



NCFRP
National
Cooperative
Freight
Research
Program

HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED IN NCFRP?

There are four ways to become involved in NCFRP:

(1) Submit a research idea or problem statement.

Provide a general description of the problem, including a clear, concise statement of the objectives expected to be met and any anticipated products of the research. Describe the specific research proposed, how it relates to the problem, and, if possible, what approach and tasks are envisioned. Include an estimate of the funds, as well as the time needed to complete the research. A problem statement outline can be found on the NCFRP website at www.trb.org/NCFRP. Problem statements are typically due in July of each year.

The NCFRP Oversight Committee meets in the fall to review problem statements and select projects for the next fiscal year's program.

(2) Volunteer to participate on a project panel.

After it is announced, each project is assigned to a panel, which provides technical guidance and counsel throughout the life of the project.

TRB normally solicits nominations in late fall or early winter for people to serve on project panels for the next fiscal year's projects. In response to the TRB's solicitation for nominations, any interested person may self-nominate or be nominated for membership on a project panel. Submit a resume and an NCFRP nomination form, which can be downloaded from the NCFRP website at www.trb.org/NCFRP.

(3) Prepare a proposal to conduct research. In response to NCFRP requests for proposals (RFPs), any interested individual, agency, or others who possess extensive, demonstrated capability and proven expe-

rience in the problem area may submit a proposal to do the research work. Information on how to prepare and submit a proposal is provided on the NCFRP website at www.trb.org/NCFRP.

(4) Use the research results. NCFRP products are developed in response to problems faced by freight stakeholders. When faced with a freight issue, use NCFRP products for guidance.

SCOPE OF NCFRP PROJECTS

NCFRP can address any issue faced by freight stakeholders. Some projects may apply to specific freight modes, while others apply to all modes of freight transportation. Projects may target areas as diverse as quantifying public benefits from freight, changing patterns of freight movements, synchronizing infrastructure improvements with freight demand, environmental impacts from freight transportation, and technology applications to increase freight capacity.

NCFRP products will be a series of research reports that freight stakeholders, government agencies, and other interested parties can consult when addressing freight issues.

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

500 Fifth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

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NATIONAL COOPERATIVE FREIGHT RESEARCH PROGRAM

WHAT IS NCFRP?

The National Cooperative Freight Research Program (NCFRP) was authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) of 2005. It is an industry-driven, applied research program that develops near-term, practical solutions to improve the efficiency, reliability, safety, and security of the nation's freight transportation system. NCFRP is managed by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies and sponsored by the Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

HOW IS NCFRP FUNDED?

NCFRP is authorized by Congress and funded as part of the periodic surface transportation legislation.

HOW IS NCFRP GOVERNED?

The NCFRP is governed by the NCFRP Oversight Committee, specified in the authorizing legislation, that is appointed by the National Research Council of the National Academies, and composed of a cross section of public- and private-sector freight stakeholders, including shippers, carriers, U.S. DOT, other federal agencies, state transportation departments, local governments, nonprofit entities, and academia.

WHERE DO THE RESEARCH IDEAS ORIGINATE?

Anyone may submit an idea or problem statement for freight research at any time to TRB, but there is an annual Request for Information posted on www.trb.org.

WHO SELECTS THE RESEARCH TOPICS?

The NCFRP Oversight Committee has developed a Strategic Plan and formulates the annual research program by identifying the highest-priority projects and defining funding levels and expected products. Emphasis is placed on selecting projects that will result in applied research products that freight stakeholders will be able to use immediately upon the completion of the research.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RESEARCH TOPICS ARE SELECTED?

TRB follows a cooperative research process that it has used successfully for almost 50 years in other programs. First, TRB forms a project panel of individuals with expertise and interest in the topic area. This project panel uses the original problem statement to develop a detailed scope of work that serves as a basis for a request for proposals (RFP). The RFP is prepared and posted on www.trb.org. Those previously expressing interest via the NCFRP website are notified immediately. The weekly TRB E-Newsletter provides notice for others. Individuals and agencies then respond to the RFP by submitting proposals to perform the work. The project panel reviews the proposals and selects the contractor to perform the work. The panel then provides technical guidance, reviews deliverables, and provides general oversight throughout the life of the project.

HOW LARGE ARE PROJECT PANELS AND WHO SERVES ON THEM?

A project panel consists of approximately six to eight people from the freight industry, consultants, academia, state and local governments, as well as liaisons from the federal government. TRB selects project

panel members because of their expertise and interest in the research topic, and carefully screens panel members for potential conflicts of interest in connection with the particular research project. Panel members serve as individuals, not as representatives of their affiliations.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT OF NCFRP PROJECT PANEL MEMBERS?

A modest time commitment is expected from project panel members. An initial 2-day meeting focuses on developing an RFP. A follow-up 1-day meeting allows members to discuss their proposal evaluations and select the contractor for the project. An interim 1-day meeting may be held to bring the project panel together with the research contractor. The remaining work is done from the panel member's place of work or home and includes reviews of draft documents and other deliverables.

ARE PROJECT PANEL MEMBERS COMPENSATED?

Project panel members serve as volunteers without compensation. However, NCFRP pays for travel costs that panel members incur to attend the meetings, including airfare, lodging, meals, and incidentals.

HOW CAN I OBTAIN NCFRP PRODUCTS?

All NCFRP products are available on the NCFRP website at www.trb.org/NCFRP.