

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD'S

# IDEA Programs

## FUNDING FOR INVENTORS

### The IDEA Mission:

Awards start-up funding for promising but unproven innovations in transportation practice.

Fosters new ideas that have potential to advance transportation practice.

Provides support at a critical early stage when funding can be hard to find.

Is open to everyone to submit proposals.

### Visit the IDEA Website to

- Download the IDEA Program Announcement and proposal forms
- Review current projects
- Learn how to submit proposals
- Submit proposals

### CURRENT IDEA PROGRAMS

**Highway IDEA:** A project of the National Cooperative Highway Research Program and funded by the state departments of transportation, NCHRP IDEA seeks advances in construction, safety, maintenance, and management of highway systems. Pavement and bridge performance, environment, and resource conservation are also focus areas of the program. Proposals due March 1 and September 1.

**Rail Safety IDEA:** Funded by the Federal Railroad Administration, Rail Safety IDEA projects promote innovative approaches to improving railroad safety or performance. Some examples of possible focus areas include high-speed rail, intercity passenger rail, and freight railroads. Proposals due September 15.

**Transit IDEA:** Funded by the Federal Transit Administration as part of the Transit Cooperative Research Program, the Transit IDEA program seeks advances in efficiency, safety, security, and maintenance of transit systems. Four high-priority focus areas are increasing transit ridership; improving transit safety and security; improving transit capital and operating efficiencies; and protecting the environment and promoting energy independence. Proposals due May 1 and November 1.

### TWO TYPES OF IDEA PROJECTS:

#### Concept Exploration Projects (Type 1)

IDEA programs may award funding to test the validity of innovative concepts with potential applications for transportation practice. **Funding for concept exploration varies but does not exceed \$150,000.**

#### Prototype Application Projects (Type 2)

IDEA projects may also be funded to demonstrate prototype applications in transportation practice. **Funding for Type 2 projects varies but does not exceed \$100,000.**

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### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** What can I do to improve my proposal?

**A:** Strive for clarity in describing both your innovation and the problem it addresses.

**Q:** Does an IDEA contract compromise my ability to get a patent?

**A:** No. IDEA does not retain any rights to your invention. Researchers should independently secure their intellectual property rights.

**Q:** Is it OK to contact the program officers directly with questions?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Where can I find information on preparing proposals?

**A:** Evaluation criteria, advice from selection committee chairs, and answers to many other questions are online at: <http://www.trb.org/IDEAProgram/IDEAProgram.aspx>

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