



National Center for
**INFRASTRUCTURE
TRANSFORMATION**
Led by: Prairie View A&M University

P.O. Box 519, MS 2535 | Prairie View, Texas 77446 | (936) 261-1655 | ncit.pvamu.edu

MEMORANDUM

TO: NCIT Researchers
FROM: Dr. Melissa Tooley, NCIT Research Coordinator
DATE: January 30, 2026
SUBJECT: NCIT Research Procurement

The National Center for Infrastructure Transformation (NCIT) is requesting Problem Statements from Principal Investigators (PIs) for funding consideration.

NCIT is a competitively awarded, national-tier University Transportation Center (UTC), a part of a congressionally authorized program funded by USDOT. More about the UTC program can be found here: [University Transportation Centers | US Department of Transportation](#).

The NCIT consortium (<https://ncit.pvamu.edu/>) is led by Prairie View A&M University, with partners Arizona State University, Blinn College District, Michigan State University, Rutgers University, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute and Texas A&M University. NCIT's research, education, and technology transfer programs focus on improving the durability and extending the life of transportation infrastructure.

NCIT administers this call for problem statements in compliance with all applicable Federal Executive Orders, statutes, regulations, and USDOT requirements governing the UTC Program. Proposers are encouraged to review NCIT's [Federal Compliance Terminology Guidance](#) prior to submission to ensure proposed activities and descriptions align with current Federal requirements.

Problem Statements are being sought for innovative and impactful multimodal research, which is guided by NCIT's three topical research pillars:

- Infrastructure Durability and Reliability- We aim to reshape American infrastructure by increasing the lifespan and capabilities of transportation assets, ensuring they adapt and swiftly recover from disruptions. NCIT is pioneering better design, construction, and maintenance methods for all modes using the system.
- Technology - Embracing the ever-evolving technological landscape, we strive to address the impacts and potential benefits of innovation. From connected and automated vehicles to leveraging technology to enhance construction project delivery, our

exploration extends to machine learning, artificial intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicles and more, all aimed at proactive infrastructure management.

- Policy - We recognize the critical role of policy in shaping the future. Our commitment is to improve decision-making for financial resource allocation. Through refined economic analysis, innovative transportation finance methods, and strategic policy development related to project delivery and construction techniques, we are ensuring informed decisions are guided by sound policy.

Project Statements are also accepted for projects addressing education and workforce development (EWD) and technology transfer and collaboration (T2C). EWD and T2C activities rise to the level of a project (rather than a program, which is funded through other means) when it results in a unique product or deliverable and/or has a research component. EWD projects may include the development of curriculum or educational modules, for example. T2C projects may include such things as activities involved in the commercialization of project outputs or professional development training.

The timeline for NCIT project procurement is as follows:

- **January 30** – Call for Problem Statements Released
- **February 27 – Problem Statements Due.** (acknowledging the complexities of a multi-university consortium, late submissions may be accepted at the sole discretion of the partner institutions' Associate Directors)
- **May 8** – Full Proposals Requested
- **June 5** – Full Proposals Due (extension to submit the full proposal may be requested by the PI by email, but will be reviewed jointly by the NCIT Research Coordinator and the project's partner institutions' Associate Directors)
- **Decisions on the full proposals are anticipated by mid-August.**

Projects may propose start dates in the fall of 2026 or spring of 2027 and may be 12-18 months in duration. Due to differences in partner institutions some might need to fund more 12 month projects than 18 month projects. **PIs are encouraged to discuss potential project duration and match sources with the Associate Director at their institution.** Actual start dates are dependent upon 1) having a complete proposal package, 2) contractual paperwork approvals, and 3) issuance of a kick-off packet. Other start dates may be considered on a project-by-project basis. **Please note that due to the constraints of the grant period, research projects must have an end date of May 31, 2028, or earlier. Certain EWD and T2C projects may have an end date no later than August 31, 2028.**

Collaborative projects must include signatures of Associate Directors at the PI's Institution and any Collaborating Institutions.

Please note that the submission of a project for consideration does not guarantee that the project will be accepted for funding. In addition to the quality of the Problem Statements, the NCIT Steering Committee must also consider institutional budgets and balance between topical pillars, programs, and partners. It is expected that the procurement process for this center will be quite competitive.

A few helpful hints:

- Collaboration is encouraged between the partners. It is not an absolute requirement, however.
- Integration and promotion of early-career faculty members and researchers are encouraged.
- Project budgets (Total Project Cost = Direct Federal + Matching Funds) are expected to be about \$150K to \$200K per project per year, with no more than \$100K in federal funds per year per project. Exceptions may be considered. **Budgets should be realistic and well-justified in terms of the project scope, tasks, and deliverables.**
- PIs are encouraged to work with the Associate Directors (ADs) at their institutions to ensure that their idea is consistent with the AD's vision at that institution and have their co-PIs at other institutions do the same.
- PIs are encouraged to prioritize projects and use best judgement regarding multiple submissions (including partnering on collaborative projects) to ensure that the strongest and best ideas are proposed while also considering existing time commitments.
- This grant is subject to a 100% match requirement. Detailed budgets are not required at the Problem Statement phase. However, for projects selected to submit a Formal Proposal, PIs will be encouraged to use salary match, institutional support, industry support, monetized datasets and resources, graduate assistantships paid by non-federal sources and more to match the federal funds provided by the grant. PIs should work with their ADs on their budgets to make sure they are consistent with UTC requirements and to ensure that the match requirements for each institution are followed.
- Having stakeholder involvement throughout the life cycle of a project is a critical component to achieving NCIT's technology transfer goals.

Please submit your information and Problem Statements in the required format through the NCIT submission portal (<https://ncit.pvamu.edu/ncit-rfp-problem-statement-2025-2026>). The Associate Directors for all consortium partners involved in the proposed project must have signed the problem statement. The Associate Directors are:

- Dr. Claudia Zapata, Arizona State University, claudia.zapata@asu.edu
- Dr. Bora Cetin, Michigan State University, cetinbor@msu.edu
- Dr. Md Jobair Bin Alam, Prairie View A&M University, mdalam@pvamu.edu
- Dr. Pat Szary, Rutgers University, szary@soe.rutgers.edu
- Dr. Anand Puppala, Texas A&M University, anandp@exchange.tamu.edu
- Dr. Melissa Tooley, Texas A&M Transportation Institute, m-tooley@tti.tamu.edu
- Mr. Marshall Rich, Blinn College District, marshall.rich@blinn.edu

Thank you for your interest in NCIT. We look forward to reviewing your ideas.

cc: Judy A. Perkins, PhD, PE – NCIT Director