will coordinate with the researchers to select locations for further study.

3.4 Task 4: Initial Analysis of Locations

The researchers will set up cameras in the identified locations and use video analysis to identify near misses between pedestrians and vehicles. Researchers should consider using post-encroachment time (PET) or other safety surrogate measures to identify near misses. Researchers should also consider what contributing factors were involved in the near misses and whether they align with previous insights about that location.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with an analysis of findings, including number of near misses and contributing factors.

3.5 Task 5: Choose and Implement Countermeasures

Based on the results of the near miss analysis, the researcher and POC will consult on countermeasures intended to improve safety at the locations. The researchers will install the countermeasures for a set period of time.

Deliverable: The researchers will provide the POC with a list of countermeasures to be tested and rationale.

3.6 Task 6: Analysis of Countermeasures

The researchers will again analyze near misses at the intersection and compare the results to the previous analysis. The analysis should consider any statistically significant differences between safety outcomes at the location before and after the intervention, as well as the nature of the near misses. If there are any unanticipated consequences, these should also be noted.

Deliverable: The researchers should share the initial findings with the POC including evaluation of the efficacy of countermeasures comparing both the number and nature of near misses at the site.

3.7 Task 7: Community Feedback Report

In addition to the countermeasures, the research team must develop a way to gather and summarize community feedback regarding the intervention, such as its impact on drivers and pedestrians. Researchers should consider whether the community felt positively about the intervention and if not, how WisDOT may better partner with them when pursuing future countermeasures.

Deliverable: The researchers should summarize the community feedback about the countermeasures and provide the POC with a written summary (1-3 pages).

3.8 Task 8: 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.

3.9 Task 9: 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

4.1 Required Testing

Researchers will install and use camera footage and designated testing locations before and after installation of countermeasures. 3-5 testing locations will be determined during Task 3.

Researchers will implement and test the efficacy of engineering countermeasures, to be determined in consultation with the POC as a result of findings in Task 4.

4.2 Equipment

Include costs in research proposal budget if equipment will be necessary for Tasks.
Provide explanation if cost for any piece of equipment is over \$1,000.

4.3 Non-WisDOT Equipment and Materials

The research team is responsible for providing necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) for fieldwork. PPE can be included in the research proposal budget.

Video Cameras

- If the field locations determined in Task 3 already have traffic cameras with sufficient video quality, then this could potentially be used instead of video cameras.
 - LiDAR has also been used to evaluate PET—researchers may use this instead of or as a supplement to video footage.
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Engineering Countermeasures (exact types to be determined)

Countermeasures will be low-cost, quick-build, and temporary, such as bollards, paint, or temporary lighting solutions that could test out a solution before installing a permanent version (e.g., creating a temporary median island with bollards and paint).

4.4 Materials

Include costs in research proposal budget if materials will be necessary for Tasks.
Provide explanation if cost for any materials is over \$1,000.

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

Travel to do field testing is required.

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

Conference attendance by the researcher is not required for this project.

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.
- The WisDOT POC will consult with the researchers to choose site locations and countermeasures; the POC can provide additional feedback as needed throughout the project.

Traffic Control (if needed)

Installation of countermeasures may require traffic control; traffic control needs will be discussed with the POC and WisDOT staff once locations for testing are determined.

If fieldwork to conduct this research is anticipated on or around in-service facilities the researcher shall specify the nature and extent of traffic control needs. The proposal should specify if county maintenance departments or traffic control businesses will be utilized. The researcher will make accommodations in their proposal budget for traffic control if it is needed. Please see the Proposal Preparation Instructions for additional information.

WisDOT will NOT fund traffic control expenses apart from what is included in the research project proposal budget.

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 Deliverables – Reports and Presentations

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 see Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information.

9.7 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	The researchers will provide the POC with a written literature review along with a presentation summarizing the results.
2	Case Study Summary Document	The researchers will provide the POC with a case study document discussing the process and results and 1–2-page executive summary of key findings. The document should analyze the contributing factors and offer takeaways relevant to WisDOT. Although roadway design will be addressed later in the study, including takeaways related to driver and pedestrian behavior is also useful.
3	List of Proposed Sites	The researchers will provide the POC with a list of proposed sites and rationale; the POC will coordinate with the researchers to select locations for further study.
4	Analysis of Status Quo	The researchers will provide the POC with an analysis of findings, including number of near misses and contributing factors.
5	List of Proposed Countermeasures	The researchers will provide the POC with a list of countermeasures to be tested and rationale.
6	Countermeasure Evaluation	The researchers should share the initial findings with the POC including evaluation of the efficacy of countermeasures comparing both the number and nature of near misses at the site.
7	Community Feedback Summary	The researchers should summarize the community feedback about the countermeasures and provide the POC with a written summary (1-3 pages).
8	Project Report	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L. See Final Report and Close-Out Presentation (COP) Preparation and Submission Information
	Final Report and Summary document	Email Word and PDF versions to R&L
9	COP Presentation	See 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 type="checkbox"/> Develop a Model:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Design Method or Guidance:	Inform guidance on roadway design in rural areas as it relates to pedestrian safety.	
<input type="checkbox"/> New Product Implementation:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recommend Future Studies:	Provide feedback on the use of case studies to analyze trends, as well as camera footage and safety surrogates, to inform future research and pilot projects.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Revise a Specification:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inform Policy:	Explore the use of surrogate safety measures in analyzing safety outcomes and consider how their use could be incorporated more broadly in WisDOT's work; use case studies to identify areas where WisDOT can intervene to improve pedestrian safety; include implications for WisDOT's practices around funding for pedestrian infrastructure in rural areas.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other:	Provide insights into rural residents' perspectives on pedestrian safety and potential improvements.	

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 <p>The researcher will completely fill-in the Excel Budget Worksheet template.</p>
12.2	Budget Justification <p>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.</p>
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 <p>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.</p> <p>Any material submitted in response to this request that the proposer considers confidential and</p>

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.

19 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.

20 Evaluation Criteria

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

End of Request for Proposal