Request for Proposals (Year 4)

New England Regional University Transportation Center (NEUTC)
Promoting Safety

Center Mission:

The New England Regional UTC (NEUTC) is a varied, multidisciplinary consortium committed to addressing the pressing issue of traffic safety. Our objective, in line with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), is to drive transformative research, education, and technology transfer to address critical traffic safety needs in a time when roadway fatalities are distressingly high.

Center Themes:

Our research and educational activities at NEUTC are guided by four principal safety themes, each addressing a critical challenge in transportation safety. These themes capture the various integral components of the transportation system, focusing on technology, infrastructure, vehicles, and users with a commitment to fairness and public engagement. Our overarching theme is promoting safety, with the common underlying science being the study of behavioral, systemic, environmental, and mobility-driven factors on safety.

Project Requirements:

- Transportation safety theme within NEUTC thematic areas
- Student involvement
- PI is a faculty member or full-time research staff
- 100% matching funds from non-Federal sources

In addition to research projects, proposals are welcome for course development and STEM outreach activities involving a transportation safety theme. Please contact the NEUTC representative from your University for more information.

Proposals are due by May 15th, 2026
Award Decisions will be made by July 2026
Projects to begin September 2026

Instructions for Research Proposals

Proposers submit a three-page project proposal (details below). This proposal will be reviewed by the Site Director of the respective University to assess whether the project meets the goals and themes of the Center, the budget is appropriate, and whether matching funds are available. If these criteria are met, the proposal document is circulated among the other consortium universities for review by other faculty, staff, and advisory board members using the criteria listed below. Funding decisions will be made by the director and associate directors based on the review recommendations, feasibility, availability of matching funds, and relevance to Center themes. The number of projects funded will depend on the level of funding requested of the top tier proposals.

Project information will be entered in fields on the submission form. This information will not be shared with reviewers.

1. Project Title
2. Name, institution, email, and Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) for each principal investigator
3. Proposed project costs for each institution involved in project and total project budget
4. Anticipated matching funds amounts and sources - must be at least 100% of proposed project costs
5. Project start and end dates (period of performance is generally 12 – 18 months)

Proposal Document (to be uploaded through submission website; will be shared with reviewers)

1. Proposal Body (up to 3 pages)
    a. Project Title
    b. Problem Statement: discuss the importance of problem to transportation safety, and relevance to NEUTC theme and topic areas.
    c. Alignment with US DOT priorities: Describe how the project supports US DOT priorities and the RD&T strategic goals. Also describe how the project engages in breakthrough, advanced, or transformative research.
    d. Collaborative and Interdisciplinary Features
    e. Research Plan: describe research questions, independent variables, dependent measures (if applicable), experimental design, protocol or procedure
    f. Data Analysis Plan for dependent measures
    g. Technology Transfer activities: describe identification of and interaction with stakeholders and expected outputs (any new or improved process, practice, methodology, technology, software, training aid or other tangible product resulting from research and development tasks)
    h. Impact: Describe the application of the output and any changes this output has or will make to the transportation system, or its regulatory, legislative, or policy framework, including a description of products or patents, or a change in practice, or instances of research results informing policy decisions. Discuss how this research output will positively impact the transportation system in terms of safety, reliability, durability, costs, etc.
    i. Student Involvement: articulate how graduate and undergraduate students will work with a faculty or research staff mentor to achieve goals of the project

    j. Description of Data to be collected: – all NEUTC funded projects must comply with USDOT Public Access Plan, which means that all raw data must be uploaded to a repository upon project completion. Describe data types and formats, if any identifiable information will be collected and if so, how this data will be anonymized for public data sharing.
2. Collaboration Plan (1 page; for multi-site collaborative projects only; does not count toward page count)
    a. Describe project coordination strategies, such as regularly scheduled meetings, project conference calls, collaboration on periodic progress reports and single final report for project
3. Budget (1 page, does not count toward page count)
    a. Start and end dates for project (i.e., period of performance); recommended start date is September 2024
    b. Budget table indicating proposed costs and matching costs
    c. Narrative description of sources of matching funds; must be at least 100% of proposed project costs

Proposal Format

The proposal must be submitted as a PDF and should have normal margins (1" on all sides), 12 point font, and 1.15 line spacing.

Submission Process

Proposers will complete the project information form on the submission website that asks for personally identifiable information relating to the proposal. As noted above, this information will be separate from the proposal to allow for a blind review. Proposers will attach the PDF of their proposal to the submission page. The submission website can be found here.

Evaluation Criteria

- Projects that address NEUTC themes
- Projects that have high potential to advance knowledge and understanding of transportation safety
- Projects that have a well-conceived and feasible plan of research
    - Experimental conditions clearly linked to research questions
    - Independent and dependent measures are reasonable and relevant (if applicable)
    - Data analysis methods are appropriate for experimental design and data to be collected
- Projects providing graduate or undergraduate research assistantships with at least 25% effort
- Interdisciplinary projects involving students and faculty from multiple departments and colleges
- Clarity of technology transfer plans beyond academic publishing
- Projects that involve collaboration with other consortium members
- PIs and Co-PIs are in good standing with NEUTC regarding submitting semi-annual and annual progress reports.

Important Dates

Proposal Due Date – May 15th, 2026

Award Decisions Announced – July 2026

Projects Begin - September 2026

NEUTC Center Themes:

1) Developing Smart Infrastructure and Connected Systems: optimizing roadway infrastructure to improve safety and reduce congestion through advancements in telecommunication, sensors, improvement in geometric design, augmented reality, driver assistance systems, human-machine interactions, as well as by addressing cybersecurity risks of hardware, software, and infrastructure systems.

2) Improving Safety for all Modes and Populations: examining the synergistic relationships between safety and mobility and considering specific needs of vulnerable populations (e.g., underserved communities and disadvantaged populations) across modal preferences (e.g., pedestrians, bicyclists, commercial vehicles, and automated vehicles) to develop a fully integrated transportation system.

3) Promoting Automated Vehicle Safety: identifying, developing, and evaluating novel approaches that promote safety between automated vehicles, which move both people and goods, and all road users, including all types of vehicle drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Evaluating the human and machine interface as well as the cybersecurity risks of automated vehicle systems.

4) Embedding Community Engagement within Transportation Safety: developing and integrating best practices to comprehensively improve transportation safety while addressing existing disparities and actively involving the public in the co-development and dissemination of safety solutions.

Reporting and Data Availability Requirements

If proposal is funded, PI(s) must assure compliance with NEUTC reporting procedures and comply with the US DOT Public Access Plan.

Periodic Reporting Requirements

- Semi-annual progress report throughout the performance period of the project
- Matching fund sources documentation
- Description of technology transfer activities including research papers, conference presentations, integration of research into courses, and involvement of local and state DOTs during and following the performance period of the project

Project Deliverables

Each NEUTC funded project is required to provide four deliverables at the end of the project's performance period:

1. Final technical report (due on project end date)
2. Two-page summary (due on project end date)
3. Webinar presentation of results (to be scheduled shortly following project end date
4. Compliance with US DOT Public Access Plan (within 60 days of project end date)

Principal investigators are required to submit a two-page summary and final technical report on or before your project end date for each funded project. Collaborative projects will submit one technical report. The summary and final report should both be Microsoft Word documents using the templates that will be provided. The final report should be written as a technical report and contains enough detail for other researchers to fully understand the background, methodology, and results of your project. The two-page summary has a different purpose. It should focus on the outcome and outputs of the project and provide end users, such as government agencies or private companies, with guidance on how the results of the study could be implemented or used in their work.

As your project end date approaches, we will work with you to set up a date for your project webinar. The webinar is one hour in total length. The presentation portion should be 40-45 minutes followed by 15-20 minutes of questions and discussion.

Compliance with the US DOT Public Access Plan for research data is also required. Information about NEUTC's approved data management plan is included on the center's website. There will be a review process for reports and summaries. After we have received your summary and final report, we will strive to complete the review in one week. We will then send you reviewed copies for revisions. At that time, you will have one week to return your revisions to us. Education and Outreach projects will not be required to submit a technical report, yet a two-page summary and webinar are still expected. If data is collected, compliance with the US DOT Public Access Plan is required.

Matching Funds Requirement

Each project funded by a UTC is required to obtain matching funds from non-federal sources. The amount of matching funds required for NEUTC is 100 percent – for every $1 funded by the grant, the proposer must provide $1 in matching funds. Matching funds must be from non-federal sources and may take the form of departmental fellowships or tuition funding using nonfederal funds, faculty release time, documented in-kind support from private companies or institutions, matched funding from related research projects not funded federally. Each project will need to comply with their own University's procedure to document these matching funds and report this to the NEUTC administration.

Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)

Principal investigators and authors are required by the NEUTC federal grant to have an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID). ORCID provides unique identifiers for researchers and scholars and automatic linkages to research objects. All report, article, and paper authors must have an ORCID. If researchers are added to the project after initiation, they must also obtain ORCID. Registration is free and takes 5 minutes:

https://orcid.org/

An ORCID is required by the federal grant for all PIs, report, article, and conference paper authors.

Compliance with Recent Executive Orders

All proposed projects must comply with current Administration priorities and Executive Orders (EO) that address energy, climate change, diversity and gender, and economic analysis, and other priorities. Applicable Executive Orders and Memoranda include:

- Executive Order 14148, Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions;
- Executive Order 14154, Unleashing American Energy
- Executive Order 14151, Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing
- Executive Order 14168, Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government
- Secretarial Order 2100.7, Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in Department of Transportation Policies, Programs, and Activities (https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2025-02/DOT_2100.7-Ensuring_Reliance_Upon_Sound_Economic_Analysis_in_DOT_Policies.pdf)
- Secretarial Memorandum on Implementation of Executive Orders Addressing Energy, Climate Change, Diversity, and Gender (https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/signed-secretarial-memo-re-implementation-executive-orders-addressing-energy-climate)