

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Pipeline and
Hazardous Materials
Safety
Administration
(PHMSA)

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Pipeline Safety Research Competitive Academic Agreement Program (CAAP)

Fiscal Year 2019

Opening Date: March 22, 2019

Closing Date: May 3, 2019

Closing Time: 11:00AM Eastern Daylight Time

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 20.724

PHMSA Funding Opportunity Number 693JK319NF0005

Applicant must be registered at www.grants.gov to apply for the grant. It is highly recommended that applicants begin the registration process as soon as possible to avoid delays in submission. Additionally, applicants must maintain a valid Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and an active registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) at www.SAM.gov.

Furthermore, applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. Your organization's Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from SAM, is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how to use the portal, view the *FedConnect: Ready, Set, Go! Tutorial* under the *Need Help?* section on the FedConnect home page.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Article I.	Program Description	4
Section 1.01	Statement of Purpose.....	4
Section 1.02	Program Authority	4
Section 1.03	Background	4
Section 1.04	Research Topics	5
Section 1.05	Deliverables	6
Article II.	Award Information	7
Section 2.01	Funding	7
Section 2.02	Cost Sharing.....	8
Section 2.03	Period of Performance.....	8
Section 2.04	Type of Award	8
Article III.	Eligibility Information.....	8
Section 3.01	Eligible Applicants.....	8
Section 3.02	Minimum Requirements.....	8
Article IV.	Registration and Application Submission Information.....	8
Section 4.01	Application Submission Medium.....	9
Section 4.02	Grants.gov Registration.....	9
Section 4.03	Question Deadline	9
Section 4.04	Application Submission Deadline	9
Article V.	Application Content & Format	9
Section 5.01	Technical Proposal	9
Section 5.02	Budget/Cost Proposal & Budget Narrative.....	9
Section 5.03	Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances.....	11
Section 5.04	Lobbying	11
Article VI.	Application Review Information.....	12
Section 6.01	Evaluation Criteria	12
Section 6.02	Scoring Guidelines	12
Section 6.03	Review and Selection Process	13
Article VII.	Agency Contact Information	14
 Attachment A: Technical Application Template		
Attachment B: Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances		
Attachment C: Terms and Conditions		

Program Summary

Federal Agency Name:

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA)

Federal Agency Contact:

U.S. DOT/PHMSA
Acquisition Services Division, PHF-20
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Washington, DC 20590
Attn: Ben Patterson

Funding Opportunity Title:

“Pipeline Safety Research Competitive Academic Agreement Program (CAAP) – FY 2019”

Announcement Type:

Initial Announcement

Funding Opportunity Number:

693JK319NF0005

CFDA Number:

20.724

Eligible Applicants:

Applicants must be non-profit institutions of higher education located in the United States or a U.S. territory or possession.

Dates:

NOFO Issue Date: March 22, 2019

Question Deadline: April 12, 2019 at 11:00am EDT

Application Due Date: May 3, 2019 at 11:00am EDT

Grants.gov Questions:

Grants.gov Contact Center

1-800-518-4726 support@grants.gov

Article I. Program Description**Section 1.01 Statement of Purpose**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) hereby requests applications from non-profit institutions of higher education for CAAP funding to research innovative solutions to pipeline corrosion and other known pipeline integrity challenges.

Section 1.02 Program Authority

PHMSA's Pipeline Safety Research and Development (R&D) Program is authorized pursuant to the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-355, 49 U.S.C. § 60101 note. The authority to enter into cooperative agreements under the CAAP is codified at 49 U.S.C. § 60117(k).

Section 1.03 Background**Section 1.03-1 Background on Pipelines and PHMSA's Pipeline R&D Program**

CAAP grant funding is subject to availability of appropriations. PHMSA anticipates awarding up to \$2,000,000. Federal funding will not exceed \$250,000 per award. The research to be conducted under the agreements will seek a wide set of solutions for corrosion and other pipeline integrity challenges. PHMSA anticipates the period of performance of each award to be no less than 24 months, while not exceeding 36 months.

The pipeline infrastructure in the U.S. is the primary means of transporting natural gas and the majority of hazardous liquids from production basins and ports to areas of consumption. The importance of energy pipelines to the U.S. economy, our standard of living, and potential for safety and environmental impacts requires that these assets be maintained safely and expanded appropriately to meet demand.

Research must play a larger role in finding the solutions to national, regional, and local pipeline operational safety and environmental challenges. Some of these challenges include ensuring operators have the best technology to efficiently and effectively meet or exceed Federal and state regulatory requirements on the safety and integrity of pipelines. Other challenges include keeping critical industry consensus standards fresh with the latest knowledge so that people, property, and the environment are protected.

PHMSA's core pipeline research program involves all stakeholders in a time-tested process for generating success. Since 2002, the Pipeline Safety R&D Program has been focused on the near-term by demonstrating and deploying technology development and commercialization. Additional information on the existing Pipeline Safety R&D Program is available at: <https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/rd/index.htm>.

This research enterprise continues to have a tangible impact toward developing technology, strengthening consensus standards and creating and promoting general knowledge to decision makers. More performance details are available at PHMSA's Pipeline Safety Research website <http://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/rd/performance.htm>.

Section 1.03-2 Background on the CAAP Initiative

The Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-355) mandates that DOT and other designated Federal agencies "...carry out a program of research, development, demonstration and standardization to ensure the integrity of pipeline facilities." Specifically, PHMSA's Pipeline Safety R&D Program's mission is to sponsor research and development projects focused on providing near-term solutions that will improve the safety, reduce the environmental impact, and enhance the reliability of the Nation's pipeline transportation system.

The goals and objectives of the CAAP initiative, as discussed below, directly support both this mission and the congressional mandate.

The CAAP initiative is intended to spur innovation by enabling academic research focused on high technical risk and high pay-off solutions for the many pipeline safety challenges. It will potentially deliver solutions that can be “handed-off” to PHMSA’s core research program for demonstration and deployment. The goal is to validate proof of concept of a thesis or theory all the way to commercial implementation into the market.

The pipeline industry and Federal/state regulators are experiencing low numbers of applicants to entry level positions that are technically focused. Consequently, another goal of the CAAP initiative is to expose and engage graduate and PhD research students to participate in subject matter task(s) that are common to pipeline safety challenges and to illustrate how their engineering or technical disciplines are highly needed in the field. The ultimate benefit would be to cultivate new talent in all aspects of the pipeline industry, similar to how programs at other Federal Agencies and non-profit organizations have encouraged talent to consider a career in certain fields.

Section 1.04 Research Topics

PHMSA is soliciting proposals in three primary research and development focus areas based on technical gaps identified at PHMSA’s November 2016 Government and Industry Pipeline Research Forum (Research Forum) and the needs of the USDOT. The Research Forum brought together approximately 230 representatives from Federal, state, and foreign government offices along with domestic and foreign natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline operators. The Research Forum's goals included identifying key challenges facing industry and government, sharing information on current research efforts, and identifying research that can help to meet the challenges.

The Research Forum further refined pipeline research coordination and collaboration by producing a national research agenda reflective of stakeholder consensus on what research should be solicited to address identified pipeline challenges. Visit https://primis.phmsa.dot.gov/rd/mtg_111616.htm for more information about this important event and how it helped in crafting the topics solicited in this announcement. PHMSA will only consider proposals that address technical gaps within the on-shore pipeline safety program areas listed in this NOFO. Proposals submitted past the closing date and time or outside the identified program areas listed below will not be reviewed or further considered.

The focus areas are intentionally ambitious and broad enough to allow for the acceptance of a wide spectrum of specific proposals that strategically support PHMSA’s mission in pipeline safety. Proposals are to be focused on high technical risk and high pay-off solutions for the many pipeline safety challenges. Anticipated outcomes will potentially deliver solutions that can be handed off to PHMSA’s core research program.

Each application must address only one of the following primary pipeline safety program areas per proposal submission. Applicants may submit multiple proposals.

Research Area #1: Anomaly Detection and Characterization

Background: Advancements in nondestructive inspection methods have continued to increase in sophistication and capabilities, allowing for the detection of more pipeline anomalies with an array of geometries, depths, severities, and types. However, current technologies are limited in identifying interactive anomalies.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) released Safety Recommendation P-15-010 which recommended PHMSA to “Update guidance for gas transmission pipeline operators and inspectors on the evaluation of interactive threats. This guidance should list all threat interactions that must be evaluated and acceptable methods to be used.” This project seeks to further enhance pipeline safety with solution to identify and characterize those interactive threats NTSB calls to evaluation.

A successful proposal will suggest a nondestructive evaluation capability to be employed, and the data processing approach to characterize the anomalies. While this project has a two to three year timeframe, those proposals which include roadmaps to future commercialization (three to five years) are highly sought after.

Research Area #2: Develop and Validate ILI Technologies for Circumferential Anomalies and Bending Stresses

Collectively, PHMSA and industry have invested heavily in improvements to In Line Inspection (ILI) technology towards a variety of integrity threats. However, some preliminary research was funded on circumferential cracking detection and characterization cracking in dents (particularly on the pipe’s bottom side) creating a driver for additional research and development. This project should develop and validate advanced ILI technology in compliance with B31G and Remaining Strength of Corroded Pipe (RSTRENG) to detect circumferential cracking and characterize its severity in dents (particularly bottom side). The project should also quantify bending stresses, including those contributions from geotechnical and environmental conditions. Upon successful completion of this phase, analysis of government and industry data to compile for use of the current practice and performance; should factor ILI pull tests with non-destructive testing and destructive testing while considering the effects of temperature changes and thermal variability on pipelines with regard to stress added such as climatic and operationally driven temperature variations.

Research Area #3: Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) to Enhance Pipeline Safety

Background: Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), using both line of sight and beyond line of sight unmanned aerial vehicles, potentially provide the safety regulator the ability to gain visual access to areas that would otherwise be inaccessible due to rough terrain, inclement weather, or other adverse conditions. Furthermore, UAS-collected information may provide pipeline inspectors the ability to determine regulatory compliance, and enhance incident response following pipeline leaks or natural disasters.

Anticipating increased UAS usage to gather information and inform decision makers, the USDOT’s PHMSA Office of Pipeline Safety seeks to explore UAS applicability for pipeline safety. There are several safety benefits to UAS use in pipelines, potentially including leak detection, or geological impacts to pipelines after severe natural events. The expectation will be the ability to directly collect information about pipeline field conditions, which presently rely on the pipeline operator to collect. This information may be used to identify safety risks. While PHMSA does not wish to dictate potential solutions, some areas of interest to the Office of Pipeline Safety are:

- Rights-of-way Conditions: General condition, land movement, flooding, 3rd party excavation

- River Crossing Conditions, including recent changes
- Class location verification per 49 CFR 192.609 and 192.611
- Accident Response Assessments – Spill size and trajectory
- Above ground tank inspections
- National Pipeline Mapping System accuracy verification

Proposals should consider the safety requirements of the UAV platform, e.g. if there is risk of ignition, consequences of platform failure, etc. Solutions should consider UAS instrumentation beyond a visual record that will allow collection of risk and leak data. Solutions should operate within the Part 107 FAA regulations and with the approval of pipeline right-of-way owners and the affected public. While the full UAS capability may not be demonstrated due to FAA restrictions, potential beyond line-of-sight capabilities will be considered for final proposal tasks.

Section 1.05 Deliverables

The following deliverables will be required for all awarded agreements. Report templates and guidance will be provided once award documents are signed.

- Hold kick off meeting;
- Submit performance progress reports (format/content in accordance with SF-RPPR);
**Note: Reporting period begins on the effective date of the cooperative agreement.*
 - o Quarterly progress reports via email and uploaded to PHMSA's R&D database (MIS) – Due no later than (NLT) 30 days after reporting period ends
- Prepare to travel and present a poster at a remote government and/or public event up to one time per year;
- Draft final research report due NLT 30 days prior to agreement expiration;
- Produce a public final research report (once reviewed and comments incorporated); and,
- Deliver a close-out internet-based presentation.

Article II. Award Information

Section 2.01 Funding

Subject to the availability of funds, PHMSA anticipates awarding up to \$2,000,000 and the amount of *Federal* funding may not exceed \$250,000 per award. Applicants may submit more than one application, but each individual application must not exceed \$250,000 in Federal funding (See Section 1.03).

Section 2.02 Cost Sharing

There is a *mandatory* minimum 20 percent cost-sharing requirement for CAAP agreements, pursuant to § 22(b)(2)(C)(ii) of the PIPES Act of 2016 (Pub. L. 114–183). The Federal government will fund no more than 80 percent (up to \$250,000) of the total cost of each approved project.

Firm letters of commitment for resource sharing must be provided with the proposal. *Proposals without commitment letters for resource sharing will not be reviewed or considered for an award.*

See Section 5.02 for additional information regarding budget/cost proposals.

Section 2.03 Period of Performance

PHMSA anticipates a period of performance of no less than 24 months but not exceeding 36 months from the date of award for each agreement. Modifications within the scope of the cooperative agreement will be handled between the parties on a case-by-case basis. PHMSA anticipates awarding the agreements during the third quarter (April to June) of fiscal year 2019.

Section 2.04 Type of Award

All awards resulting from this announcement will be issued as cooperative agreements.

Article III. Eligibility Information**Section 3.01 Eligible Applicants**

Applicants must be non-profit institutions of higher education located in the United States or a U.S. Territory or possession. PHMSA will consider an application from an eligible higher education institution that partners with other eligible recipients, pipeline industry, and/or with any private organization, as long as the cost for the proposed partnership does not exceed 20 percent of the proposed amount of Federal contribution to the project (which may be up to \$250,000).

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and Minority Institutions (MIs) are encouraged to submit applications on their own and/or in collaboration with others. However, no portion of this requirement will be set aside or reserved exclusively for either of the groups identified above.

Section 3.02 Minimum Requirements

The following are minimum requirements that all applicants must meet to be considered. Failure to meet these requirements at any time pre- or post-award will result in either removing an application from further consideration or termination of the agreement. The application must include a letter on the submitting institution's letterhead that certifies these minimum requirements are understood and will be met. The letter must be signed by the Dean or equivalent level of that college, department, or program and inserted as Appendix A to the technical application (first page of the Appendix).

1. Eligible applicants are non-profit institutions of higher education located in the U.S. or a U.S. territory or possession.
2. The academic research agreement will be with the institution and not with individual students, faculty, or staff.
3. The research scope must be executed by undergraduate, graduate, and/or PhD research students. Institution faculty/staff should design the scope and oversee student execution of the scope. *Applications that do not propose student involvement will be deemed non-responsive and will be removed from consideration. NOTE: Students must be identified no later than the first quarter of the period of performance.*

Institution faculty, staff, and students that are proposed to be involved with the research agreement must be U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or possess current visas that will allow them to remain in the country long enough to complete the research project. Federal funding is solely for allowable costs necessary for executing the research scope, such as institution overhead, the procurement of expendables, and any required labor. Purchasing of new or existing testing equipment will not be permitted with Federal funds. Also, Federal funding cannot be used toward construction of new facilities or refurbishing of existing facilities.

4. Applications must meet the cost sharing requirements stipulated at Section 2.02; failure to meet the required cost sharing threshold (20 percent) will result in an application being removed from consideration.

Article IV. Registration and Application Submission Information

Failure to comply with the requirements described in this section shall result in an application not being reviewed.

Section 4.01 Application Submission Medium

Applicants are required to submit their complete applications through Grants.gov.

Section 4.02 Grants.gov and FedConnect Registration

To submit an application, applicants must be registered at www.grants.gov. New users must register for an account. **Please note that new user registrations for Grants.gov can take up to two weeks to complete.** For additional questions on how to register, contact Grants.gov support.

Additionally, applicants must register with FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net> for an account before submitting an application. Your organization's Marketing Partner ID number (MPIN), which can be retrieved from System for Award Management (www.SAM.gov), is required to create an account. For instructions on how to register in FedConnect and how to use the portal, view the *[FedConnect: Ready, Set, Go! Tutorial](#)* under the *Need Help?* section on the FedConnect home page.

Each applicant is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application under consideration by PHMSA. PHMSA may not make a grant award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. PHMSA will review an applicant's SAM registration status to make responsibility determination.

Section 4.03 Question Deadline

All questions regarding this NOFO must be submitted via the Message Center in FedConnect. Please do not send questions via email. PHMSA is not responsible for answering questions that were received after the Questions Due Date & Time. All questions must be received on or before **April 12, 2019 at 11:00am EDT** to be considered. Answers to all questions will be posted in Grants.gov as an amendment to the initial announcement.

Section 4.04 Application Submission Deadline

Complete applications must be received electronically through Grants.gov by **11:00am EDT on May 3, 2019**. No late proposals will be considered for evaluation. Applicants will receive an automated receipt from Grants.gov of the date and time of application submission. If the timeliness of a submission comes into question, the date and time recorded in Grants.gov will take precedence over that of MIS.

Section 4.05 Funding Restrictions

Construction is not an allowable activity under this announcement. Equipment is not an allowable purchase under this announcement. Funds are not available for reimbursement of pre-Federal award costs.

Article V. Application Content & Format**Section 5.01 Technical Proposal**

In preparing their technical proposal, applicants must use the technical application template attached to this opportunity (**Attachment A**). The attachment includes instructions regarding required content and information. Applicants must only apply for funding that can *reasonably* be spent within the proposed period of performance.

The following Technical Application requirements are summarized below but described in detail in the provided template. Failure to follow these requirements shall result in the removal of your application from consideration.

1. All information supporting the evaluation criteria must be 20 pages or less, which does *not* include the Cover Page, the Technical Application Information Page, or the Appendix.
2. The Certification Letter of Minimum Requirements must be the first page in the Appendix.
3. The Appendix may include additional information; however, this information will not be used by reviewers in evaluating the proposal (except to determine that each applicant has submitted a certification letter regarding minimum requirements; ref: Section 3.02).
4. Times New Roman 12-pt font and 1.15 line and paragraph spacing for text body.

*Technical proposals in the format prescribed by **Attachment A** must be uploaded to the “Project Narrative” section of the Grants.gov application.*

Section 5.02 Budget/Cost Proposal & Budget Narrative

Applicants must use Standard Form (SF) 424A through Grants.gov to submit their budget/cost proposal. The budget should reflect the applicant’s best terms from a cost and technical standpoint to perform the work. No fee or profit should be proposed, as this is a resource-sharing arrangement.

Additional budgetary information, broken out as described in sub-paragraphs a. through h. below, must provide detailed information on each cost element, consistent with the applicant's cost accounting system. **The amounts requested for each budget category must be justified in a Budget Narrative document and uploaded to the “Budget Narrative” section of the application.** Budget Narratives must address the following items:

- a. Personnel: List individually all personnel and include for each, the requested hours to be funded and the respective compensation rates (salary/wages and fringe benefits). This section of the Budget Narrative must include the following information:
 - i. Supplemental schedule identifying the number of hours, hourly rates, and cost by labor classification for each budget year;
 - ii. Basis/explanation for the proposed number of hours and hourly rates (for instance, number of hours could be based on past experience, an engineering estimate, etc. and hourly rates could be actual rates for the individuals who will perform the work, an average labor rate for the labor classification, or a departmental average rate); and,
 - iii. In cases where an individual’s salary/wage increases between budget years, explain the basis for the increase and provide substantiating documentation, if available.
- b. Fringe Benefits: Applicants must provide a copy of or a web link to the university’s policy stating the appropriate fringe rates for each labor classification.
- c. Travel: Proposed travel must be directly related to the performance of the project. In the Budget Narrative, state the reason(s) for travel, the type and duration of the travel, and its relation to the project. Additionally, recipients may anticipate travel requested by PHMSA to present their findings up to once each 12 months of the project. Provide an itemized list of associated travel costs.
- d. Equipment/Supplies: Provide an itemized list of proposed supplies. Include individual costs for each item exceeding \$5,000 and the basis for estimating the cost (e.g., vendor quotes, catalog prices, prior invoices, etc.). Reference Section 3.02, Item 5, where it states that “Purchasing of new or existing testing equipment will not be permitted.”

- e. Contractual (Consultants/Subcontractors): List the names of consultants and describe the activities to be performed, duration of the service, and the compensation involved. Provide the hourly or daily rate along with the basis for the rate. Furnish resumes or similar information regarding qualifications and experience. Provide at least two invoices reflecting hourly or daily rates charged to customers other than the Government. A statement signed by the consultant certifying his or her availability and salary must be provided. If travel or incidental expenses are to be charged, give the basis for these costs. For proposed subcontractors, provide their total cost per year. Detailed subcontractor costs should appear in the subcontractor's budget explanation. The total cost of consultants and/or subcontractors must not exceed 20 percent of the proposed amount of Federal contribution to project.
- f. Other Direct Costs: Provide an itemized list with associated costs for any other item proposed as a direct cost that is not included in another category. State the basis for each proposed item.
- g. Indirect Charges: Provide a copy of or a web link to the university's negotiated indirect rate agreement. Explain/demonstrate how the total indirect charges were calculated.
- h. Resource Sharing, In-House Contributions: Cost/budget proposals must show the breakout between Federal and non-Federal funding sources, and the Budget Narrative must explain what the non-Federal sources are comprised of and how the associated values were derived. Non-Federal contributions may include cash, personnel, donated goods/services (provided that the market value of the good/service is substantiated by a letter or other form of evidence from the provider of the good/service), equipment, and other resources. All resource sharing or matching contributions, including cash and third-party contributions, must meet the following criteria, which can be found in CFR §200.306: "Cost sharing or matching":
 - i. Are verifiable from the non-Federal entity's records;
 - ii. Are not included as contributions for any other Federal award;
 - iii. Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives;
 - iv. Are allowable under Subpart E – Cost Principles of this part;
 - v. Are not paid by the Federal government under another Federal award, except where the Federal statute authorizing a program specifically provides that Federal funds made available for such program can be applied to matching or cost sharing requirements of other Federal programs;
 - vi. Are provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency; and,
 - vii. Conform to other provisions of this part, as applicable.

Section 5.03 Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances

Applicants must sign, date, and return with the application, the "Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances" specified in **Attachment B: Standard Title VI/Non-Discrimination Assurances**. Specifically, applicants must complete and return Attachment B. The completed documents should be submitted as an attachment with the other application materials.

Section 5.04 Lobbying

Funds may not be used in direct support of litigation, lobbying, for direct advocacy for or against a pipeline construction or expansion project or other pipeline policy matters, or for activities associated with regulatory compliance or typical operations and maintenance of pipeline facilities.

To be considered for award, each application must include a signed Lobbying Form (SF LLL).

Article VI. Application Review Information**Section 6.01 Evaluation Criteria**

PHMSA will use the Scoring Guidelines in Section 6.02 to rate and select among competing applications. The evaluation criteria are the items in the far-left column of the table located in Section 6.02. These criteria are intended to identify projects that target high technical risk areas, offer well-defined plans, and produce results that are measurable and transferable to further investigations in the CAAP or PHMSA's core research program.

Section 6.02 Scoring Guidelines

Applicability			
Criteria	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Applicability of solution	Proposal addresses the entire topic area needs	Proposal addresses most of the topic area needs	Proposal addresses some of the topic area needs
Scientific Merit			
Originality of proposed solution	The proposal suggests original solutions to the topic area, evidence is provided with excellent sources and discussion	The proposal suggests a solution which could prove original for the topic area, provided with adequate sources and discussion	The proposal suggests a solution which may prove original for the topic area, questionable sources and discussion
Technical Readiness	The proposed topic solution is readily implemented for end users or commercialization	The proposed topic solution would only be mildly difficult to adopt or commercialize	The proposed topic solution would be moderately-severely difficult for end users to adopt or commercialize
SME oversight	The proposal has identified SME for the project which will be available at the beginning of the period of performance. SME has knowledge directly pertinent to the topic area.	The proposal has identified partnerships which will be available no sooner than 3 months from the beginning of the period of performance. SME has knowledge which may be directly pertinent to the topic area	The proposal has identified candidates for SME input, OR they will not be available no sooner than 6 months from the beginning of the period of performance SME has knowledge which could be directly pertinent to the topic area
Research partnering	The proposal has identified partnerships which will be available at the beginning of the period of performance Identified partner is deeply involved in topic area.	The proposal has identified partnerships which will be available no sooner than 3 months from the beginning of the period of performance Identified partner is moderately involved in topic area.	The proposal has identified partnerships which will be available no sooner than 6 months from the beginning of the period of performance. Identified partner somewhat involved in the topic area.

Management Plan, Work Tasks, Schedule			
	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Research goals and objectives	The research goals and objectives are clearly defined, and are entirely supported by the WS/T/M*	The research goals and objectives are well defined, and are well supported by the WS/T/M	The research goals and objectives are decently defined, some support by the WS/T/M
Work scope, tasks, and milestones (WS/T/M)	The WS/T/M are clearly defined, project risk is accounted for and mitigative measures taken	The WS/T/M are well defined, some project risk is accounted for and some mitigative measures taken	The WS/T/M are decently defined, little project risk is accounted for and few mitigative measures taken
Research facilities	The facilities available to the proposer will be equipped to support the work at the beginning of the period of performance	The proposer has access to some of the facilities to support the work during the period of performance/ The facilities will be available no sooner than three months from the beginning of the period of performance	The proposer has access to a few of the facilities to support the work during the period of performance/ The facilities will be available no sooner than six months from the beginning of the period of performance
Student involvement	Student involvement per task is excellently defined. Student development plan is excellently described. In addition, the student(s) has/have been identified and is available at the beginning of the period of performance	Student involvement per task is well defined. Student development plan is well described. In addition, potential students have been identified	Student involvement per task is not well defined. Student development plan is poorly described. Potential students have not been identified.
Presentation Quality			
	Exemplary	Adequate	Needs Improvement
Proposal presentation	Proposal is logically organized, grammar (0 errors), no missing information. Proposal easily understood to technical persons.	Proposal has reasonable organization, grammar (1-2 errors), little missing information. Proposal somewhat easily understood to technical persons.	Proposal has some disorganization, grammar (3-4 errors), some missing information. Proposal is only understood with deep background in the topic area.

Section 6.03 Review and Selection Process

PHMSA will conduct an initial administrative review of each application to determine if it is complete and meets the minimum eligibility requirements per Article III, Eligibility Information. A team composed of PHMSA representatives and, potentially, industry experts will then conduct a review to evaluate and rate each application against the Scoring Guidelines (see Section 6.02) and to evaluate the acceptability of the proposed budget. Applications will be recommended for award based on technical merit as rated using the Scoring Guidelines. Final award recommendations will be made by the PHMSA Administrator after taking into consideration recommendations made by the technical evaluation panel. Final award decisions will be made by the Secretary of Transportation.

Article VII. Agency Contact Information

Agreement-Related Questions

Primary Point of Contact:

Ben Patterson, Agreement Administrator (AA)
Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Acquisition Services Division (PHF-20)
Phone: 1-202-366-5102
Email: ben.patterson@dot.gov

NOTE: All questions related to the content of this funding opportunity MUST be submitted via the Message Center in FedConnect. Please do not send questions via e-mail.

Only for technical issues or questions related to FedConnect, please email support@fedconnect.net or call 1-800-899-6665.

Only for technical issues or questions related to Grants.gov, please email support@grants.gov or call 800-518-4726.