To: DISTRIBUTION – see below

From: Christopher Hedges

Director, Transportation Research Board Research Programs

Subject: Panel Members for FY 2018 Projects in the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program (BTSCRP)

**Immediate Action Requested by January 19, 2018**

On September 16, 2017, the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Executive Board approved the BTSCRP 2018 research program. We are forwarding the research problem statements (see attached) to you and asking for your help in identifying individuals with relevant expertise and experience to volunteer to serve on each project technical oversight panel.

Nominations can be submitted via email using the attached form (in WORD) and sent with a resume to Mr. Joseph Snell at jsnell@nas.edu, copying Dr. William C. Rogers at wrogers@nas.edu. We encourage the nomination of members of historically underrepresented groups, including women, young professionals (age 35 and younger), and members of minority groups. Contacts to determine an individual's interest in serving will be made by this office after we have matched available expertise with that required by the nature of the project.

Panels for the new projects are scheduled to meet beginning in February, 2018. Panel members are prohibited from submitting or participating in the preparation of proposals on projects under their jurisdiction. They serve without compensation but are paid travel and subsistence expenses. Travel insurance is provided at no cost to panel members. In many cases, three meetings are held in the life of a project, and these normally occur in Washington, DC. The first meeting is to develop a project statement that is used to solicit proposals; the second meeting is to select a research agency from among those submitting proposals. Typically, a third meeting will be held to review progress with the research team while the research is active. There are usually 6-7 panel members on each project, including a GHSA Monitor, and panels operate under the guidance of a permanent chair (see attached "The Roles of BTSCRP Panel Members and Liaisons." The BTSCRP staff serves as the secretariat.

Please realize that if your nominee is not selected, there are several factors to be considered when forming well-balanced and objective panels. Although expertise is the primary factor, we also attempt a proper balance in terms of geographic areas, organization or agency types (e.g., public and private agencies, universities, associations, local and state government), and gender and ethnic diversity.

Attachments:

BTSCRP Description

2018 BTSCRP Research Problem Statements

BTSCRP Panel Nomination Form

"The Roles of BTSCRP Panel Members and Liaisons"

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Christopher J. Hedges

Cooperative Research Programs Director and Manager, Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program

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DISTRIBUTION

# BEHAVIORAL TRAFFIC SAFETY COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

*A forum for coordinated and collaborative research, the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program (BTSCRP) is a partnership between the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and The Transportation Research Board (TRB). The BTSCRP develops practical solutions to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce costs of road traffic crashes associated with unsafe behaviors.*

**BTSCRP Program Description**

The GHSA Executive Board serves as the Governing Board for the BTSCRP. The Board consists of representatives of the 10 NHTSA regions and appoints the GHSA Research Committee, who monitors and facilitates the activities of BTSCRP. Its ultimate goal is to oversee a quality research program that is committed to addressing research issues facing the State Highway Safety Offices and to promote research findings that improve highway safety.

Each year the Research Committee facilitates the development of a research project problem solicitation.

Anyone can write or contribute to preparing a problem statement. However, problem statements must be endorsed by a State Highway Safety Offices, GHSA Executive Board members, GHSA Committees, or NHTSA to be eligible for consideration.

Submitters are strongly encouraged to do a literature search, before submitting, to ensure the problem hasn't been solved or isn't being studied already. NHTSA and TRB staff will review the submitted research project problem statements and provide feedback to the Governing Board. The Governing Board gives final approval of the annual research projects.

Once the research projects are approved, TRB assigns the problem statements to technical panels of experts who provide guidance on the technical aspects of the research and translate the problem statements into BTSCRP research Requests for Proposals (RFPs) with well-defined objectives. On the basis of these statements, TRB solicits research proposals from private and public research organizations that can demonstrate capability and experience in the problem area to be researched.

The technical panel of experts reviews the proposals, recommend contract awards, monitor research in progress, provide technical guidance, and review reports for acceptability and for accomplishing the research plan. They also provide counsel to TRB staff in matters of overall project administration. Selected agencies perform research under contract to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, guided by the *Procedural Manual for*

*Contractors Conducting Research in the Transportation Research Board's Cooperative Research Programs.*

Research findings are published in the BTSCRP Reports series. The reporting format is designed specifically to accommodate highway traffic safety officials and technical staffs. All reports are also available electronically, free of charge.

**Contact:**

Christopher Hedges, Director – Cooperative Research Programs
Telephone: 202-334-1472
Email: chedges@nas.edu

**Problem Statement Number: 2018-01**

**Title: Evaluate Workforce Motivational Programs: Safety Citizenship**

**Research Area:** Occupant Protection

**Background:**

Typically, more than 30,000 people die annually on U.S. roadways. (1) Many of these fatalities are related to occupational driving. Notably, "motor vehicle crashes killed more than 1,600 people and injured 293,000 while they were working in 2013" and "more than half of the injuries forced people to miss work". (2)

While engineering solutions have significantly reduced traffic-related fatalities in recent decades, road user behavior remains the most common risk factor associated with traffic crashes. Traditional traffic safety strategies focus on seeking change within the persons engaging in these risky behaviors. A new approach adapted from organization safety is to empower those road users who behave safely to influence and support the safety of those road users engaging in risky behaviors. This strategy is known as "safety citizenship." (3,4,5)

Previous research on traffic safety citizenship revealed that the perception of whether most people do intervene (e.g., the perceived descriptive norm) is strongly correlated with intervening behavior. (6) Further, people's sense of comfort and confidence to intervene is also correlated with intervening. (6) Applying these research findings in a real-world setting is essential; however, questions about what specific interventions workplaces should implement to bolster their employees' comfort and confidence to engage in protective traffic safety citizenship behaviors and to grow the perception that speaking up is typical remain.

The proposed research project seeks to address these questions by developing and testing a specific intervention suitable for a workplace to grow traffic safety citizenship regarding a traffic safety issue that is an identified priority for the workplace. Research suggests that there are opportunities to grow traffic safety citizenship. (6)

**Objective:**

Identify and evaluate the efficacy of workplace motivational programs in increasing seatbelt usage. The final products should include recommended best practices and the research should include a review of programs aimed at other forms of behavioral modification, including anti-smoking or drinking and driving.

**Research Method:**

The BTSCRP is seeking the insights of proposers on how best to achieve the research objectives. Proposers are expected to describe research plans that can realistically be accomplished within the constraints of available funds and contract time. Proposals must present the proposers' current thinking in sufficient detail to demonstrate their understanding of the problem and the soundness of their approach to meeting the research objective.

The work must be divided into tasks and proposers must describe the work proposed in each task in detail.

The research plan should build in appropriate checkpoints with the BTSCRP project panel including, at a minimum: (1) a kick-off teleconference meeting to be held within 1 month of the contract's execution date, and (2) at least two face-to-face interim deliverable review meetings as well as web-enabled teleconferences tied to panel review and BTSCRP approval of any other interim deliverables deemed appropriate.

The final deliverables should include: (1) the (main product) as a stand-alone document; (2) a final report that documents the entire research effort; (3) an executive summary in the final report that outlines the research results; (4) a Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation describing the background, objectives, research method, findings, and conclusions, and (5) all data collected as part of the research.

The research team will be expected to present the results, at a minimum of two meetings of GHSA or other relevant national organizations to be determined by the BTSCRP.

**Recommended Funding:**

For proposed objective: $350,000

**Urgency and Payoff Potential:**

It was estimated that traffic crash injuries on and off the job cost employers $47.4 billion in 2013.(2) Given the huge burden traffic crashes have on both employees and

employers, developing traffic safety interventions suitable for workplaces is essential. The results of this research to develop and test a specific intervention to grow traffic safety citizenship in the workplace can yield significant benefits for employers and their employees. Moving research to practice by developing and testing an intervention that workplaces can implement to increase traffic safety citizenship provides options that move beyond traditional strategies to change road user behaviors and towards a comprehensive effort to achieve zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

References

1. http://www-fars.nhtsa.dot.gov/Main/index.aspx

2. Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS). (2016). Cost of motor vehicle crashes to employers – 2015. Retrieved from http://trafficsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/NETS-Cost-of-Motor-Vehicle-Crashes-to-Employers-Report-2015.pdf

3. Hofmann, David A., Frederick Morgeson, and Stephen Gerras. "Climate as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Leader-Member Exchange and Content Specific Citizenship and Content Citizenship: Safety Climate as an Examplar." Journal of Applied Psychology, Vol. 88, No. 1 (2003) pp. 170-178.

4. Dov, Zohar. "Safety Climate and beyond: A Multi-Level Multi-Climate Framework." Safety Science, Regulatory Issues, Safety Climate, Culture and Management Papers selected from the third international conference Working on Safety (WOS2006), September 12-15th, 2006, Zeewolde, The Netherland, Vol. 46, No. 3 (March 2008) pp. 376–387.

5. Didla, Shama, Kathryn Mearns, and Rhona Flin. "Safety Citizenship Behaviour: A Proactive Approach to Risk Management." Journal of Risk Research Vol. 12, No. 3–4 (June 2009) pp. 475–483.

6. Otto, J., Finley, K., & Ward, N. (2016). An assessment of traffic safety culture related to engagement in efforts to improve traffic safety. Montana Department of Transportation. Retrieved from http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/trafficsafety.shtml

**Problem Statement Number: 2018-02**

**Title: Variable Message Signs**

**Research Area:** Public Information Campaigns

**Background:**

A variable (VMS), also referred to as changeable, electronic, or dynamic message signs are programmable signs used on highways throughout the US. These signs provide drivers with information relating to traffic updates, roadwork warnings, traffic crashes, and other traffic and safety-related information. Use of VMS's began in the early 1950. Since that time, extensive research has been conducted on traffic-related messages.

Non-traffic-related messages (i.e. Don't Drink / And Drive, Click It or Ticket, etc.) were first displayed on VMS around 2009-10. Tennessee was one of the first states to use VMSs to show the number of roadway fatalities. Today there are numerous states that use this technology as an expansion of their public awareness program.

There have been at least three studies investigating the usefulness and effectiveness of safety and public service announcement messages on dynamic message signs (DMS). Two were pooled-fund research projects sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration ("Effectiveness of Safety and Public Service Announcement Messages on Dynamic Message Signs," and "Public Perception of Safety Messages and Public Service Announcements on Dynamic Message Signs in Rural Areas.") and the other by the California Department of Transportation (An Evaluation of the Consequences and Effectiveness of Using Highway Changeable Message Signs for Safety Campaigns.") Various questions addressed in these studies were identifying how safety and public service announcement messages influence driver behavior, assess how attentive the public is to the message, and identify how various agencies could optimize the utility of safety and PSA messages on DMS.

General results of these studies suggest:

(1) most respondents reported they do see and understand safety and PSA messages on the DMS and they raise their awareness of the safety issue
(2) majority reported that safety and PSA messages are useful and some felt they are more effective than other media such as television
(3) selected respondents indicated that a more threatening connotation (i.e., "100 deaths this year on Texas roads) or assertive language would impact their driving behavior
(4) greater exposure to safety and PSA messages were considered more effective

(5) safety and PSA messages were considered useful for respondents older that 60 with some graduate school or post-graduate degree but were not perceived effective for males with lower incomes and younger than 30 years old
(6) positive safety effects may be derived when the public is familiar with and understands the message displayed

Behavior change is of particular interest. The FHWA study assessing the effectiveness and potential benefits of posting PSAs in rural areas stated "approximately 23 percent of travelers reported changing their driving behavior after seeing the posted message; however, 54 percent of respondents indicated that seeing safety campaign messages on DMSs in the past had caused them to change their driving."

These studies give us a sense of the benefits of displaying safety and PSAs on variable message signs. There are, however, many unanswered questions about this practice. This study has the potential to address several of these questions. They include: which states display safety and PSA messages on VMS, how are messages selected, what messages are currently being used, when and where are the messages displayed, what administrative policies and procedures regulate this initiative and what are the barriers hampering optimal implementation of this practice?

Ultimately providing answers to these questions will help guide State Highway Safety Offices in identifying best practices and maximizing the use of variable message signs to enhance awareness of safety messages and potentially alter driver behavior.

**Objective:** To summarize the current state of the practice, best practices, process and procedures, and barriers to implementation of putting safety messages and public service announcements on variable message signs?

**Research Method:**

The BTSCRP is seeking the insights of proposers on how best to achieve the research objectives. Proposers are expected to describe research plans that can realistically be accomplished within the constraints of available funds and contract time. Proposals must present the proposers' current thinking in sufficient detail to demonstrate their understanding of the problem and the soundness of their approach to meeting the research objective.

The work must be divided into tasks and proposers must describe the work proposed in each task in detail.

The research plan should build in appropriate checkpoints with the BTSCRP project panel including, at a minimum, (1) a kick-off teleconference meeting to be held within 1 month of the contract's execution date and (2) at least two face-to-face interim deliverable review meetings as well as web-enabled teleconferences tied to panel review and BTSCRP approval of any other interim deliverables deemed appropriate.

The final deliverables should include: (1) the (main product) as a stand-alone document; (2) a final report that documents the entire research effort; (3) an executive summary in the final report that outlines the research results; (4) a Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation describing the background, objectives, research method, findings, and conclusions, and (5) all data collected as part of the research.

The research team will be expected to present the results, at a minimum of two meetings of GHSA or other relevant national organizations to be determined by the BTSCRP.

**Recommended Funding: $350,000**

**Urgency and Payoff Potential:**

Previous research implies that placing safety messages and public service announcements on variable message signs is both useful and effective. Many State Highway Safety Offices in cooperation with their partners utilize this practice to supplement their various safety initiatives including mobilizations and specialized safety campaigns. Additional information, specifically best practices, is needed to maximize the message development and utilization of these variable message signs.

This research is designed to provide answers to key questions that will lead to better understanding and application of the practice of using safety messages and public service announcements on variable message signs.

**Problem Statement Number: 2018-03**

**Title: Primary Handheld Bans vs. Texting Bans**

**Research Area: Distracted Driving**

**Background:**

Current data indicates that there isn't much difference for safety reasons between hands-free and just having a primary offence texting law. However, law enforcement says that without hands-free it's very difficult to enforce a texting law. Is strong enforcement enough to change driving habits?

**Objective:**

Determine whether the enforcement of a hands-free cell phone law with primary enforcement for all drivers is more effective than just a texting ban with primary enforcement for all drivers. The research methodology must control for all variables including the existence or absence of public awareness campaigns.

**Research Method:**

Since there have been a number of studies addressing this topic, care should be taken to clarify how the research is going to address a research gap. Coordination with NHTSA will be important to assure this research is not duplicative.

The BTSCRP is seeking the insights of proposers on how best to achieve the research objectives. Proposers are expected to describe research plans that can realistically be accomplished within the constraints of available funds and contract time. Proposals must present the proposers' current thinking in sufficient detail to demonstrate their understanding of the problem and the soundness of their approach to meeting the research objective.

The work must be divided into tasks and proposers must describe the work proposed in each task in detail.

The research plan should build in appropriate checkpoints with the BTSCRP project panel including, at a minimum, (1) a kick-off teleconference meeting to be held within 1 month of the contract's execution date and (2) at least two face-to-face interim deliverable review meetings as

well as web-enabled teleconferences tied to panel review and BTSCRP approval of any other interim deliverables deemed appropriate.

The final deliverables should include: (1) the (main product) as a stand-alone document; (2) a final report that documents the entire research effort; (3) an executive summary in the final report that outlines the research results; (4) a Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation describing the background, objectives, research method, findings, and conclusions, and (5) all data collected as part of the research.

The research team will be expected to present the results, at a minimum of two meetings of GHSA or other relevant national organizations to be determined by the BTSCRP.

**Recommended Funding: $250,000**

**Urgency and Payoff Potential:**

This is important for states who are considering hand-free laws. If there is no difference then states shouldn't try to change their primary laws. We just don't believe the research we currently have on this subject.

**Problem Statement Number: 2018-04**

**Title: State Trends in Adjudication and Enforcement**

**Research Area:** Law Enforcement Techniques

**Background:**

Highway safety is an incredibly important topic for state and federal agencies. While federal agencies (e.g. Federal Highway Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration) monitor highway safety trends, it is state law enforcement agencies that enforce highway safety laws and regulations, and state courts that adjudicate traffic tickets. Although we have a lot of information about traffic caseloads, it is often difficult to directly compare state adjudication of common traffic offenses due to the difficult of obtaining specific cross-sections of court data. We know that there is a lot of variation in the traffic caseload by state, but very little about how those cases are disposed of, and how states compare for particular types of offenses. According to the Court Statistics Project at the National Center for State Courts, the number of cases per 100,000 residents ranged from 1,932 (MA) to 56,499 (NJ) in 2015, depending on the state.

Given these far-reaching differences in the propensity of state law enforcement agencies to issue traffic citations, one would also expect similar differences in adjudication in state courts. However, it is hard to obtain this type of information for several reasons. First, each state has a uniquely designed court system, and not all traffic cases are heard in the same kind of state court. Depending on the state, traffic cases are heard in courts of general, single, and limited jurisdiction. Second, each state has different types of statutes, criminal codes or methods of identifying and describing traffic infractions. Because of driver's license reciprocity across states, there is a way for state driver licensing agencies (SDLAs) to deal with this challenge. They maintain equivalency tables that convert charges coming from or headed to other states based on standards developed by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). The problem is that AAMVA and other entities have had difficulty maintaining these tables for every state, so it is difficult to identify the appropriate translator that enables cross-state comparison. Third, states have significant limitations to their court statistics databases, which do not always allow them to pull specific charges, isolate specific types of cases (e.g. cases involving a commercial driver's license holder), or limit the ability to report on cases more than a few years old. Fourth, obtaining state court data is often an arcane process, and is potentially expensive, as some states levy substantial fees for their data. Research is needed to improve these processes if state administrators, federal administrators, and

researchers are to improve their understanding about which enforcement and adjudication techniques are most effective.

**Objective:**

To develop recommendations for harmonized data collection protocols among U.S. state and local courts and motor vehicle administrators to enable valid comparisons of state enforcement and adjudication practices.

**Research Method:**

It is expected that the research will address the following questions: What kinds of changes do administrative offices of the courts (or equivalent state agency), SDLAs, and other entities involved in the enforcement and adjudication aspect of traffic offenses need to make so that public research of state trends in adjudication and enforcement is more feasible? What kind of changes must states make to electronic databases so that cross-sectional and temporal court cases can be broken down to greater, more finely tuned detail so that specific state policies can be subjected to empirical scrutiny? What kinds of process standards do states need to adopt to ensure that activities related to license plate reciprocity can be tracked (i.e. court adjudication, changes to standard driver license statuses, changes to CDL driver license statuses, etc.)? How much funding is required to make these changes, and might they be made as part of a broader reform of state court systems? Why do some states differ in their propensity to send individuals to issue citations, uphold fines, send violators to state traffic school, and revoke licenses? Which policies have the most impact on highway safety? Specifically, do lax enforcement and adjudication lead to higher crash rates, injuries, and fatalities, all else equal?

**Recommended Funding: $350,000**

**Urgency and Payoff Potential:**

This research is important because it will ultimately result in implementable solutions that will enable much more comprehensive research into state court enforcement and adjudication than is currently available. The limitations to current data collection processes make it difficult to know which sorts of approaches to enforcement and adjudication are most effective in reducing highway safety hazards – unsafe driving levels, crashes, injuries, and fatalities. States must develop the information infrastructure necessary for interested parties to compare state enforcement and adjudication; provide on-demand data queries quickly and cheaply; conduct more in-depth analysis of specific charges, case dispositions, and court trends; and determine which state policies are the most effective at mitigating threats to highway safety. Making detailed enforcement and

adjudication data available to elected officials, policy experts, and the public will drastically improve the quality and precision of highway safety research.

# TRB COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAMS
# BTSCRP PANEL NOMINATION FORM

## Please submit a resume along with this form

| BTSCRP Project Number: | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**NOMINEE**: _____
First Middle Last

Employer: _____

Current Job Title: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone #: (  ) _____ Fax #: (  ) _____ Email: _____

Years at Current Position: _____ Years of Experience Relevant to this CRP Project: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

***Optional Information on Nominee***

Ethnicity (*please check one*):

_____ (A) American Indian or Alaskan Native; origin in any of the original peoples of North America.

_____ (B) Black; origin in any of the black racial groups.

_____ (H) Hispanic, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

_____ (P) Asian or Pacific Islander; origin in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Pacific Islands. Includes China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, Samoa, and the Indian subcontinent.

_____ (W) White; origin in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

_____ (2) Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino); all persons who identify with more than one of the above five races.

Name of Nominator: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

*Please return to*: Mr. Joseph Snell (jsnell@nas.edu) and Dr. William C. Rogers (wrogers@nas.edu)
Cooperative Research Programs
Transportation Research Board
500 Fifth Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001 or **FAX 202/334-2006**

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TRB
TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

# The Roles of BTSCRP Panel Members and Liaisons

BTSCRP panels have four major responsibilities:

1) Translate problem statements into Requests for Proposals with well-defined objectives;
2) Review proposals and select the most capable research team to undertake the work;
3) Provide guidance on the technical aspects of the research during the life of the contract, by commenting on Quarterly, Interim, and Final reports;
4) Serve as champions for implementation of the research results.

This document provides details on how these four responsibilities are carried out in a typical BTSCRP project.

## How panel members are selected

Subsequent to the annual selection of new research projects by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Executive Board, staff distributes a solicitation for panel members. Each project is assigned to a Project Manager who manages the panel selection process. Project Managers select panel members from among the nominees, or through other sources when necessary. Each panel numbers about eight persons and operates under the guidance of a Chair. The objective of forming a panel is to make sure it includes the expertise necessary to provide the appropriate technical oversight of the project. The panel should include representatives from a cross section of interest areas that can address all sides of the issue. The panel should also include key stakeholders who will be implementing and using the results. All panels will include a GHSA Monitor from one of the State Highway Safety Offices (SHSOs). BTSCRP also tries to achieve a balance of geographic distribution, gender, and ethnicity of its panel members.

## Role of liaisons

Panels will typically include liaisons from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), TRB's Technical Activities Division, and other agencies and industry associations as needed. These organizations maintain an awareness of relevant research needs and activity on a national level; their liaisons help to ensure that the panel addresses pertinent needs without duplicating other efforts. Liaisons participate fully in all panel deliberations but do not vote on issues before the panel. They are not on the panel to decide the project's outcome, but to help facilitate the work of the key stakeholders.

## Role of the BTSCRP Project Manager

The BTSCRP staff member serving as Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that the terms of the research contract are fulfilled, the technical expertise of panel members is used wisely, and the

contractor is responsive to the panel's guidance. The Project Manager will serve as the liaison between the contractor and the project panel.

**Panel meetings**

Panels will typically meet at least three times over the course of the project: once to develop the Request for Proposals, once to review proposals and select a contractor, and one or more times to review interim research products. You will be reviewing regular progress reports on your own time and submitting review comments by email, but the ability to travel and attend the scheduled panel meetings is extremely important. While travel has become more burdensome and difficult for many of our panel members, BTSCRP panel meetings are scheduled at points in the project where face to face interaction is particularly critical to the success of the project. You should take this into account when you are first invited to participate on a panel.

**Drafting a Request for Proposals**

At the first panel meeting, the panel will start with a draft problem statement that has been approved by the governing body and develop a Project Statement that forms the basis of a Request for Proposals (RFPs). Your Project Manager will guide you through the RFP process. There are a number of things to keep in mind. First, when a group of experts get together to discuss a problem of common interest, there is a natural desire to *solve* the problem. The role of the panel is not to solve a problem; that is the role of the research team that is contracted to undertake the work. At this point, the panel's main job is to *describe* the problem and the desired outcomes in sufficient detail that a qualified research team will clearly understand what is needed and expected. An outline with the components of a typical RFP will be provided to you. We always recommend that panels start with the objective statement. Once the panel reaches consensus on a clear, concise objective statement, the rest of the RFP should follow in a logical manner. Remember that BTSCRP projects are intended to produce practical, readily implementable products that can address a specific problem. The objective should describe the desired product in detail, and the product itself should be tailored to the right target audience in the right format for most efficient implementation. The panel will determine the appropriate contract length commensurate with the budget and expected tasks.

**Selecting a contractor**

When the deadline for submissions has passed, BTSCRP staff will send you copies of all proposals received – this will be about four to six weeks before the second panel meeting. You should review the proposals carefully and be prepared to offer your initial rankings of them (from best to worst) right at the beginning of the second panel meeting. Your Project Manager may ask you to submit your rankings before the meeting, especially if there are a large number of proposals. This is not considered a vote, nor is your ranking binding in any way. This is simply an effective way to focus the discussion on the higher-ranked proposals that have the best chance of being selected. The factors in reviewing proposals are described in a rating form provided by your Project Manager. When reviewing the experience of the team, take particular note of projects that dealt with a similar subject area and a similar target audience. If these projects were successful, it demonstrates that the research team understands the subject and the environment in which the results will be implemented. Many panels look favorably on a research team that includes one or more members with practical experience as research users. If a team member has experience in implementing or using research

results, they should be in a good position to develop products that address real needs and are ready to implement. Similarly, a good research plan is one that is feasible, appropriate, and has a good chance of success. Innovative research methods can be a positive feature as long as the panel has confidence that they can be achieved successfully. Also consider the data requirements for the proposed research plan. If data does not exist, it cannot be simply compiled and analyzed. In that case, the researchers may need to conduct field research or simulation to develop conclusions and recommendations.

Selection of a contractor requires a 2/3 majority of the voting panel members. However, it is very important that all panel members leave the second meeting with the belief that the chosen contractor has the experience and ability to successfully complete the project, even if it wasn't their first choice. In order to meet this consensus decision, panel members should raise any uncertainties or concerns they have with the first-choice proposal. Your Project Manager will record a list of all panel comments, question, clarifications, and suggested modifications. These will be forwarded to the research team for a point-by-point response. Hopefully, the research team will provide information and make adjustments to their research plan that will provide all panel members with a high level of confidence in the team's ability to successfully achieve the desired objectives.

We also ask that – if possible – you select a second choice contractor. The contracting policies of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine require detailed documentation of the review process and justification for selection of the winning proposal, in order to demonstrate that the selection was fair and thorough. In the extremely rare event that the panel's first choice is unable to accept the assignment, BTSCRP can award a contract to the second choice agency without another panel meeting if the justification is well-documented. A second choice selection is not obligatory; if the consensus of the panel is that only one proposal can successfully accomplish the project objectives, then that should be stated and recorded by the Project Manager in the meeting notes.

**Updated Work Plan**

Within 15 days of contract execution, the research team must provide an updated Amplified Working Plan. It is essentially the original work plan from their proposal, modified as necessary to address the panel's comments. It will also contain an updated schedule starting on the contract execution date. Once approved by the project panel, this becomes a public document that can be shared with others. Along with the original Request for Proposals, this updated work plan is the most important reference for panel members to ensure that the research team's contractual obligations are being met.

**Reviewing Quarterly Progress Reports**

Once a contractor is selected and work gets underway, the most important way you will ensure that they are on track is by a thorough review of quarterly progress reports. The researchers are instructed to provide enough detail in the quarterly reports to enable the panel to understand what work that has been done and the results to date. It can be helpful to refer back to the Amplified Working Plan to make sure the research conducted in each quarter is consistent with the work that has been approved by the project panel. We typically ask that you review the reports and provide comments within three weeks. When comments are late coming in, the research team does not know if the panel is satisfied with their progress, and could have a legitimate reason to delay further work. When you receive the quarterly report, please set aside the time needed to provide your comments to the Project Manager in a timely fashion.

**Reviewing Interim Reports**

Interim reports are required at key project milestones. The interim meeting should take place after sufficient work has been completed to give the panel a good indication of the likely project results, but while there is still enough time and money in the schedule and budget to allow for any redirection needed to meet the project objectives.

The meeting will usually take place about four weeks after the panel has received the interim report for review. This is an extremely important meeting, and is usually the first time the panel meets face to face with the research team. If the panel has any concerns or questions about the project direction, this is the time they must be resolved. At the end of the interim meeting, the panel, research team and Project Manager should have a clear understanding of the next steps to be taken to address any concerns and conduct the next phase of research.

**Reviewing Other Deliverables**

Panels frequently ask for other interim products such as technical memoranda during the course of the project. These are another important way for you to evaluate progress. Please keep in mind that keeping the contract on schedule requires a timely review on your part of all interim products. Also bear in mind that while the report will be reviewed by professional staff editors before publication, they are not technical experts. You should therefore concentrate on the technical aspects of the work, including the content, structure, tables and graphics to make sure they convey information clearly and succinctly to the intended audience.

**Reviewing Preliminary Draft Final Reports**

This is the final opportunity for the panel to influence the content and format of the final report. You should review the report very carefully, taking into account direction that has been provided on interim reports and progress reports along the way. You will be asked to provide comments and answer several specific questions to evaluate the success of the project and the acceptability of the final report. Your answers to these questions, along with the research team's response to your detailed comments, will be used by staff to make a recommendation on whether or not the report should be formally published by TRB. The final publication decision is made by senior management as well as by an independent Subcommittee on NRC Oversight. Please give this final review the time and attention it deserves.

**Contact with the Principal Investigator**

Unless otherwise specified, all contact between the research team and the panel should go through the Project Manager. In some cases, the panel members may be important sources of information that the research team needs to conduct their work. In this case, the Project Manager may permit direct communication, but under no circumstances should the panel members or the research team get into a discussion of the overall research direction or method.

**Your role as a "champion" for implementation**

Research that is not implemented has little value. TRB does not own infrastructure, make regulations, or set policies. Therefore, it must rely on others to implement the results of its research programs. The panel members have an important role in this regard. From development of the objective and desired products, selection of contractor, and review of project deliverables, panel members should keep the ultimate implementation of results in mind. When the project is completed, the panel members can help to facilitate implementation by communicating the importance of the research, the potential benefits, and ways that it can be put into practice. This may involve dealings with colleagues, other key stakeholders, senior management, and – on occasion - the media and the general public.

**Travel Expense Reports**

The Academies use an electronic travel expense report form that can be accessed through the internet or the Academies' web page. Your Project Manager will provide you with detailed instructions. In general, you will be reimbursed for your travel, lodging, and subsistence expenses up to the federal maximum per diem rates.

**Evaluation of contractor and Project Manager**

At the end of the research contract, you will be sent a form to evaluate your experience with both the research contractor and your BTSCRP Project Manager. Your feedback is very important to us, and we strongly encourage you to complete the evaluation. Your input on our strengths and weaknesses will help us to continually improve our programs and services to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our members and stakeholders.

**A Note on Panel Fatigue**

If your project stretches over two or more years to complete, it can be difficult to keep all panel members fully engaged in the review process. Panel members may move to other positions, or their workload may constrain their ability to devote enough time to CRP project panels. We want to stress the importance of all panel members remaining active and attentive through all phases of the project. If you cease to provide comments on progress reports and interim products, we lose the perspective of an important stakeholder, and the chances of delivering high-quality, implementable research are seriously compromised. Please remember that we rely on the commitment of our volunteer experts to maintain the level of quality that our community expects and deserves.