

Who we are:

Transportation is so basic that many of us overlook its overwhelming importance in our daily lives. Practically everything used in our homes, offices, or schools across Tennessee – from furniture to food items to clothing – requires a large and complex transportation network. The Tennessee Department of Transportation provides citizens of Tennessee and travelers with one of the best transportation systems in the country. TDOT is a multimodal agency with responsibilities in building and maintaining roads, aviation, public transit, waterways, railroads, cycling and walking. Our involvement ranges from airport improvements to funding transit buses to planning for river ports. The Department of Transportation has approximately 3,500 employees with four statewide region facilities in Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Jackson.



Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team Lead

Aeronautics Division – Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Section

Nashville, TN

\$103,848 annually

Job Overview

The Aeronautics Drones & Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) Team Lead will lead, mentor, and train the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team through empowerment, communication, and delegated authority. This position will develop work plans that align with TDOT's strategic vision and will effectively delegate authority and responsibility while ensuring the availability of resources for the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team to be successful.

The Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team Lead will lead the development and implementation of departmental policies, discipline-specific technical guidance, procedures, and manuals related to drones and advanced air mobility for incorporation into TDOT's programs and projects. This position will ensure the implementation of the quality assurance program to achieve program efficiency and effectiveness. The Team Lead will supervise technical staff and implement performance plans, schedules, and budgets, ensuring each team member's expected outcomes, performance, and accountability. The Team Lead will research national best practices to drive innovation and efficiency within the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team.

Essential Job Responsibilities

Manage resources and staff utilization and assist the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team in performing their roles effectively and efficiently. Optimize the team's ability to successfully administer safe operational processes, data collection, and cargo and passenger movement using drones and advanced air mobility aircraft.

Collaborate with the Flight Services, Grants, Compliance & Inspections, and Project Development & Delivery sections and teams, TDOT Divisions, TDOT Regions, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and local governments, including coordination with the Tennessee Aeronautics Commission (TAC). Ensure effective communication is maintained to promote cohesiveness, innovation, and timely project delivery within the sections and Division.

Lead the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility team with in-depth technical knowledge of compliance with FAA Parts 49, 107, 108, 135, 139, Code of Federal Regulations, and state aviation regulations.

Manage external partners, including developing and advising on contract scopes of work, negotiating contracts, reviewing consultant contract invoicing, managing

contracts and grants, and completing consultant grading. Work with engineering consultants, project managers, and industry partners to facilitate aviation infrastructure development.

Lead the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team in providing exceptional customer service to internal and external customers, exercising effective listening skills, providing prompt responses, maintaining complete and accurate documentation, and communicating effectively. Serve as a liaison between state agencies, the FAA, municipalities, private sector partners, and research institutions. Facilitate partnerships with air mobility companies, drone service providers, and public safety agencies to support AAM and drone adoption. Lead public outreach and education efforts on the benefits and safety of drones and AAM technology.

Establish and ensure that there is a direct relationship between quality and work outcomes by developing and implementing quality control and quality assurance processes for the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team with respect to regulatory compliance, operational and safety protocols, testing and performance, inspection and maintenance, incident reporting, and audits to enhance reliability. Support testing operations, pilot programs, and technology demonstrations to validate evolving drone and AAM concepts.

Assist with managing the policy direction for the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team as part of a matrix structure, creating policies, procedures, guidelines, and performance metrics that support adherence to federal and state requirements, including best practices, and improve planning processes. Assist with the financial performance of the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team in alignment with TDOT financial processes to ensure transparency and accountability. Ensure projects comply with FAA regulations (e.g., Part 91, 107, and 135) and state/local guidelines.

Manage change and conflict, clarify the vision, take ownership of the change, communicate effectively, remain transparent, lead by example, and hold yourself and others accountable throughout the process. Develop and implement strategic roadmaps for integrating drones and AAM into the state or regional aviation plans.

Ensure the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team remains current on national best practices as they relate to federal, state, and local aviation processes and procedures; incorporate research, evaluations, and implementation of emerging processes and technologies into the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility team responsibilities that will improve efficiency, resiliency, effectiveness, reliability, sustainability, and the safety of Tennessee's transportation network; integrate federal and state requirements into TDOT's guidance documents, processes, and procedures. Participate in peer exchanges with State and local governments and applicable industry partners for key insights and collaboration.

Provide oversight in developing the Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team deliverables and ensure they are consistent, predictable, and repeatable to provide consistently high levels of achievement, risk mitigation, production of annual reports as required, and an established track record of success. Promote quality through data-driven performance monitoring, compliance audits, and post-mission evaluations.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree
- 5 years of demonstrated competency in aviation management, aviation planning, transportation management, or a related field.
- FAA Part 107 Certificate preferred

Ideal Candidate

The Drones & Advanced Air Mobility Team Lead excels in developing, managing, and administering innovative aviation programs. They demonstrate strong communication, leadership, and team management skills, effectively engaging with stakeholders at all levels. As Team Lead, they provide direction on best practices and state and federal regulations, fostering innovation within their team. Their role is critical in identifying opportunities to address challenges while planning for the future. They are an innovative and forward-thinking aviation professional with drone, AAM aircraft, and airspace integration expertise. They are skilled in developing policy, regulatory frameworks, and infrastructure planning to support the safe and efficient adoption of drones and AAM technologies.