1. Identify Related Research Needs

Committee strategic planning efforts help determine if there are others with the same or a similar research idea. This helps identify funding program champions and sponsors. This also can avoid duplication of efforts and facilitates communication, coordination, and collaboration. Search the following databases and websites:

- TRB Research Needs Statements (RNS) database
- U.S. DOT Research Hub
- Research Program and Project Management (RPPM) Unfunded and Partially Funded Research Needs

2. Identify Transportation Research Funding Programs

While not exhaustive, the best source of transportation research funding programs is the Funding Sources for Transportation Research: Competitive Programs. See Chapter 3 for a table of funding programs. The table designates the programs by topical area, annual funding, and project type to help identify which program(s) fits your research need.

3. Know the Programs/Understanding the Requirements of the Program

- What is the project schedule?
- Who can submit research problem statements?
- Are there research focus areas or high-priority topical areas?
- Are champions required? If so, who can be a champion?
- Who prioritizes the research problem statements?
- Who makes the funding decisions?
- What is the process for funding research problem statements?

4. Select the Program(s) That Best Meet Your Research Needs

After reviewing the available funding programs and understanding their requirements, select the program(s) that fulfill your needs. Please reach out to the sponsoring entity, if you have questions about the program(s).

5. Set Up a Schedule

Develop a schedule from research idea gathering through problem statement submittal that matches the funding program(s) schedule.

6. Develop Your Research Problem Statements with the Funding Program in Mind

Write your research problem statements to meet the requirements of the funding program(s). See the “How To” Write an Effective Research Statement.

[ Continues on next page ]
7. Get your Research Problem Statement Out There
This completes the cycle that began with #1 above.

- If you have a connection to a TRB committee, get your research problem statement entered to the TRB RNS database. Universities search this database to identify student projects.
- If you do not have a connection with a TRB committee, identify a committee related to your AASHTO committee and make a connection, see AASHTO–TRB Connections.
- If there is no related TRB committee and your research need is not funded, add it to RPPM.

8. Do Not Get Discouraged
If your research needs are not funded initially, do not get discouraged, it is an iterative process. Learn from previous submittals to improve your chances the next time.

- Obtain review comments.
- Never forget your target audience.
- Network—ask for advice and seek support from others.

The complete set of “How To” documents include the following:
• Committee Approach to Research
• Writing a Strategic Plan
• Writing a Problem Statement
• Funding Resources
• Experimental Features
• Sharing Results
• Implementing Results
• Determining the Value of Research
• Monitoring Results