

Wisconsin Highway Research Program Proposal Preparation Guidelines



WHIRP



An individual or a collaboration of colleges, universities, industry, research institutions, foundations, engineering consultants, or others who possess extensive, demonstrated capability as well as proven experience in the project area are welcome to conduct WHRP research.

Each submitted proposal will be forwarded to the appropriate WHRP Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) for review and evaluation. It is mandatory that proposals contain the following information:

1. Cover
2. Summary Page
3. Table of Contents
4. Research Plan
5. Time Requirement/Schedule
6. Budget
7. Qualifications of Research Team
8. Other Commitments of Research Team
9. Equipment and Facilities
10. Technician and Laboratory Certification

Presentation

WHRP recommends that proposals be as concise as possible. Proposals will include page numbers and be prepared with a minimum of 10 point font. The length of the research plan is not to exceed eight pages. The maximum length of the entire proposal is 18 pages.

Details of Required Content

1. **Cover:** Cover contains the title of the project, limited use disclaimer, and identifies the submitting agency. We recommended using the example cover page provided in Figure 1 on page six.
2. **Summary Page:** The summary page immediately follows the cover and includes the information shown in Figure 2 on page seven. Any questions/clarifications regarding the information required on the summary page should be directed via e-mail to: research@dot.wi.gov.
3. **Table of Contents**
4. **Research Plan (eight pages or less)** – The purpose of the research plan is to clearly detail the steps taken to address the problem statement and scope presented in the request for proposal (RFP). Specifically, the research plan includes the following subsections:
 - a. **Background:** In the background section of the proposal the researcher is required to demonstrate a clear understanding of the problem provided in the RFP and how it relates to WisDOT practices. The proposal should demonstrate the researcher’s awareness of recent work on the subject through definition of the technological or practical barriers that must be addressed in solving the problem.

- b. **Research Objectives:** Provide a brief overview of the approach the research will take to address the objectives defined in the RFP and the anticipated products of the research that will improve current practice.

- c. **Research Approach:**
 - i. **Work Plan/Experimental Design:** Present a logical, innovative plan that addresses the scope provided in the RFP. The plan will include a detailed description of each task related to completion of the overall research. Wisconsin conditions, materials, and practices must be considered in the research approach. If appropriate this section will also include an experimental design identifying key materials' properties and test methods used to evaluate them.
 - ii. **Expected Contribution from WisDOT Staff:**
 - 1. **WisDOT/TOC Staff Time:** Identify research activities in which WisDOT involvement is required or expected. Example activities include: technical review, coordination, data access, training, and materials/data collection. Additions to or deviations from the expected involvement provided in the RFP should be noted and justified.
 - 2. **Equipment:** The availability of WisDOT equipment for research purposes cannot be assumed unless it is specified in the RFP. If equipment will be donated to the project from another source, a letter of commitment is required.
 - iii. **Other Equipment and Materials:** If the proposal includes the purchase or assumes the donation of equipment or materials from industry or other sources, the proposal must include commitment letters or other formal documentation.
 - 1. **Equipment:** Donation or purchase of any equipment used in the laboratory or field solely for the purpose of the research project.
 - 2. **Materials:** Donation or purchase of materials used for testing or test specimen preparation that exceed a value of \$1,000.

- d. **Anticipated Research Results and Implementation Plan:** The research plan will include specific statements describing anticipated research results and an assessment of implementation potential. Please detail the research results in terms of a specific deliverable, (i.e. a design/analysis tool, test methods, or change in performance thresholds) and their impact on current WisDOT practice. This section also includes an implementation plan. It is understood the plan may change as the research progresses, however at a minimum it should include:
 - i. The product expected from the research.
 - ii. The stakeholder or intended audience that the results of the research will most likely impact.
 - iii. Potential impediments to implementation
 - iv. Activities necessary for successful implementation.

- 5. **Time Requirement:** The duration of the research project is provided by WHRP in the RFP. Project timelines will be clearly communicated in the proposal in terms of project schedule and distribution of research team hours. The project schedule will be presented using a Gantt chart showing the start and end dates of each task with dates of project milestones and submittal of deliverables clearly indicated.

Schedules are based on an assumed contract start date of **October 1** or as specified in the RFP. The actual research will officially begin when both parties sign the contract. The schedule will also include a timeframe of three months or the time specified in the RFP to allow for TOC review of the final research products. This review period includes a project closeout presentation, TOC review of the draft final report, researcher revisions based on TOC comment, and final submittal of the report in WHRP format. The contract is considered closed with final submission of the report to WHRP. In addition the amount of hours by task committed to the project by each member of the research team must be provided in a table. A “Summary of Hours” template is provided in Figure 3 on page eight.

6. Budget:

- a. Itemized Budget:** The maximum cost of the project is defined by WHRP in the RFP. The budget and staffing plan are based on an assumed project start date of October 1. Also, the year one budget includes the funds required for 12 months, from October 1 to September 30. The duration of year one matches the federal fiscal year. The researcher is responsible for providing a budget consistent with the scope of work in the proposal. The budget will be organized to reflect the cost associated with each research task in the proposal itemized using the categories provided in Figure 4 on page nine. Any proposal submitted with a budget that exceeds the amount posted in the RFP will be considered non-responsive to the RFP requirements and will not be accepted.
- b. Budget Justification:** Provide a **detailed description** of costs related to travel, materials and supplies, and other direct costs. The description will include the items or activities considered in estimating the budget for the line item costs and any other information that is relevant to the project budget.
- c. Matching Funds:** Matching funds will not be considered in the proposal evaluation process.
- d. Technical Editor:** WHRP requires that draft final reports submitted by researchers for committee review exhibit quality technical writing and proper grammar. It is acceptable for the budget to include the services of a technical editor to ensure these requirements are met.

7. Qualifications of Research Team: Provide the academic, industrial, and/or research experience for the principal investigator (PI) and all other key research team members and how the experiences relate to the project. Describe any past WHRP efforts in this section. Note experience conducting any tests required by the RFP that are not certified by WisDOT. This requirement does not extend to graduate students.

8. Other Commitments of the Research Team: Proposals will contain a listing of the current organizational and personal commitments to other work over the duration of the project as an indicator that the PI and the rest of the research team has the time available to accommodate the effort commitments provided in the proposal. To provide a sufficient level of detail, please list funded research efforts and other commitments separately. The “Summary of Other Commitments” Template is provided in Figure 5 on page 11.

9. Facilities and Information Services: This section will include a description of the information services and facilities available to complete the research project.

- a. **Laboratory Equipment:** The description of the laboratory should include a listing of equipment available considered necessary to complete the scope of the research project. In the instance that required equipment is not on hand, arrangements to borrow or rent the equipment should be communicated in the proposal. Letters of agreement to borrow equipment or quotes obtained for equipment rental are sufficient forms of verification that the equipment is available.
- b. **Certifications:** National or state laboratory and technician certifications for activities relevant to the research project should be provided in the proposal. In the instance that the request for proposal requires laboratory and/or technician certification that the proposer does not have at the time of submittal, the proposal will communicate the efforts that will be made to obtain certification or committee approval to conduct testing with the proposed technicians and laboratories.
- c. **Information Services:** The section will also describe the availability of the library and information services for the research team to allow for a thorough literature review and understanding of current practice and research activities.

10. Technician Certifications: Requirements for technician certification are provided in the RFP for a given project. If the proposer does not have the proper technician certifications to meet the requirements of the RFP, they must communicate the plan for obtaining proper certification for the project.

The attached figures on pages 6-11 are available for download.

- Figures 1 and 2 are combined in a single MS Word document at <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/Title-and-Summary-Page-Templates-11-26-14.docx>
- Figures 3, 4, and 5 are combined in a single MS Excel document at <http://wisdotresearch.wi.gov/wp-content/uploads/Budget-Worksheet-Revised-November-2014.xls>

FIGURE 1: Cover Sheet

Wisconsin Highway Research Program

Project Title

Wisconsin Highway Research Program
LIMITED USE DOCUMENT

This proposal is for use of the recipient in selection of a research agency to conduct work under the Wisconsin Highway Research Program. If the proposal is unsuccessful, it should be destroyed. Proposals are regarded as fully privileged, and dissemination of the information included therein must be approved by WHRP.

Agency Name
Date

FIGURE 2: Summary Page

Project Title:

Proposing Agency: (Use name that will appear on contract include address and telephone number)

Person Submitting the Proposal: (Name and Title)

Proposal Written By: (Name and Title)

Proposal Date:

Principal Investigator: (Name and title, address, telephone number, and email address)

Administrative Officer: (Name and title, address, telephone number, and email address)

Proposed Contract Period: (In months)

Total Contract Amount:

Indirect Cost Portion at ____%

Technical Oversight Committee (TOC) Member Disclosure:

(Please disclose the name(s) and employer(s) of any WHRP TOC members who are part of the proposing team. If no TOC members are part of your team, please simply indicate *None*.)

Figure 3: Summary of Hours

INDIVIDUALS	TASKS				TOTAL HOURS
	1	2	3	4	
Principal Investigator					0
Graduate Students/Senior Staff					0
Hourly Students/Junior Staff					0
Office Staff					0
TOTALS	0	0	0	0	0

Figure 4: Budget Worksheet
 [PROJECT TITLE]

Table 1 Work Effort by Task

INDIVIDUALS	TASKS				Total Salaries	Fringes	Total Salaries and Fringes
	1	2	3	4			
Principal Investigator					\$0		\$0
Graduate Students/Senior Staff					\$0		\$0
Hourly Students/Junior Staff					\$0		\$0
Office Staff					\$0		\$0
TOTALS	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Table 2 Total Contract Summary by Fiscal Year

	Year 1*	Year 2	TOTALS
Total Salaries, Wages and Fringes (From Table 1)			\$0
Sub-Contracts (Please list each subcontract separately)			
<i>Subcontractor 1 (Provide Name)</i>			\$0
<i>Subcontractor 2 (Provide Name)</i>			\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Direct Costs			
<i>Item 1</i>			\$0
<i>Item 2</i>			\$0
<i>Item 3</i>			\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials & Supplies (List all items over \$1000 separately)			
<i>Item 1</i>			\$0
<i>Item 2</i>			\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel (State number of trips and estimated cost/trip)			
<i>Trip 1</i>			\$0
<i>Trip 2</i>			\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Communications (Printing is required)			
<i>Printing (8 printed final reports are required)</i>			\$0
<i>Other</i>			\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS			\$0
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS (Provide Rate and Base)			\$0
Fixed Fee if Applicable			\$0
TOTAL CONTRACT COST			\$0

NOTES: *Year 1 starts with the date of the contract and ends September 30th of the following year and is based on the federal fiscal year.

Figure 5: Commitments of Research Team

Research Team Commitments			Percentage of Time	
Team Member	Role	Activity	Committed	Available
		Activity 1:		
		Activity 2:		
		Activity 3:		
		Total		
		Activity 1:		
		Activity 2:		
		Activity 3:		
		Total		
		Activity 1:		
		Activity 2:		
		Activity 3:		
		Total		
		Activity 1:		
		Activity 2:		
		Activity 3:		
		Total		

* Please identify research projects separately