Who we are
The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) was established in 1967 as the state combined various agencies, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, the State Highway Commission, the State Aeronautics Commission and the State Patrol.

WisDOT supports all forms of transportation. The department is responsible for planning, building and maintaining Wisconsin's state highways and Interstate highway system. The department shares the costs of building and operating county and local transportation systems, including highways, public transit and other modes. WisDOT plans, promotes and financially supports statewide air, rail and water transportation, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

The WisDOT Research and Library Services unit is part of the Performance, Policy and Research Section within the Office of Management and Budget. The program structures its services and activities around these principles to support the overall department:

1. Support research and related services that encourage the development and operation of a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system in Wisconsin through innovation, improvement and cost-effective solutions.

2. Encourage the active and meaningful participation of partners from inside and outside the department to augment technical expertise, ensure accuracy of research results and support implementation of research findings.

3. Make decisions, design programs and offer services using objective and documented methods that are fully accountable to all partners and customers.

4. Communicate the needs, findings, implementation and value of research to the transportation community through methods that are relevant and understandable.

5. Continually review program structures, services and procedures to adopt creative ideas and encourage efficient operations.

How we are funded
Most of the individual elements of WisDOT’s Research and Library Services unit are partially or fully funded through the federal State Planning & Research Part 2 (SPR2) dollars (CFR 23.I.E.420), administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the United States Department of Transportation (US DOT). WisDOT’s Research unit works closely with the FHWA Wisconsin Division to develop an annual SPR2 Work Program as well as to monitor the conduct of research. For FFY 2018, the SPR2 Work Program totaled over $4 million in combined state and federal funds.

What we do
The WisDOT Research and Library Services unit manages several distinct programs:

• The Wisconsin Highway Research Program (WHRP) examines highway and bridge materials, structures and construction processes. Approximately $1 million of research
projects are awarded each year through competitive process to academic institutions and consultants.

- The Policy Research Program examines key safety, operations, planning and policy issues for WisDOT. Policy research projects are awarded through a competitive process to academic institutions and consultants.

- WisDOT contributes over one million dollars to national programs operated through the Transportation Research Board (including the National Cooperative Highway Research Program) based on national formulas.

- The department contributes approximately one million dollars annually to support 40-50 federally-designated pooled fund research projects that allow states to combine resources on research projects with common topical or geographical interest.

- The research program manages about $170,000 annually in technology transfer activities to disseminate the results of research through peer exchanges, transportation synthesis reports, transportation literature searches, research briefs, selected library services and other methods.

- The Department’s Materials Lab receives funds annually from the research program to support new product research and development.

Staff, facilities and contacts
WisDOT’s Research and Library Services unit staff includes one unit supervisor, three analysts, 1.5 FTE librarians and a contracts specialist. An interagency agreement also provides research support services for the Wisconsin Highway Research Program (WHRP) from the University of Wisconsin.

WisDOT Research and Library Services unit staff is based at the Hill Farms State Office Building in Madison, Wisconsin. WisDOT performs certain SPR2 funded activities at its Materials Lab on the east side of Madison.

Contact information for the program:

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For more information on the program, visit http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/about-wisdot/research.