Preparing a Competitive ACRP Proposal & Conducting ACRP Research

Monday, October 7
1:00 – 2:30pm Eastern

NATIONAL ACADEMIES Sciences Engineering Medicine

TRB TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

ACRP AIRPORT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

Today's Learning Objectives

- Discover how to prepare a responsive and competitive proposal
- Form a research team tailored to the project objective
- Successfully navigate the unique aspects of ACRP's collaborative research process

American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE)

1.0 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available to Accredited Airport Executives (A.A.E.)

Report your CEUs:

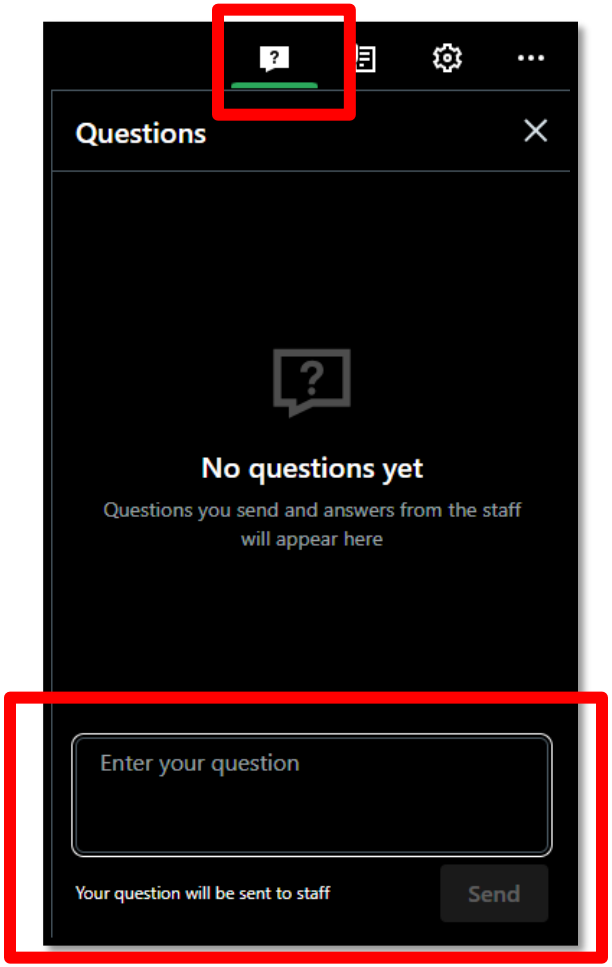
www.aaae.org/ceu

Questions and Answers

Please type your questions into your webinar control panel

We will read your questions out loud, and answer as many as time allows

#TRBwebinar



Preparing a Competitive ACRP Proposal
&
Conducting ACRP Research

Stephanie Ward
Aviation Planning
Manager
Mead & Hunt

Augustus Hudson
Assistant General Mgr.
Emergency Management
Hartsfield-Jackson
Atlanta International Airport

Marci Greenberger
Manager, ACRP

Joe Navarrete
Senior Program Officer
ACRP

Joe Navarrete

- Senior Program Officer, ACRP
- Airport Planner, HNTB
- Airport Planner, Maryland Aviation Administration
- Managed more than 100 ACRP projects

Stephanie Ward

- Aviation Planning Manager, Mead & Hunt
- Adjunct Professor, Western Michigan University
- Principal Investigator, Researcher, and Panelist on 30+ ACRP Projects
- 33 years in aviation consulting

Augustus Hudson

- Interim Deputy General Manager—Operations, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
- Served on 13 ACRP Project Panels

Marci Greenberger

- Manager, Airport Cooperative Research Program
- Sr. VP Ops and Maintenance RIAC
- Director, Operations South Bend Airport
- Manager, Operations Burbank Airport

Agenda

- ACRP Overview—Marci Greenberger, Manager, ACRP
- Successful ACRP Proposals—Conversation with:
  - Stephanie Ward, Mead & Hunt
  - Augustus Hudson, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
  - Joe Navarrete, ACRP/TRB
- Successful ACRP Research Projects—Conversation with:
  - Stephanie Ward, Mead & Hunt
  - Augustus Hudson, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
  - Joe Navarrete, ACRP/TRB
- Question and Answer Session

ACRP—Background and Context

- ✓ Industry-driven, applied research program that develops near-term, practical solutions to problems airport operators face
- ✓ Began in 2006, authorized by Congress
- ✓ Funded and sponsored by FAA
- ✓ Managed by the Transportation Research Board
- ✓ Research contractors selected on a competitive proposal basis
- ✓ Volunteer panels develop scope, select contractors, oversee research, and review results

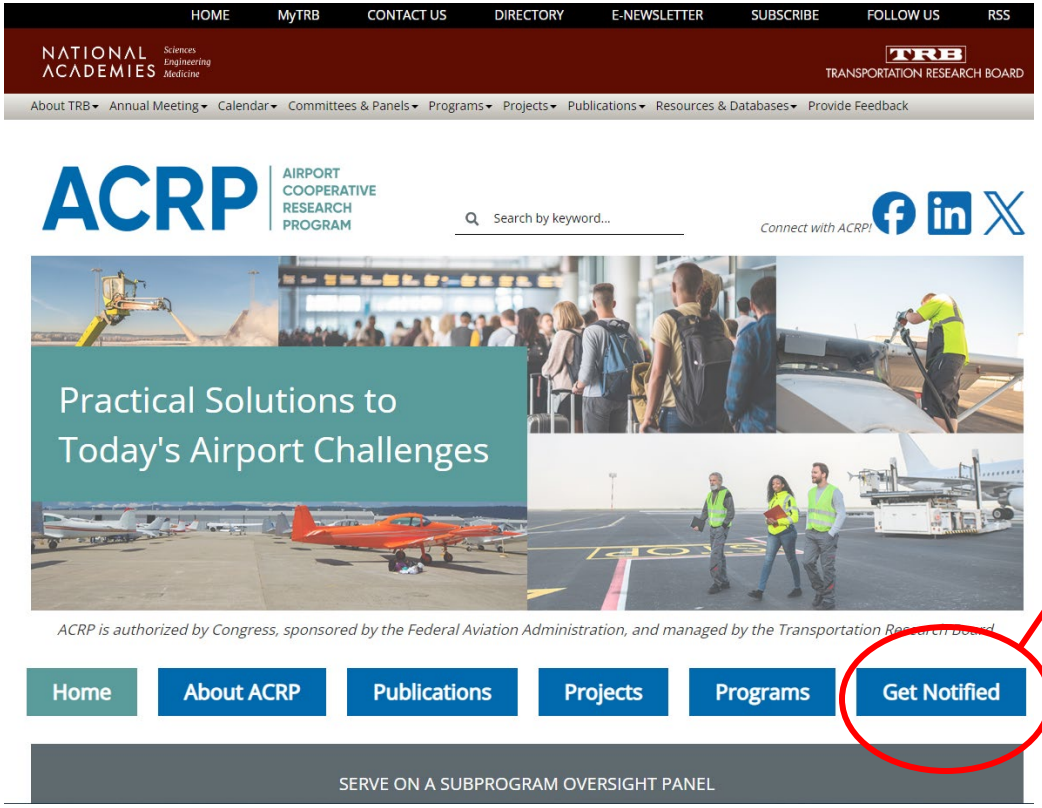
ACRP—Background and Context (Cont'd)

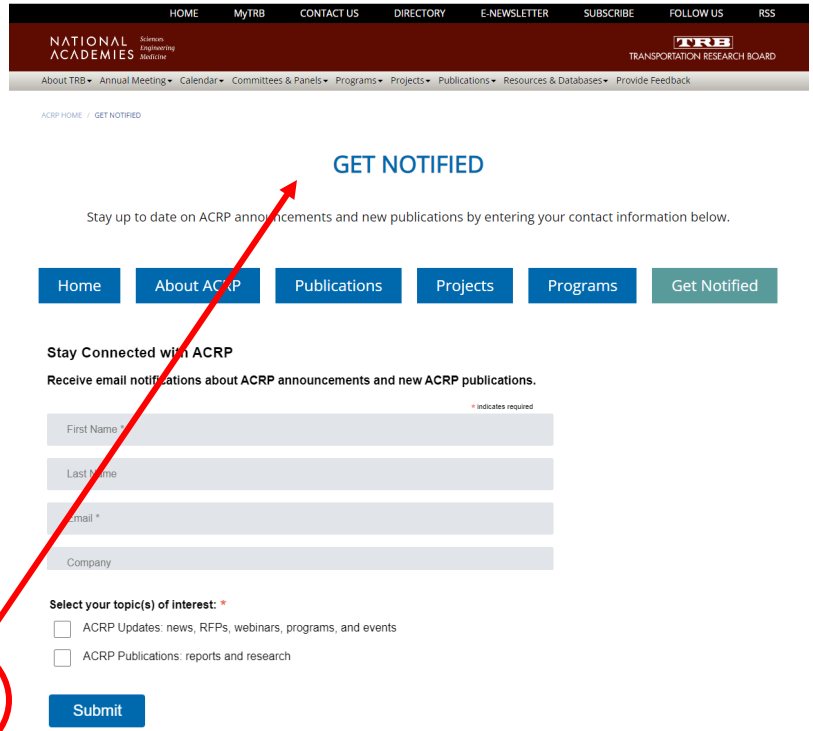
Established in 1863

ACRP research known for being:

- Evidence-based
- Unbiased
- Focused on near-term
- Practical/Implementable
- Directly applicable for airports
- Avoiding policy

How to Receive RFP Notifications





https://www.trb.org/ACRP

Panel Formation

- Topic Experts
- Diversity of:
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Experience
  - Gender
  - Geography
  - 6-8 Panelists
- Industry Partner Liaisons

Panel:

- Develops RFP
- Reviews proposals & selects contractor
- Comments on interim deliverables
- Guides research team

RFP Development

- Day-and-a-half In-Person Panel Meeting
- Panel Diversity
- General Conversation About Topic
- Start with Research Objective (Outcome)
- Consider Special Tasks, Interim Deliverables, Check-in Points with Panel
- Add Special Notes
- Prepare Background
- Confirm Project Title, Budget, Duration

1st Panel Meeting

Tip 1: Honest Self-Assessment

- Can I assemble a team with needed expertise?
  - Airports
  - Topic of study
- Can I demonstrate successful research experience on topic?
- Do I have the staff, facilities, time?

Tip 2: Follow Instructions

- In RFP

ACRP 02-101 [RFP]

Environmental Stewardship and Compliance Training for Airport Employees

Posted Date: 7/21/2022

Project Data	
Funds:	$400,000
Contract Time:	18 months
(includes 1 month for ACRP review and approval of the interim report and 3 months for ACRP review and for contractor revision of the final report)	
Authorization to Begin Work:	1/25/2023 -- estimated
Staff Responsibility:	Joseph D. Navarrete Phone: 202/334-1649 Email: jnavarrete@nas.edu
RFP Close Date:	9/7/2022
Fiscal Year:	2022

BACKGROUND

Environmental stewardship and compliance can be complex for airports and their employees. To operate an airport in an environmentally responsible manner, and in compliance with relevant environmental legislation, employees must be informed about an airport's environmental compliance and sustainability programs. Research is needed to develop customizable training materials regarding environmental laws, regulations, and sustainability programs for airports.

OBJECTIVE

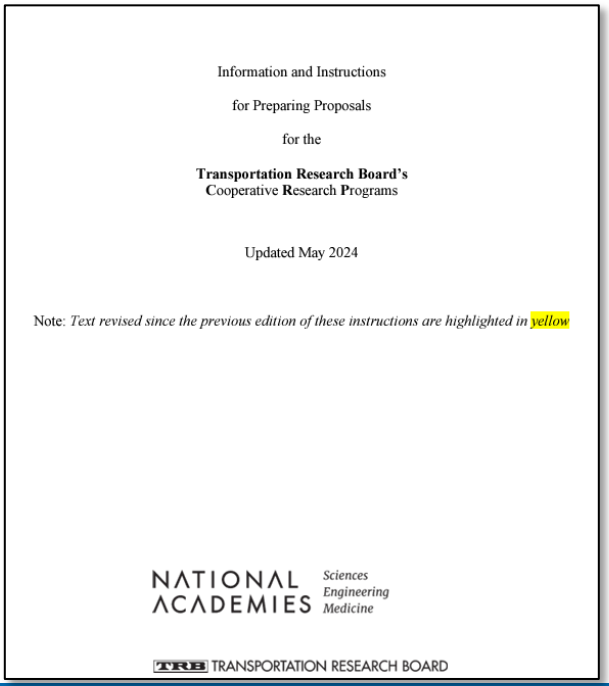
The objective of this research is to develop training materials, tools, guidelines, and other resources to inform airport employees about environmental laws, regulations, and sustainability programs and promote a culture of sustainability and compliance. The resources should include:

SPECIAL NOTES

C. The proposer recommended by the project panel will be required to submit an Investigator Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Form as a prerequisite for contract negotiations. The *Information and Instructions for Preparing Proposals for the Transportation Research Board's Cooperative Research Programs* have been modified to include a revised policy and instructions for disclosing Investigator Conflict of Interest. For more information, refer to chapter IV of the instructions. A detailed definition and examples can be found in the CRP Conflict of Interest Policy for Contractors.

D. Proposals will be rejected if any of the proposed research team members work for organizations represented on the project panel. The panel roster for this project can be found at https://www.mytrb.org/OnlineDirectory/Committee/Details/3227. Proposers may not contact panel members directly; this roster is provided solely for the purpose of avoiding potential conflicts of interest.

- In *Information and Instructions for Preparing Proposals for the Transportation Research Board's Cooperative Research Programs*
https://www.nationalacademies.org/webdocs/crpproceduralmanual/CRPProceduralManual.pdf



Information and Instructions

for Preparing Proposals

for the

Transportation Research Board's
Cooperative Research Programs

Updated May 2024

Note: *Text revised since the previous edition of these instructions are highlighted in yellow*

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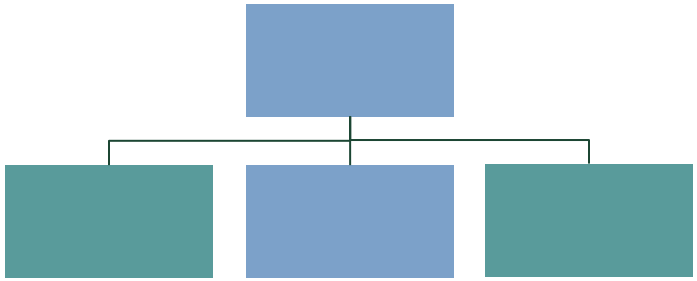
Tip 3: Build a Strong Team

- Required expertise
- Correspondence to key stakeholder perspectives
- Who's the principal investigator?
- Who will prime?
- Clear role for every team member
- DEI

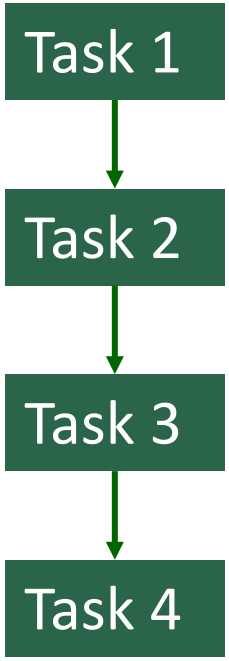


Tip 4: Demonstrate Vision

- Show understanding of project (i.e., you “get it.”)
- Don’t regurgitate RFP
- Show *confidence* but not *hubris*
- Think about audience/perspectives
- Show vision for final product(s)

Tip 5: Provide Detailed Research Approach

- List logical set of tasks with adequate detail
- Make sure approach and results are defensible
- Provide rationale if deviating from RFP



Tip 6: Make Best Use of Available Budget

- Cost is NOT a selection consideration
- Don’t leave money on the table; instead:
  - Enhance scope
  - Add deliverables

Tip 7: Contact the Program Officer

- Staff contact information is there for a reason

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Tip 8: Conduct QA/QC on Proposal

- Your proposal is sole representation of your team
- Only chance to make an impression—good or bad!
- Make sure:
  - All sections are completed
  - Well-written
  - Legible
  - Visually appealing
  - Checked for typos, grammar, spelling

Tip 9: Don’t Get Your Proposal Tossed!

- Submit within the deadline—NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Include a signed, UNALTERED liability statement!
- Don’t exceed page limit (PDF total for ALL pages)!
- Don’t exceed file size (typically, 10 MB)!

Tip 10: Ask for a Debrief

- Don’t be silent—staff are eager to share panel’s thoughts

- Don’t argue with information being shared

- Listen/ask questions

Bonus Tip: Serve on a Project Panel

- Opportunity to contribute to industry
- Collaborate with peers
- Be on cutting edge of research
- See how process works from panel's perspective
- Travel reimbursed

Summary of Tips

1. Conduct an honest self-assessment
2. Follow instructions
3. Build a strong team
4. Demonstrate vision
5. Provide detailed research approach
6. Make best use of available budget
7. Contact the program officer
8. Conduct QA/QC
9. Don’t get your proposal tossed!
10. Ask for debrief if unsuccessful

Bonus Tip: Serve on a project panel

Proposal Review Process

1. Acceptable proposals shared with panel.
2. Each panelists looks for potential conflicts of interest.
3. Each panelist reviews proposals on their own.
4. Each panelists submits a ranking to staff.
5. At meeting, discuss each proposal on its own, starting with lowest ranked.
6. Clearly deficient proposals removed at this point.
7. Remaining proposals are then compared.
8. Decision is made through consensus, not points.
9. Typically both a 1st choice and a 2nd choice are identified.

What Do Panels Look for in Proposals: Evaluation Criteria

- Concept of the Problem
- Research Approach
- Research Principals/Team
- Application/Implementation Plan
- DEI
- Equipment & Facilities
- Other Factors

2nd Panel Meeting

Conducting ACRP Research

- Unique compared to typical consultant and research projects
- This is real research, not imparting your expertise
- Teaming is often necessary—even critical for successful outcome
- This is practical research—work doesn't end until translated into implementable products
- Industry wants results as quickly as possible
- After publication, contractors often recognized as industry experts
- Academies own rights to research

Conducting ACRP Research (Cont'd)

- Respond to panel's comments on proposal
- All subcontracts over $25,000 must be approved
- Changes to PI require panel and Academies approval
- Some activities may be done outside contract period (i.e., responding to editor queries)
- Contracts may be terminated for various reasons (rare)

ACRP Research Milestones (Once Under Contract)

- Preparation of Amplified Research Plan
- Site visit/kickoff meeting
- Interim Report/Interim Meeting
- Draft Final Deliverables
- Final Deliverables
- Response to Editor Queries (post contract)

Lessons Learned from Contractors

- Budgets and schedules often tight
- Stakeholder outreach or season-dependent data collection may affect schedule
- Research is privileged until published
- Need to be responsive to panel guidance and staff direction
- Deliverables need to read as if written by one author
- Keep in communication with your team—and SPO
- Don’t let issues fester

Questions?

Thank you!

For Additional Information

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Marci Greenberger
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mgreenberger@nas.edu

Other Events for You:

October 22, 2024

TRB Webinar: Military Resources and Strategies to Improve Civilian Airport Resiliency

October 24, 2024

TRB Webinar: Developing a Culture of Innovation in Airports

https://www.nationalacademies.org/trb/events

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Transportation Research Board

Get Involved with TRB

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- Networking opportunities
- May provide a path to Standing Committee membership

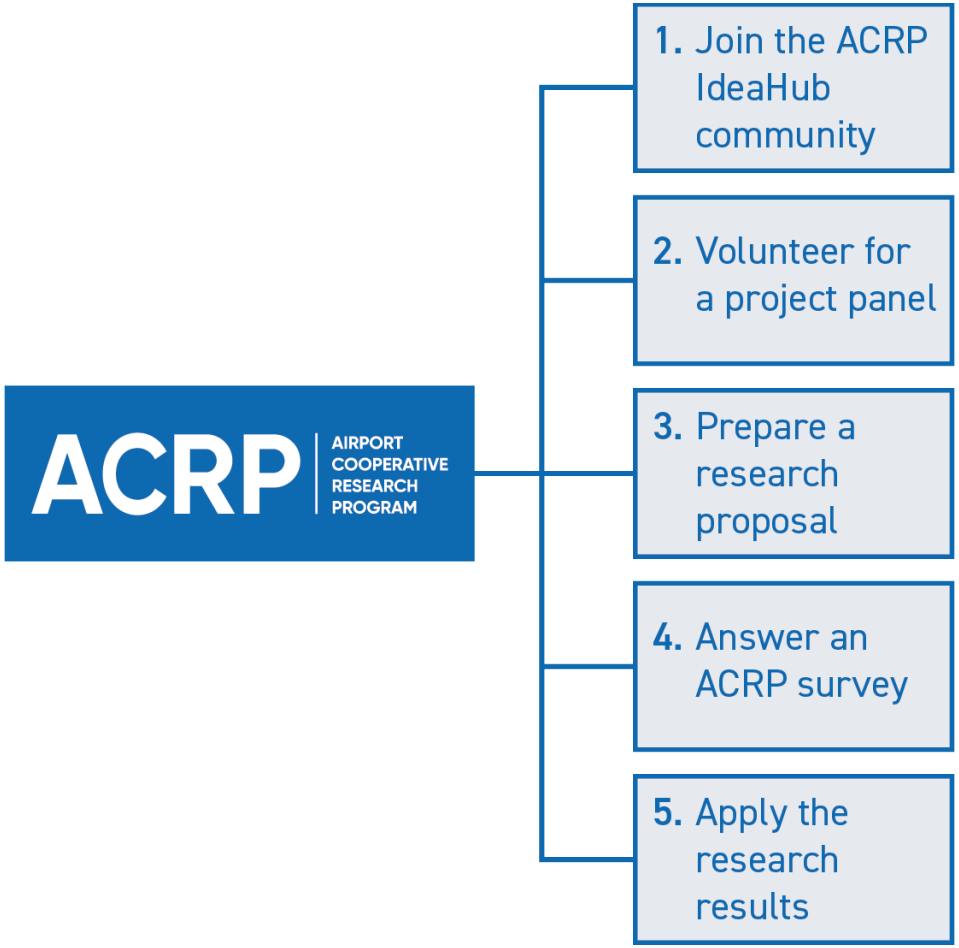
Join a Standing Committee bit.ly/TRBstandingcommittee

Work with CRP https://bit.ly/TRB-crp

Update your information www.mytrb.org

Getting involved is free!

Get involved with ACRP



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