

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (DOT)

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA)

TRANSPORTATION POOLED FUND EXCELLENCE AWARD SUPPORTING STATEMENT

OMB CONTROL NUMBER 2125-XXXX

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is partnering with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Research Advisory Committee (RAC). Together, FHWA and RAC are establishing a Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) Excellence Award that will further promote research, innovation, and excellence by recognizing outstanding TPF studies.

For more than 45 years, FHWA's TPF Program has enabled public and private entities to collaboratively conduct cutting-edge transportation research. Through the TPF Program, these entities can pool funds and expertise to develop innovative solutions at lower costs while extending the reach and impact of their research.

The TPF Excellence Award will recognize outstanding TPF studies that have made significant advancements in national research efforts in the areas of safety, economic growth, equity, and transformative climate solutions. The award program will highlight the importance of meaningful collaboration and partnership in transportation research. The award will be administered biennially through a partnership between FHWA and AASHTO RAC. One TPF study led by FHWA and one TPF study led by a state department of transportation (DOT) will be awarded each cycle. Nominations will be received between August through September every other year. Nomination forms will be sent to FHWA Division Offices and State DOTs to solicit nominees.

PART A. JUSTIFICATION.

1. Circumstances That Make Collection of Information Necessary

Information collection for the TPF Excellence Award Program supports the agency's mission to "improve mobility on our Nation's highways through national leadership, innovation, and program delivery."¹ The award program recognizes outstanding initiatives and partnerships across the United States, increasing the awareness of these successes and encouraging the sharing of innovative practices to achieve FHWA's mission. The TPF Excellence Award will also help to move the US Department of Transportation's strategic goals forward by recognizing outstanding TPF studies that have made significant advancements in national research efforts in the areas of safety,

¹www.fhwa.dot.gov/about/vmcv.cfm

economic growth, equity, and transformative climate solutions.² These categories will help transportation stakeholders obtain information and learn more about the selected projects so that they can potentially bring similar innovations and efforts into their own agency best practices.

2. How, By Whom, and For What Purpose the Information Will Be Used

Administered through a partnership between FHWA and the AASHTO RAC, the TPF Excellence Award will recognize partners and projects across the United States that use FHWA funding to go beyond regulatory compliance and achieve excellence in research and innovation.

The TPF Excellence Award will recognize outstanding TPF studies that have made significant impacts toward advancing national research efforts in the areas of safety, economic growth, equity, and transformative climate solutions.

FHWA will accept nominations for any TPF project that has been completed and is in the objectives fulfilled status by July 30th of the nomination year. Anyone may submit a nomination on behalf of the parties involved in a TPF study, including but not limited to those who performed the study. The nominator is responsible for completing a nomination form summarizing the outstanding accomplishments of the entry. The nominator will send the nomination form to FHWA through a designated email address.

FHWA will use the collected information to evaluate, showcase, and enhance the public's knowledge of research and innovation conducted through these TPF projects. Nominations will be reviewed by an independent panel of judges from various backgrounds, disciplines, and expertise. The awards will be given biennially. Award recipients will be recognized at an awards ceremony at the end of the process.

Information about TPF Excellence Award recipients will be available on FHWA's Turner-Fairbank Highway Research Center webpage and the TPF website in a published document. This document will also be made available at the awards ceremony.

The recipients of this award will demonstrate strong commitments to ground-breaking solutions as they advance their collaborative research. These recipients will serve as effective examples for other agencies and individuals looking to promote excellence in their work. The data gathered and information collected as part of the award program will help to highlight best practices in example products for other practitioners and interested parties.

3. Extent of Automated Information Collection

The entire nomination process and all award program notifications will be completed 100-percent electronically. FHWA will send emails announcing the award program. Nominators will make submissions to the award program by filling out a brief, editable

²<https://www.transportation.gov/dot-strategic-plan>

nomination form available on the TPF website. These nomination forms will allow anyone to nominate a TPF study. FHWA estimates each nomination should take no more than 5 h to complete.

4. Efforts To Identify Duplication

The TPF Excellence Award Program is unique among Federal award programs. There are no similar programs or information. The TPF Excellence Award highlights best practices, research, and innovation achieved through partnerships and collaboration. It is the only award program that highlights the great work accomplished through TPF Program partnerships and collaboration.

5. Efforts To Minimize Burden on Small Businesses

There will be no burden on small businesses. FHWA intends to use an electronic nomination process, and no special equipment is required to nominate submissions. The submission of nominations for the award program will take place via email.

6. Impact of Less Frequent Collection of Information

The biennial TPF Excellence Award Program encourages and highlights innovative research advancements throughout the country. If the program were less frequent, FHWA might miss opportunities to recognize significant projects that use FHWA funding sources to achieve excellence in research and innovation through TPF Program partnerships and collaboration.

7. Special Circumstances

There are no special circumstances associated with this collection.

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8³

FHWA published a 60-day Federal Register notice to solicit comments from the public on June 21, 2024 [89 FR 52202].

FHWA received a comment from WSDOT providing feedback on the timeline for nominations to be sent as well as the eligibility criteria. WSDOT requested that the award section criteria be change requiring that a final report be posted by June 30th of the year submitted. We have changed these criteria to require a TPF study be in the objectives fulfilled by July 30th of the year submitted.

WSDOT also noted a difference in language between the notice and FAQ. FHWA will ensure all materials are consistent in what areas will be recognized.

FHWA published a 30-day Federal Register notice to notify the public the following information collection has been submitted to OMB for review on August 26, 2024 [89 FR 68490].

³<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2006-title5-vol3/CFR-2006-title5-vol3-sec1320-8>

9. Payments or Gifts to Respondents

No payments or gifts are given to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

FHWA is not providing assurance of confidentiality.

11. Justification for Collection of Sensitive Information

None of the information collected is sensitive or private in nature.

12. Estimate of Burden Hours for Information Requested

TPF Excellence Award Program nominations will be submitted biennially.

The nomination process email will take about 2 min to complete and will be sent to approximately 500 respondents. The nomination form will take about 5 h to complete for those who choose to submit a nomination. The nomination form will be sent to approximately 500 respondents.

Totals

TPF Excellence Award Nomination form: $5 \text{ h} \times 50 \text{ respondents} = 250 \text{ h}$.

TPF Excellence Award Nomination process email: $2 \text{ min} \times 500 \text{ respondents} = 17 \text{ h}$.

Total = 267 h per collection cycle.

13. Estimate of Total Annual Costs to Respondents

There will be no costs to the respondents.

14. Estimate of Cost to the Federal Government

FHWA anticipates the projected cost estimate for the Federal Government to be \$14,895. This cost estimate assumes a GS-14 step 4 hourly staff salary of \$71.61⁴ and 208 h per award cycle dedicated to reviewing, processing, and managing the TPF Excellence Award Program.

15. Explanation of Program Changes or Adjustments

Not applicable, as this is a new program.

⁴ [SALARY TABLE 2024-DEN \(opm.gov\)](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/salaries/grades-and-salaries/)

16. Publication of Results of Data Collection

FHWA will publish the results of the TPF Excellence Award on the TPF website. FHWA will also produce a document summarizing each TPF study selected as a winner. Winners will also be announced and recognized at an awards ceremony.

17. Approval for Not Displaying the Expiration Date of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Approval

Not applicable. FHWA is not seeking approval to not display the OMB expiration date.

18. Exceptions to Certification Statement

There are no exemptions to the certification statement.