

Transportation Library Connectivity and Development

Pooled Fund Project (TPF) Solicitation

Missouri Department of Transportation

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Solicitation information for a pooled fund including: its [background](#), [project objectives](#), [scope](#), [plan](#), [costs](#) and [sponsor requirements](#).

Pooled Fund Project (TPF) Solicitation

Title: Transportation Library Connectivity and Development

Lead Agency: Missouri Department of Transportation

Background: Traditionally, a small group of libraries have been responsible for providing information service within the transportation community. They have managed collections while supporting practitioners and decision-makers. Yet, today a vast amount of industry information is not collected or posted to the internet without a management plan. User research habits are also changing. Recognizing this, a national effort has been made over the past five years to advocate for the development of improved library and information centers.

Unfortunately, stakeholders have been hampered by time and funding constraints. To overcome these constraints, this Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) supports and evaluates collaborative library development. It also enhances existing efforts to develop a national transportation information infrastructure using Transportation Knowledge Networks (TKNs).

While facilitating coordination among federal, state, academic and private sector libraries, this study provides technical and promotional support. Moreover, it capitalizes on previously developed networking initiatives to implement research tools and analyzes their effectiveness. Library services can be supported locally, but collaboration allows for shared problem solving, resources as well as potential time and cost savings through best practices, defrayed costs and collective purchasing power. All of these things are critical in an era of real-time communication.

Project Objectives: To support the coordinated development of transportation libraries, help implement TKNs and extend efforts beyond those of the TPF-5(105) [Transportation Library Connectivity](#) pooled fund, the following objectives have been adopted. These will be accomplished through member activities, partnerships with professional groups such as TRB's Library and Information Science for Transportation Committee, SLA's Transportation Division and the services of a qualified consultant:

1. Provide technical guidance to eligible members, focused on smaller libraries that are served by only one librarian, while emphasizing an increased reliance on self-sustaining networks.
2. Promote the value of transportation library and information services through the following activities:
 - a) Create key information products to demonstrate the value of, and further the contribution of, libraries to the field.
 - b) Deliver presentations to gatherings of DOT administrators, such as meetings of AASHTO and TRB Committees (Highways, Planning, Environment, etc...).

- c) Share training materials and provide training sessions, with an added marketing component, for library users at member institutions.
3. Conduct an annual meeting and workshop, in conjunction with other events, to help members demonstrate the value of library and information services to their customers.
 4. Develop an interactive content management system (CMS) based project website, including tracking and reporting information, as well as provide limited access to server space.
 5. Collaborate with the National Transportation Library, the [AASHTO RAC Task Force on TKNs](#) and other stakeholder groups to enhance communication between transportation librarians, specifically to support their projects as they help implement Transportation Knowledge Networks.
 6. Pay [OCLC](#) and TLCat subscriptions for eligible pooled fund members.
 7. Implement focused research and technology projects, as proposed by members, on an annual basis. Potential projects which have already been identified include:
 - a) Financial, technical, and logistical support for the creation of an NTKN portal website as envisioned in NCHRP Report 643.
 - b) The completion of a return-on-investment case study highlighting the tangible contributions of libraries to research.
 - c) A collaborative cataloging project to expand access to transportation resources, possibly done in conjunction with the National Transportation Knowledge Network, alleviating member time constraints.
 - d) Pooled subscriptions for online databases to improve the accessibility of electronic information while reducing access costs to member libraries.
 - e) Digitization support for institutions wishing to convert printed copies of older materials to digital formats.

Scope of Work: Pooled fund activities will include the objectives listed above. All seven of these can be classified into one of three areas: promote library and information services, support the development of a national transportation information infrastructure by connecting libraries, or providing resources for members to ensure that these networks can serve practitioner and decision-maker needs.

Plan and Deliverables (Project Description): The Transportation Library Connectivity and Development pooled fund project will be staffed by a contracted agency, administered by Missouri DOT, and directed by members of its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). All members will be responsible for proposing, voting on, and approving an annual work plan.

Deliverables from each plan must meet at least one, if not more, of the seven objectives listed above and will be selected based on their ability to do so.

As part of the steering process, the committee must select a contractor, prioritize projects, identify how they will be completed (e.g. by the consulting librarian, as a volunteer project, etc.), establish deadlines, determine consultant time management directives, and set objective benchmarks. Research and technology projects will also be voted on as a semi-independent section of the annual work plan. For flexibility, project emphases may change from year to year.

To capitalize on the ability of the pooled fund to produce deliverables, members will submit annual library statistics to the contracting agency. This data will be tracked using the CMS based project website. As the pooled fund progresses, yearly reports will document activities conducted, their costs and will examine the relationship between sponsored initiatives and member benefits. At the project's conclusion, a final report will be delivered with recommendations that highlight collective purchasing, cost savings and the benefits of – or lessons learned from – coordinated transportation library development.

Estimated Duration, Start-Up and Cost: The Transportation Library Connectivity and Development pooled fund is estimated to take five years to complete. An amount of \$5,000 or more is requested from each contributor per year. Five contributors, and approval from first-year members, are needed for the pooled fund to begin. As a member of the study, based on its level of financial contribution, each organization (and/or their designee) will receive the following cumulative benefits:

Supporting Members (at \$5,000 to \$9,999 per year)

- Participation in quarterly TAC teleconferences.
- Travel and accommodations for one professional development meeting or workshop per year.
- Authority to propose, and cast a vote on, library/information research projects as well as the annual work plan.

Associate Members (at \$10,000 to \$14,999 per year)

- All the benefits of a Supporting Member.
- Apply a portion of their contribution to OCLC subscriptions.
- Eligible for short-term technical and administrative support as well as internal staff research training sessions.

Full Members (at \$15,000 or more per year)

- All the benefits of an Associate Member.

- Travel and accommodations for an additional professional development meeting or workshop.
- The option to increase travel and OCLC allotments using contributions exceeding the minimum threshold.

In relation to the benefits outlined above, members at each level can choose to decline OCLC or travel benefits in lieu of using their contribution for an identified project of their choosing. Projects can serve individual libraries but must fall within the pooled fund's scope. In the event that questions arise regarding matters of scope, guidance will be provided by the project's committee.

Summary of Project Sponsor Requirements: Requirements to contribute are moderate while it is expected that support will come from organizations with a library, an information center, or an interest in either as they relate to their core mission. Financial support is mandatory along with an active effort to identify, support, facilitate, and fund research and technology initiatives. Members are expected to submit circulation, reference, inter-library loan and cataloging (or comparable) statistics for study purposes. Last, TAC Members are fully responsible for directing all except administrative activities.

Frequently Asked Questions

"Why have contributions for both Full and Associate Members gone up since the last solicitation draft?"

Based on OCLC costs, bills over the next five years (assuming rate increases) will exceed the needed contribution levels. See "Attachment B" for details.

"Why was the benchmark requirement added?"

This project will be run through FHWA's Pooled Fund Program. Though it can be used to provide library services, the program specializes in administering research projects. By supporting libraries, and using statistics to track performance, adding a reporting requirement allows members to figure out when and where collaboration does and does not work.

"How do the pooled fund's work plan and research projects relate to one another?"

Once a year members are responsible for producing an annual work plan. At the same time, the pooled fund's scope makes defining all activities impossible. To offset this obstacle, a broad objective was created to conduct research and technology transfer initiatives. These projects form a sub-section of the annual work plan.

"What are the limits for travel, professional development and OCLC benefits?"

Members will receive up to \$2,500 annually for professional development (per person) and \$5,000 per year for their OCLC subscriptions at the Associate level and above.

"My organization does not want an OCLC subscription and/or it doesn't need to spend money on professional development. Why should we get involved?"

All members have the choice to opt out of OCLC and/or travel benefits in lieu of pursuing another activity. Involvement in the pooled fund provides the benefit of being able to investigate projects in a collaborative environment while also being able to tackle initiatives as a group. Opting out lets members take advantage of these benefits – something they cannot do on their own.

"What purpose do the training sessions, and their marketing components, serve?"

Training sessions are intended to save staff time, promote library services, and increase the awareness of information sharing. Session content can be tailored to individual library needs.

“What evidence is there that a collaborative library development approach needs to be taken nationwide? My organization seems to be doing fine.”

Over the past five years, two major national reports have been issued that argue for a collaborative approach to knowledge management: TRB Special Report 284 “Transportation Knowledge Networks: A Management Strategy for the 21st Century” and NCHRP Report 643 “Implementing Transportation Knowledge Networks.”

“In the past, travel and professional development funding was used to send librarians to the annual Special Library Association Conference. Can I go somewhere else?”

Members can choose to attend any conference, or training event, they want providing it is approved by their host organization.

“What is meant by limited server space?”

The pooled fund owns a web domain. Utilizing this domain, and new server space, members are provided access to it. They will be allowed to use the server for any appropriate purpose, but “limited” when usage compromises its primary purpose.

“The solicitation makes several references to partners and collaboration among groups. Who do we expect the pooled fund will work with?”

A professional group, SLA’s Transportation Division will likely be involved with training initiatives and professional development. The AASHTO RAC Task Force on TKNs, the National Transportation Library and TRB’s LIST Committee will, based on previous participation, likely assist in coordinating project activities.

“Does an institution have to have a library to join?”

The expectation is that contributors have an interest in the function that libraries provide. So, any organization can get involved.

“How does the voting process work?”

TAC Members are responsible for producing a comprehensive work plan one time per year. As part of the work plan, members are required to vote on objectives and time percentage allocations. Specifics, such as benchmarks, are determined next. In this order, members vote on informal proposals and the results are determined by combined totals.

Once the annual work plan is produced, members submit formal proposals for research and technology transfer projects. These proposals will be voted on in the

same manner as the work plan, but will be chosen in order of preference according to time and funding constraints.

“My organization has chosen to contribute more than \$15,000. What will the extra money go to?”

Members can direct supplemental funding to expand their travel/professional development and OCLC allotments. Otherwise, all remaining money will be spent on contracting and other expenses.

Cost and Member Information

Table 1: New Pooled Fund Budget Allocations

Below are allocation figures for the new library pooled fund. Breakdowns are offered by membership level, travel and professional development and OCLC costs.

Membership Level	Service	Allocation
Supporting Members	Travel and professional development	\$2,500
	Work plan, contractor, etc...	\$2,500
		Total: \$5,000
Associate Members	Travel and professional development	\$2,500
	OCLC, TLCat subscription	\$5,000
	Work plan, contractor, etc...	\$2,500
		Total: \$10,000
Full Members	Travel and professional development	\$5,000 +
	OCLC, TLCat subscription	\$5,000 +
	Work plan, contractor, etc...	\$5,000 +
		Total: \$15,000 +

Table 2: TPF-5(105) FFY 2010 Budget: Oct. 2009 – Sept. 2010

While details for the new pooled fund have yet to be settled, contracting cost data for the past is available. Though used for different activities, these costs can provide an estimate for the future.

Staff	Role in Projects	Hours	Hourly Rate	Cost
Patrick Casey, Principal	Oversight and coordination	163	\$75	\$12,225
Maggie Sacco, Associate	Technical services	2,080	\$45	\$93,600
Other CTC Associates	Support services	418	\$45	\$18,810
			Total:	\$124,635

Table 3: TPF-5(105) OCLC Data, 2008

For 2008, the average OCLC cost among previous pooled fund members (including TLCat) was \$4,307. Based on the average, and assuming 3% growth, in five years OCLC costs will be \$646 higher. This comes out just above the allocated \$5,000 for the new pooled fund.

Member Library	Past TPF-5(105) OCLC Reimbursement	Cost
California DOT		\$3,332.24
Kansas DOT		\$4,583.10
Louisiana DOT		\$5,373.89
Minnesota DOT		\$3,525.30
Mississippi DOT		\$4,387.58
Missouri DOT		\$3,971.14
Montana DOT		\$2,026.24
Ohio DOT		\$6,422.75
Oregon DOT		\$4,055.30
Pennsylvania DOT		\$4,151.96
Tennessee DOT		\$4,159.93
Washington DOT		\$5,705.05