

Arkansas Department of Transportation

Guidelines for Transportation-Related Research and Workforce Development Grant Program

Introduction

Arkansas Act 705 of 2017 and Act 884 of 2021 (hereinafter referred to as “Acts”) established the Future Transportation Research and Workforce Development Fund and the Transportation-Related Research and Workforce Development Grant Program (TRWD). These Acts grant the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) authority to distribute grants under the TRWD, to promulgate rules, and to set guidelines to implement and administer the program.

Definitions

Pursuant to the Acts,

1. “Transportation-related research” means the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions to provide resilient and sustainable logistics, processes, materials, and methods to ensure cost-effectiveness and the furtherance of education and economic development concerning all forms of transportation, including without limitation rail, public transportation, aviation, and waterborne transportation; and
2. “Workforce development” means industry training, apprenticeship, and educational programs that foster skills required for transportation related personnel development.

Purpose

The TRWD provides funding to local sponsors (Sponsor) for projects that conduct transportation-related research or workforce development.

Funding Guidelines

The minimum amount requested for each application is \$20,000. There is no limit to the maximum amount that can be requested.

Eligible Sponsors and Projects

The Acts dictate that any publicly funded institution of higher education is eligible for the TRWD. Projects that fall under the outlined definitions for “transportation-related research” and “workforce development” are eligible for TRWD funding.

Project Selection Process

1. A solicitation for project applications will occur at least once every two years, as long as funding is available.
2. Potential applicants will be notified when an application period begins.
3. ARDOT staff will review all applications for eligibility. Applications which meet the eligibility requirements will be forwarded to the TRWD Committee for scoring.

4. The TRWD Committee will be comprised of the following ARDOT Staff:
 - A. Assistant Chief Engineer – Program Delivery, TRWD Chairperson
 - B. Materials Division Head
 - C. Planning & Research Division Head
 - D. Human Resources Division Head
 - E. Workforce Development Section Head
 - F. Local Programs Division Head, non-voting Member
5. The TRWD Committee will review the applications and submit scores through ARDOT's Local Programs Division to the Director.
6. Upon the Director's approval, a Minute Order will be submitted to the Arkansas State Highway Commission (AHC) for their approval.

Project Development and Implementation

1. Upon AHC approval, notification letter(s) will be sent to the Sponsor(s) indicating the award of funds and the funding amount.
2. ARDOT will schedule a meeting with Sponsor(s) to whom funds were awarded and discuss the program process.
3. An Agreement of Understanding (AOU) will be prepared by ARDOT and signed by both the Sponsor and ARDOT.
4. ARDOT will transmit the awarded funds to the Sponsor(s).
5. Post execution of the AOU, project development and implementation shall follow the reporting requirements outlined below:
 - A. At the end of each State Fiscal Year, the Sponsor must provide ARDOT with certification that expenditures were an appropriate use of the TRWD funds accompanied with a summarized expenditure report.
 - B. Upon expenditure of all TRWD funds or completion of the project, whichever occurs first, the Sponsor must submit a final report detailing what has been accomplished by the project and certifying that all expenditures were made in accordance with the TRWD.