

# National Cooperative Rail Research Program

## NCRRP

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Transportation Research Board

January 7, 2013

**TO:** Distribution

**FROM:** Christopher W. Jenks  
Director, Cooperative Research Programs, TRB

**Re:** **Research Problem Statements for the Fiscal Year 2014 National Cooperative Rail Research Program due by June 15, 2013**

The purpose of this announcement is to solicit problem statements identifying research needs for the National Cooperative Rail Research Program (NCRRP) for Fiscal Year 2014. These submittals form the basis for selection of the annual NCRRP research program. It is easy to develop and submit a problem statement for consideration. Most are 1-3 pages in length using the enclosed outline.

The NCRRP was authorized by the *Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008* (PL 100-432, Division B, §306). The program is sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and managed by the National Academies, acting through its Transportation Research Board (TRB), with oversight provided by an independent governing board (the NCRRP Oversight Committee). This committee includes representatives of rail operating agencies, state departments of transportation, and others. The NCRRP provides applied research in the complex area of intercity passenger, commuter, and freight rail planning and operations. As established, the research program is designed to address concerns relating to expansion and capacity, ridership forecasts, risk analysis, financial and economic analysis, operations and maintenance, safety and security, design and construction, planning and development, labor force retention and generation, legal and institutional, and other issues that are in the forefront of a growing national, state, and regional emphasis on enhancing overall freight and intercity rail passenger services.

As an applied research program, the NCRRP examines problems important to intercity and commuter rail, and freight rail practitioners. Desired research proposals should be formulated to help solve common operating problems, adapt appropriate new technologies from other industries, and introduce wide-ranging innovations into the rail industry. Of primary interest are issues and complexities shared by freight, intercity, and commuter rail practitioners that are not being adequately addressed by existing federal research programs.

*The NCRRP is sponsored by the Federal Railroad Administration; research projects are selected by the NCRRP Oversight Committee; and the Program is managed by the Transportation Research Board.*

Participants in management and oversight of the program include (1) an independent governing board, the NCRRP Oversight Committee (ROC), appointed by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation with representation from freight, intercity, and commuter rail operating agencies; state departments of transportation; other stakeholders; and relevant industry organizations such as the Association of American Railroads (AAR), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRRA), and the National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP) as vital links to the rail community; (2) the TRB as program manager and secretariat for the governing board; and (3) the FRA as program sponsor.

The NCRRP benefits from the cooperation and participation of rail professionals, equipment and service suppliers, other rail users, and research organizations. Each of these participants has different interests and responsibilities, and each is an integral part of this cooperative research effort. It is the responsibility of the NCRRP governing board to formulate the research program by identifying the highest priority projects and defining funding levels and expected products.

Research projects selected to date include the following:

- *Comparison of Passenger Rail Energy Consumption with Competing Modes,*
- *Intercity Passenger Rail Service and Development Guide,*
- *Passenger Rail in the Context of a Competitive Economic Market,*
- *Building and Retaining Workforce Capacity for the Railroad Industry,*
- *Alternative Financing Approaches for Passenger and Freight Rail Projects,*
- *Developing Multi-State Institutions to Implement Intercity Passenger Rail Programs, and*
- *Legal Aspects of Rail Programs.*

Further information is available on the TRB web site: <http://www.trb.org/NCRRP/NCRRP.aspx>

The NCRRP Oversight Committee will select new research projects from the submitted problem statements pending the availability of funding. For projects selected, requests for proposals will be issued, and contractors will be selected through a competitive proposal process.

Thank you very much for your interest. Your willingness to participate in the identification of relevant rail research topics is a key element of a successful, Rail Research Program. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Larry Goldstein at 202/334-1866 or [lgoldstein@nas.edu](mailto:lgoldstein@nas.edu).

Attachment

## OUTLINE FOR NCRRP PROBLEM STATEMENTS

### I. PROBLEM TITLE

The title should be no more than 10 words.

### II. RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

In no more than three paragraphs, provide a general description of the problem or need.

### III. OBJECTIVE

Include a clear, concise statement of the objectives (anticipated products) that are expected to be met by this particular research.

### IV. RESEARCH PROPOSED

Provide a statement of the specific research proposed, how it relates to the general problem statement in Section II and, if possible, the research approach and the tasks envisioned.

### V. ESTIMATE OF THE PROBLEM FUNDING AND RESEARCH PERIOD

**Recommended Funding:** Include an estimate of the funds necessary to accomplish the objectives stated in Section III. As a general guideline, the present cost for research usually averages approximately \$200,000-\$250,000 per professional staff-year. NCRRP projects typically are in the \$400,000-\$600,000 range. A detailed budget is not necessary.

**Research Period:** Provide an estimate of the period of time needed to complete the research, including 3 months for review and revision of a draft final report.

### VI. URGENCY AND PAYOFF POTENTIAL

Include a statement concerning the urgency of this particular research. Identify and, if possible, quantify the potential and magnitude of payoff from the achievement of the project objectives. Any institutional, political, or socio-economic barriers to implementation of the anticipated research products should also be identified.

### VII. RELATED RESEARCH

If available, provide information on other research—completed, in progress, or pending—that is closely relevant to the proposed problem.

### VIII. PERSON(S) DEVELOPING THE PROBLEM

Provide the specifics (i.e., name, title, address, telephone, and fax numbers) for the person(s) who developed the problem.

### IX. PROCESS USED TO DEVELOP PROBLEM STATEMENT

State whether this problem statement is the product of an individual, a formal committee, or another group.

### X. DATE AND SUBMITTED BY

Provide the specifics (see Section IX) of the person(s) who submitted the problem and the date of submission.

Submit to:

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202/334-3089  
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