

**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS (CFS)
CFS Number Spring 2026-DRISI**

**California Department of Transportation
Division of Research, Innovation & System Information
2026-2027 Research Proposal Guidelines**

A CONTRACT MAY OR MAY NOT BE AWARDED FROM THIS CFS.

The Division of Research, Innovation & System Information (DRISI) of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is requesting research proposals from public research institutions: public colleges, universities, and government agencies that bring solutions to Caltrans' research problems. Respondents are encouraged to engage in collaborations with industrial and public agency partners, and to enhance the research and to facilitate communication of research results to those who deploy and operate transportation systems (technology transfer).

Private universities or institutions are not eligible participants under this Call for Submissions (CFS) process and direct submittals from these institutions cannot be accepted. Public institutions using subcontracts with private entities are subject to certain conditions and may not be eligible under this CFS process. Respondents who have concerns over their eligibility are encouraged to contact the DRISI representative identified below to determine their status prior to spending time and resources on a proposal.

All needs in this CFS are based on an Initial Scope of Work (ISOW) derived from a customer need.

DRISI is advertising this CFS with two ISOW. Public institutions are invited to review and respond to this CFS Number CFS SPRING 2026-DRISI, titled, **"California Department of Transportation, Division of Research, Innovation & System Information, 2026-2027 Research Proposal Guidelines."** Please refer to the link below for access to electronic versions of the CFS document and ISOWs. Proposals must be submitted by **May 14, 2026, at 5:00 PM (PST)**. Proposals must be a fully developed bid, with a clear scope of work linked to timelines (in weeks, not specific dates), milestones, and deliverables. Each major category in the budget shall be fully supported within the bid. <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/research-innovation-system-information/call-for-submissions>

Please see the schedule in the Proposal Submission/Evaluation Process section of the CFS. In submitting your documents, you must comply with the instructions found herein. Reference the attached CFS Initial Scope of Works for detailed information.

If you have questions, the contact person for this CFS is:

Diane Huynh

Division of Research, Innovation & System Information
California Department of Transportation

Email: diane.huynh@dot.ca.gov

All questions must be submitted to [CFS Q&A](#) on or before April 10, 2026, at 5:00 PM (PST). Questions will be collected and responded to in a single public response made available via a public posting via the following internet site. All participants will be advised of the posting when it is available. All questions will be stripped of any identifying information traceable to the originating participant.

Responding parties shall submit their formal proposals and supporting documents to: [Call For Submissions - Research Proposals](#)

In the event Caltrans elects to issue a contract for this work, the selected proposal(s) and supporting documents shall be made available to Caltrans in a Microsoft WORD (*.DOC) compatible format, in addition to an Adobe PDF compatible format. This will facilitate development and processing of the actual contract documents.

This CFS contains a preliminary representation of terms and conditions relating to the research ISOW included in this CFS. In the event a contract is awarded, the final terms and conditions may vary from this initial representation, depending upon the exact nature of the contractual arrangement between the parties.

Proposals must be received no later than **5:00 PM (PST)** on **May 14, 2026.**

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I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the manager of interregional transportation services. Caltrans has the traditional role of owner and operator of the 15,000-mile State Highway System but is more than just a transportation agency. The work Caltrans performs is not limited to constructing and maintaining highways, its to improve lives.

Caltrans Division Chiefs lead their respective Program Steering Committees (PSCs), which assist in developing the research slate and implementing research results. Together, these Division Chiefs, with select District Deputy Directors, form the Research Deployment Advisory Committee (RDAC) to advise Caltrans on research topics of interest and recommended priorities. Senior staff, from the responsible Divisions, lead the Technical Advisory Panels (TAP). The TAPs membership can also include technical experts from other Divisions, Districts and/or external agencies. Project Panels are formed for each project, consisting of the Project Manager (PM), Customer Representative (CR) and other members as selected by the PM in consultation with the CR. The responsible Project Panel and the responsible TAP have developed the enclosed ISOW, and the responsible Project Panels will review and select any resulting research proposal(s). The PSCs and Caltrans will make the final determination on which, if any, proposal(s) will become actual research projects. This system provides customer participation throughout the research process and customer ownership of research products.

II. RESEARCH NEEDS

Highlighted issues in this specific CFS are:

- This CFS is organized according to the Division's customer needs within the specified category.
- Caltrans research needs in these specific areas are described in the ISOW included within this document.
- Respondents should clearly demonstrate how their specific proposal(s) would benefit the traveling public.
- Proposals need to be focused on how the implementation of their results can be used to improve transportation.
- In order to promote synergy among diverse research projects, respondents should consider how their efforts and findings might potentially be integrated with other research projects, as well as transportation planning and deployment projects, in specific California regions or corridors.
- Where appropriate, Caltrans staff will work with the proposal authors of selected proposals to strengthen the project's implementation effectiveness and to facilitate its integration with other new and ongoing research, planning and deployment projects.
- Multi-disciplinary and multi-campus research teams are encouraged in order to integrate diverse research capabilities.

III. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT

All respondents must complete the Department of General Services “**Model Agreement Template**” which is located at:

<https://www.ucop.edu/research-policy-analysis-coordination/research-sponsors-agreements/state-of-california/cma-templates.html>

All contractual forms must be thoroughly completed as instructed. Incomplete proposals may not be considered for review. At this time, you may leave the “State Agency Contact” information section blank.

IV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Respondents with questions about the requirements of this CFS must submit those questions in writing to [Call For Submissions Question\(s\)](#) on or before **5:00 PM (PST) on April 10, 2026**. Any questions received after this date will not be accepted.

Any direct contact with the customer and/or a Caltrans representative(s) after the Q&A deadline is not acceptable and may result in being disqualified from participation in the solicitation process. After the indicated deadline for question submittal has passed, questions will be collected, answered and publicly posted on Caltrans DRISI CFS website as per the indicated schedule. All information traceable to the individual and/or organization submitting the question will be removed prior to posting of a response by DRISI. (See web link below).

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/research-innovation-system-information/call-for-submissions>

V. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION/EVALUATION PROCESS

Proposal Submittal, Modification, Resubmittal, and Withdrawal

Respondents are to submit proposals to:

Call For Submissions - Research Proposals

Respondents submitting proposals may modify or withdraw the proposal at any time prior to the submittal deadline. Such modification or withdrawal of a proposal shall be in writing and submitted by the same person submitting the original proposal.

If the modification requested is only an addition to a proposal, a modified copy of the entire revised proposal should be resubmitted to the link above.

Evaluation Process

The proposal evaluations will be completed by Caltrans Project Panels. The Caltrans Program Steering Committees will make the final selection(s). Proposals will be screened against the evaluation criteria below.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

- **Organization:** Is the proposal well written? Adheres to requested outline? Does the proposal respond well to the Problem Statement? Has a comprehensive literature search been completed?
- **Research objective:** Are the stated objective, scope and motivation clear, valid, and logical? Responds well to problem statement and meets Caltrans goals?
- **Deployability of research outcome:** When will the ultimate product(s) that is the subject of the research be available and is it likely to be deployed?

- **Methodology:** Are the plans, methods, techniques, and procedures feasible, clear, valid, adequately referenced and state-of-the-art?
- **Qualifications:** Are the qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed lead researcher and other key personnel sufficient to achieve the proposed objectives? If applicable, is proposed research facility adequate for proposed work?
- **Budget:** Does the budget reflect the actual needs of the proposed work? Have the requests for personnel, equipment, supplies, etc. been fully justified? Have cooperative features, partnerships and subcontracts been fully identified?

Acceptance and Rejection of Submissions

DRISI retains the right to disregard a minor deviation from the requirements and may, at its sole discretion, request supplemental information or clarification of the information submitted by any respondent.

Negotiations with Selected Respondent

Once a proposal is submitted, DRISI may elect to negotiate with the any selected respondent or group of respondents. These negotiations may or may not result in a written agreement with DRISI. Any agreement as a result of this CFS will be subject to all necessary State, Federal, Agency and Caltrans approvals. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations will cease and no contractual agreement, written or implied, will exist. DRISI will not reimburse submitting organizations for any costs incurred in the preparation or submission of pre-proposals or proposals, nor for any expenses incurred in the negotiation process.

This CFS shall not commit DRISI to negotiate and execute any contract or agreement. DRISI reserves the right to accept proposals that, in the sole judgment of DRISI, are in the best interest of the State or other research customers. DRISI reserves the right to reject any or all proposals or to modify or cancel, in part or in its entirety, this CFS.

VI. GENERAL INFORMATION

Confidentiality

Proposal submittals are confidential. Selection committee members shall discuss the evaluation proceedings and content of proposals only with

DRISI staff and with members of the selection committees. Proposals that are not selected will not be reprinted or used for purposes not pertaining to this CFS process. Information on proposals that are selected will not be released until a contract is in place.

Supporting Documents

There may be supporting documents posted on the CFS web page. Respondents are encouraged to review these documents prior to submitting a proposal. These documents are intended to help establish and frame the amount of work needing to be done for selected elements of this Initial Scope of Work.

Amendments to this CFS

DRISI reserves the right to amend this CFS by addendum prior to the final date of proposal submission.

Schedule

The schedule related to this Call for Submissions proposal is as follows:

EVENT	DATE
Available to Prospective Respondents	March 27, 2026
Written Question Submittal Deadline	April 10, 2026
Responses to Questions	April 23, 2026
Final Date for Proposal Submission	May 14, 2026
Proposal Selection	May 25, 2026
Respondents Notified	May 29, 2026

VII. RESEARCH INITIAL SCOPE OF WORK

The Initial Scopes of Work are available at

<https://dot.ca.gov/programs/research-innovation-system-information/call-for-submissions>