



Region II

University Transportation Research Center

Robert E. Paaswell, P.E., Ph.D., Director

2008-09 UTRC Research Initiative

2008-09 UTRC Advanced Technology Initiative

Request for Proposals

Introduction

The Region II University Transportation Research Center (UTRC) is pleased to announce the 2008-09 UTRC Research Initiative and 2008-09 UTRC Advanced Technology Initiative, competitive matching grant programs for faculty-initiated projects. UTRC is seeking research proposals as outlined below. It is anticipated that awards will be announced by August 2008.

Proposals on all transportation topics of relevance to USDOT Region II are eligible for these programs. Proposals will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Final awards will be subject to the governing requirements of the U.S. DOT University Transportation Centers Program and the Research Foundation of the City University of New York. It is not yet clear how many awards will be funded in this cycle.

Program Objectives

The objectives of the UTRC Research Initiative are to:

1. Promote excellent and innovative research projects on transportation problems relevant to U.S. DOT's Region II (including New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).
2. Encourage multi-disciplinary and multi-university approaches to research on these problems.
3. Provide practical and workable contributions and solutions to the region's transportation community.
4. Further the education of transportation students by involving them in scholarly research.
5. Encourage junior faculty in the UTRC consortium to compete for research funds.

The objectives of the UTRC Advanced Technology Initiative are to:

1. Promote high-quality research on the development, demonstration, or implementation of advanced technologies in the transportation field.
2. Promote collaboration between traditional fields of transportation expertise (e.g. civil engineering and urban planning) and academic research centers in advanced technologies (e.g. nanotechnology, photonics, wireless communication technologies).
3. Encourage partnerships among universities, public agencies, and the private sector.
4. Provide practical and workable contributions and solutions to the region's transportation community.
5. Further the education of transportation students by involving them in scholarly research.
6. Encourage junior faculty in the UTRC consortium to compete for research funds.

Abstract Requirements

Starting this year, proposals are to be submitted in two parts. We are requiring that an abstract of your proposal be submitted early to facilitate recruitment of reviewers. We expect that this will help expedite the review process once the full proposals are received.

Abstracts should include: the names and affiliations of the Principal Investigator and any co-PIs, the title of the project, and a brief description of the problem, proposed approach, and work effort in 400 words or fewer.

Abstracts must be received by Ellen Thorson (ethor@utrc2.org) by **Monday, April 14, 2008**.

Proposal Requirements

Full proposals must include the following elements:

1. A cover page, following the form in the [Cover Sheet for Other UTRC Proposals](#) on the UTRC website. A lead institution and Principal Investigator (PI) should be clearly identified. The Principal Investigator must be a faculty member of a member university of the UTRC consortium.
- Proposals should indicate on the cover page which program (UTRC Research Initiative or Advanced Technology Initiative) the application is for.
 - Proposals are to be signed by an official authorized to commit the university in contractual arrangements. If the proposal is successful, the lead institution will be the prime contractor with the CUNY Research Foundation.

- Research proposals involving well-structured teams from two or more institutions are encouraged. Such proposals should be submitted as a single entry with appropriate budget and signature documentation from each institution.
2. The main proposal narrative, not exceeding 4,000 words, describing in more detail:
 - a. The problem being addressed, and its relevance to the region.
 - b. The research approach.
 - c. How this project relates to other work being done on this topic.
 - d. Description of deliverables the research project will produce. This must include a one- to two-page research brief summarizing the methods, findings, and significance of the research project in non-technical language, suitable for distribution to transportation agencies and policymakers.
 3. Proposed tasks and timeline. Each task or subtask should be associated with a timeframe, a specific deliverable, and a percent of effort toward the total budget.
 4. Listing of research obligations of key project personnel for the 2008-09 Academic Year, including both UTRC and non-UTRC projects that will be underway during that time.
 5. Brief curricula vitae of all principals responsible for the study (not to exceed two pages each).
 6. A budget, using the [Template for UTRC/NYS DOT/NYMTC Budget Proposal](#) on the UTRC website:
 - Each proposal must include a detailed estimate of the time and cost to perform the work, including the billing rate for each person.
 - Proposals should include funding for at least one graduate student researcher.
 - Proposals should include funding to present research findings at one academic or professional meeting.
 - No faculty member can receive funding from UTRC exceeding 50% of his/her academic year's time.
 - UTRC's financial contribution must not exceed \$50,000 and should be fully matched with a non-federal source of funds. Eligible sources of matching funds include hard or in-kind sources of funds from state or local transportation agencies; foundations, business, or civic organizations; or faculty release time or student tuition reductions provided by the university. Sources of matching funds must be documented on a letterhead of the sponsor agency. Proposals that are not able to identify sufficient matching funds are still eligible for consideration in this program. Please contact Camille Kamga before you submit your proposal if you need guidance on budget preparation or potential sources of a match. We will also circulate proposals to potential funding agencies.

Full proposals must be submitted electronically to Ellen Thorson at ethor@utrc2.org by **Monday, May 12, 2008**. In addition, one signed original of the proposal should be mailed to:

Ellen Thorson
University Transportation Research Center
City College of New York, MR-910
New York, NY 10031

Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed by an ad hoc committee of researchers at other transportation centers, and by practicing professionals at agencies/industries within USDOT Region II. They will score proposals according to following criteria:

- A. Originality and timeliness of topic.
- B. Quality, clarity, and feasibility of research plan.
- C. Validity of data and research methods.
- D. Likelihood of producing useful information and insights.
- E. Qualifications of Principal Investigator(s)
- F. Relevance to needs and problems in Region II and UTRC's theme of "Planning and Managing Regional Transportation Systems in a Changing World."

The UTRC Director and Executive Committee will consider the ad hoc committee's rankings in making the final selection of projects. In addition to the considerations listed above, special consideration will be given to projects that:

- Use UTRC's limited resources efficiently
- Are led by junior faculty members
- Involve graduate or undergraduate students

Proposals will be sent to outside reviewers shortly after the closing date, with reviews due at UTRC approximately 45 days later. The ad hoc review committee then will consider the reviews and rank the proposals. The UTRC Executive Committee will meet to select projects for funding or partial funding and to make other budget recommendations.

UTRC staff will review all budgets for compliance with UTRC rules and will inform all PIs of the status of their proposals after submission.

Other Research Policies

Researchers are expected to acknowledge the support provided by the UTRC in all presentations and publications resulting from the research. UTRC will not knowingly support research that is being funded or proposed for funding in whole or in part by other agencies or organizations

without a specific agreement for joint funding. Failure to disclose other proposed or in-hand research funding for a project substantially similar to a UTRC project is grounds for termination of a UTRC grant.

Graduate student contributions to research projects must be acknowledged in any publication resulting from research using UTRC funds. Acknowledgment may be by footnote or by co-authorship of reports and articles, depending upon the nature and extent of student contributions.