

## 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. TDOT Aeronautics is located near the John C. Tune Airport in Nashville, TN.



### **Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist**

Strategic Planning, Research, and Innovation Division – Research and Innovation  
Section  
Nashville, TN  
\$75,204 annually

#### **Job Overview**

The Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist assists in managing TDOT's Research Program, Innovation Program, and other transportation research and innovation initiatives. This position is responsible for supporting TDOT in identifying and implementing research and innovations to improve program and project delivery and support TDOT's strategic direction. The Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist role requires collaboration with TDOT Divisions, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Local Public Agencies, and state colleges, universities, and other research organizations. This position must effectively articulate research and innovation program and project concepts through training, mentoring, and collaborating as part of a matrix organization.

#### **Essential Job Responsibilities**

Assist in facilitating, monitoring, and managing TDOT's Research Program and all projects funded through the State Planning and Research (SPR) Program Part B funding. Coordinate with internal and external partners in finalizing and amending the annual Work Program for approval, ensuring it is balanced to available funding and budget. Analyze research budget issues and reconcile financial records related to the Work Program. Routinely and proactively assess risk factors on projects and work with Divisions and Regions to minimize potential impacts on projects' scope, schedule, and budget. Finalize the annual program closeout report for approval.

Conduct and complete the biennial, competitive research Call for Projects. Coordinate with Divisions and Regions in the development of needs statements for selected projects. Participate in pre-proposal meetings. Coordinate the awards process including analyzing and compiling submittals and presenting them to the Research Oversight Task Force for approval. Issue Requests for Proposals. Coordinate with Divisions and Regions to finalize the problem statement scope of services for selected research projects.

Develop, negotiate, execute, and amend contracts with the institutions of higher learning and other research organizations in coordination with the Research and Innovation Team Lead, the Research and Innovation Technical Specialists, Divisions and Regions. Coordinate the review of Scopes of Services for awarded projects and ensure they comply with TDOT policy and procedures as well as FHWA regulations.

Oversee the research projects' contract tasks. Review and approve progress reports and invoices.

Assist with the coordination of research activities including the Transportation Pooled Fund Program with FHWA, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP), the Transportation Research Board (TRB), the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), and other transportation organizations. Collaborate with federal, state, university, and industry representatives regarding the research program to discuss transportation research issues and topics to provide input into state, regional, and national issues.

Direct TDOT's innovation initiatives to increase the generation, development, and implementation of innovative ideas throughout TDOT's programs and projects. Serve as a liaison with FHWA and other State Departments of Transportation in identifying and monitoring best practices and innovations and evaluating their applicability, in coordination with Divisions and Regions, to TDOT. Ensure reporting requirements for FHWA's Every Day Counts initiative and Statewide Transportation Innovation Council are completed timely and accurately.

Support initiatives that promote and analyze efforts for implementing research results and innovations throughout TDOT. Collaborate with Divisions and Regions to analyze research initiatives and innovations and related program and project performance to determine effectiveness and the on-going application thereof. Assist in communicating the value of the research findings and employ technology transfer opportunities associated with research findings where appropriate.

Oversee technology transfer initiatives for local and rural road agencies through management of the Tennessee's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) contract. Ensure Tennessee's LTAP program is in conformance with federal and state requirements.

Coordinate with the TDOT Technical Training Director and assist in the development and delivery of research and innovation training and technical guidance that addresses research and innovation identification and application, acquired knowledge, and risk management, inspiring new program and project processes, procedures and technologies, and developing skills. Provide expertise, training, and mentoring to TDOT staff, university partners, and local agencies regarding research and innovation issues and considerations.

Provide exceptional customer service to both internal and external customers by exercising effective listening skills and providing prompt responses. Serve as a TDOT liaison in teaming with federal and state partners, institutions of higher learning and other research organizations and industry.

Promote and encourage the pursuit of excellence in alignment with TDOT's vision. Assist with the development and execution of quality management procedures for research and innovation activities to ensure a high level of quality, achievement, and implementation. Consistently work to improve processes that support quality deliverables.

Remain current with national and regional applicable research program and innovation program initiatives. Assist in developing, maintaining, and updating TDOT's policies, methods, procedures, and guidelines for the efficient and effective management of the research and innovation programs in conformance and compliance with federal and state requirements and TDOT policies.

### **Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree
- 3 years of demonstrated competency in research practices and methods or public administration, business administration, transportation planning or engineering, public policy, project management, program

evaluation, computer science, data science, library science, innovation management, environmental sciences, continuous improvement, project management, or a related field.

**OR**

- Master's degree
- 2 years of demonstrated competency in research practices and methods or public administration, business administration, transportation planning or engineering, public policy, project management, program evaluation, computer science, data science, library science, innovation management, environmental sciences, continuous improvement, project management, or a related field.

**Ideal Candidate**

The Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist brings the team a remarkable blend of technical expertise and knowledge. They are a natural problem solver, who excels at navigating challenges and developing innovative solutions. The Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist is proficient at seamlessly engaging with leadership, Subject Matter Experts, and stakeholders. Their approach emphasizes that the most successful outcomes are achieved through collective effort and clear communication. The Research and Innovation Senior Technical Specialist fosters seamless communication and teamwork.