

## 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 Technical Specialist**

Strategic Planning, Research, and Innovation Division – Research and Innovation Section

Nashville, TN

\$60,600 - \$70,680 annually

#### **Job Overview**

The Research and Innovation Technical Specialist assists TDOT in identifying and implementing research and innovations to improve program and project delivery and support TDOT's strategic direction. The Research and Innovation Technical Specialist role requires collaboration with TDOT Divisions, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Local Public Agencies, and universities, state colleges, 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 of TDOT Technical Specialist I, II, and III include:**

Assist in developing and amending the annual State Planning and Research (SPR) Part B Work Program, balancing available funding with projects. Ensure fiscal activities are accomplished and reconciled for assigned projects. Assist in preparing the annual program closeout report.

Assist in conducting and completing 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. Participate in the awards process including analyzing and reviewing submittals and working with researchers and TDOT technical staff to ensure all necessary information and activities are reflected in the research problem statement scope of services.

Assist in coordinating with Divisions and Regions to finalize the problem statement scope of services for selected research projects. Verify contract terms and conditions. Complete internal reviews. Assist with coordinating, executing, and processing contracts and amendments. Monitor and review contract tasks through project completion.

Identify research findings and insights that are applicable for incorporation into TDOT policies, practices, and planning documents. Assist in communicating the value of the research findings and employ technology transfer opportunities associated with research findings where appropriate.

Publish research reports on the TDOT and TRB websites.

Research and identify innovative processes, procedures, and technologies independently and in coordination with Divisions and Regions that improve efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, sustainability, and safety of Tennessee's transportation network. Support and promote FHWA's selected Every Day Counts initiatives.

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.

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.

**Additional Job Responsibilities for the TDOT Technical Specialist II and III include:**

Assist in coordinating the execution and processing of contracts and amendments with the institutions of higher learning and other research organizations. Assist in coordinating the review of research problem statements and scopes of services for awarded projects and ensure they comply with TDOT policy and procedures. Review and finalize progress reports and finalize invoices for approval. Close projects.

Assist in overseeing technology transfer initiatives for local and rural road agencies through Tennessee's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) contract. Assist in ensuring Tennessee's LTAP program is in conformance with federal and state requirements.

Promote and encourage the pursuit of excellence in alignment with TDOT's vision. Assist with the 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.

Collaborate with TDOT Research Teams and other internal project stakeholders to proactively identify research and innovation opportunities that support the goals and objectives of TDOT. Facilitate the implementation of research results and innovations in processes, procedures, and technologies, in coordination with the Divisions and Regions, that improve efficiency, effectiveness, reliability, sustainability, and safety of Tennessee's transportation network.

**Additional Job Responsibilities for the TDOT Technical Specialist III include:**

Assist in coordinating with the TDOT Technical Training Director and 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.

Perform quality assurance reviews of active research projects including progress reports, invoices, amendments, and deliverables. Coordinate meetings with research organizations, as necessary, to review and analyze project documentation, and identify issues requiring remediation. Report findings and make recommendations for improving management processes.

**Qualifications**

**TDOT Technical Specialist I**

- Bachelor's Degree

### **TDOT Technical Specialist II**

- Bachelor's Degree
- 1 year 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.

### **TDOT Technical Specialist III**

- Bachelor'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.

**The Tennessee Department of Transportation reserves the sole right in determining the level of position based on the applicant's work experience, education, skill level, and all other appropriate factors, including business needs. Within 6 months of hire, employees must demonstrate successful mastery of corresponding work competencies and skill blocks of the Technical Specialist Competency Program for the level of worker for which they were hired. If skills and competencies are not met during that period, the employee can be demoted to the level of worker for which he/she is qualified.**

### **Ideal Candidate**

This position is a career path series within TDOT. The Research and Innovation Technical Specialist I, II, or III demonstrates a combination of technical expertise, analytical skills, and effective communication abilities. They not only possess technical capabilities, but also have a truly visionary approach to identifying and facilitating improvements to program and project delivery processes and technologies. The Research and Innovation Technical Specialist II and III excels in collaboration which allows them to work seamlessly with internal and external stakeholders.