Type of Request: Extension of currently approved information collection.
OMB Control Number: 2133–0514.
Form Numbers: None.
Expiration Date of Approval: Three years from date of OMB approval.

Summary of Collection of Information: This collection of information requires U.S.-flag operators to submit vessel operating costs and capital costs data to MARAD officials on an annual basis.

Need and Use of the Information: This information is needed by MARAD to establish fair and reasonable guideline rates for carriage of specific cargoes on U.S. vessels.


Annual Responses: 175.
Annual Burden: 700 hours.

Comments: Comments should refer to the docket number that appears at the top of this document. Written comments may be submitted to the Docket Clerk, U.S. DOT Dockets, Room PL–401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590. Comments may also be submitted by electronic means via the Internet at http://dmses.dot.gov/submit.

Specifically address whether this information collection is necessary for proper performance of the functions of the agency and will have practical utility, accuracy of the burden estimates, ways to minimize this burden, and ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected. All comments received will be available for examination at the above address between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. EDT (or EST), Monday through Friday, except Federal Holidays. An electronic version of this document is available on the World Wide Web at http://dms.dot.gov.

By Order of the Maritime Administrator.

Joel C. Richard, Secretary, Maritime Administration.
[FR Doc. 02–28086 Filed 11–4–02; 8:45 am]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Grant Program for Research and Development in the Field of Transportation Statistics

AGENCY: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, DOT.

ACTION: Announcement of grant program.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) supports its goal of advancing the field of transportation statistics through the Transportation Statistics Research Grants program. This notice solicits applications for projects that (1) support the development of the field of transportation statistics; and/or (2) involve research or development in transportation statistics. It outlines the purpose, goals, and general procedures for application and award. For this cycle, BTS will make available up to approximately $500,000 in grant funds to eligible organizations.

DATES: For BTS to consider your application, we must receive it by January 31, 2003, at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. Applications received after January 31, 2003, will be held for the next cycle, which is anticipated to be every six to twelve months, unless you request in writing that your application be returned.

ADDRESSES: You must send six copies of the application package to the BTS Grants Program, Room 3117, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Promod Chandhok, Office of Statistical Programs, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Room 3117, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Transportation, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590; phone (202) 366–2158; fax: (202) 493–
I. Background—Advancing the Discipline of Transportation Statistics

The purpose of this grant program is to provide financial assistance to eligible organizations to help advance the discipline of transportation statistics. These grants are authorized by section 5109 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA–21) (Public Law 105–178 (1998), codified at 49 U.S.C. 111(g)). BTS anticipates awarding up to $500,000 per year in grants for projects that (1) support development of the field of transportation statistics; and/or (2) advance research or development in transportation statistics.

BTS is a separate operating administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Its mission is to lead in developing transportation data and information of high quality, and to advance their effective use in public and private transportation decision-making. In accomplishing this mission, BTS works to improve six key attributes of transportation data and analysis—quality, comparability, completeness, timeliness, relevance, and utility.

Our ultimate goal is to make transportation better—to enhance safety, mobility, economic growth, the human and natural environment, and national security (the five strategic goals of the Department of Transportation). BTS’s role in this goal is to put together data and information that others need to make decisions concerning transportation. We collect data and compile, analyze, and publish statistics. Many others, both within and outside DOT, are involved in building this knowledge base and BTS could not do it alone.

While there are many excellent transportation data programs and many excellent statistics programs, few are devoted to the intersection of these two disciplines. Bringing a better understanding of statistics to transportation data will improve data quality, increase utility (e.g., by improving measures of travel), and reduce costs (e.g., by using techniques to make data collection, analysis, and dissemination more efficient). BTS wants to foster the transportation statistics discipline and increase its quality and usefulness to the transportation community. This grants program is one way BTS is working toward this goal.

II. Eligibility Requirements

What Organizations May Apply?

BTS invites applications from public and private non-profit entities. We strongly encourage organizations serving minorities, who have been traditionally under-represented in transportation statistics, to submit applications. If organizations partner on a project, the participants should submit a single application. You may submit more than one application as long as the applications are for separate and distinct projects.

What Projects Are Eligible for Funding?

Proposals should serve the broad transportation interests of the country, and we are particularly interested in high-quality proposals that treat one or more of the following areas:

1) Quantifying the “safety culture” of transportation companies; assessing the predictive power of “safety culture” in predicting accident risk; identifying minimum data required in quantifying the “safety culture” of a transportation company; and suggesting specific measures or attributes of a company that are strong predictors of accident risk.

2) Researching the utility of narrative text in accident and near-miss reports in identifying precursors to an accident; evaluating text mining techniques; and developing text mining tools specific for extracting information from Police Accident Reports.

3) Measuring the vulnerability of the transportation system and its users to crime and terrorism.

This list is not exhaustive, and we are eager to consider any innovative proposal that supports the development of the field of transportation statistics or involves research and development in transportation statistics.

What Are the Cost Sharing Requirements?

For awards of $100,000 or more, the recipient shall fund at least 50 percent of the project’s costs. The nonfederal match must come from sources other than the project sponsor, and must be cash contributions rather than in-kind contributions. In reviewing all applications, even those requesting less than $100,000, the degree of cost-sharing will be considered, with more weight given to cash contributions than in-kind services.

III. Application Contents

For more information about submitting an application, please refer to the Attachments and DATES sections listed above. In order to be considered for funding under this program, your application package must include the following:

1) A Project Narrative. This must not exceed 12 letter-size pages, single-spaced and double-spaced. Use at least 12-point type and one inch margins. In general, the information you provide should be in sufficient detail so BTS understands the proposed work and its anticipated benefits. It should also demonstrate that you have the necessary experience and resources to accomplish it. The narrative must identify the organization; how it meets the eligibility criteria; its experience and accomplishments in collecting, analyzing, and/or disseminating transportation data; and the qualifications of the principals proposed to conduct the activities. The narrative must also describe the proposed activity, including how you would accomplish it, a timeline listing major milestones associated with the project, and a list of specific products and/or services with the dates they will be delivered.

2) An Application for Federal Assistance. Submit OMB SF–424 (Application for Federal Assistance), which is the official form required for all Federal grants. It requests basic information about the grantee and the proposed project. Under Part 10 of this form, use 20.920 and Transportation Statistics Research Grants for the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number and Title. Also submit OMB SF–424A (Budget Information—Nonconstruction Programs). You can download these forms from the OMB Internet site at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants.

3) An Evaluation Plan. Include a brief description of how you will evaluate and measure the success of the project, including the anticipated benefits and challenges in completing it. This can be part of the Project Narrative.

4) Resumes. Include resumes from up to three key personnel who would be significantly involved in the project.

5) Letters of Commitment. If your proposal includes the significant involvement of other eligible organizations, your application must include letters of commitment from them.

IV. Application Review Process and Selection Criteria

The Transportation Statistics Research Grants program uses a competitive process and applications will be evaluated based on the merit and relevance of the proposed project in relation to the other applications received. BTS anticipates making multiple awards based on this solicitation. While BTS will select the
most meritorious proposals, we may choose to not award all available funds.
Upon receiving an application, BTS will conduct an initial review to
determine if it meets the eligibility
criteria and contains all of the items
specified under the Application
Contents section of this announcement.
A BTS evaluation committee will then
review each complete application from
an eligible recipient using the
evaluation criteria listed below (the
order of criteria does not designate
priority) and the BTS Director will
select the final grants. The evaluation
criteria are:
(1) How well does the proposal
support BTS’s strategic goals of
improving the quality, comparability,
completeness, timeliness, relevance,
and utility of transportation data? How
well does the proposal serve the broad
transportation interests of the United
States?
(2) How innovative is the proposed
activity? To what extent is the work
being accomplished elsewhere?
(3) How much experience has the
applicant demonstrated in one or more
of the following areas—collecting,
analyzing, storing, or disseminating
transportation data, particularly data
collected or disseminated by BTS, and
working with theoretical statistical
issues concerning transportation data?
(4) Does the applicant have the
professional qualifications and team
members necessary for satisfactory
performance of the proposed activity?
(5) How well does the technical
approach and proposed costs reflect an
understanding of the procedures
necessary to complete the required
tasks?
(6) To what degree does the proposal
include cost-sharing? More weight will
be given to proposals with cash
contributions than in-kind services. For
awards of $100,000 or more, BTS
requires cash contributions of 50
percent toward the total project’s cost.
V. Amount of Funds Available and
Period of Support
We anticipate that approximately
$500,000 per year will be designated to
support grants over the next five years,
subject to the availability of
appropriated funds. This estimate does
not bind BTS to a specific number of
offers or awards, nor to a specific
amount of funding support for
particular awards or awards in
aggregate. It is anticipated that
individual award amounts, based upon
demonstrated needs, will likely range
from $50,000 to $200,000, though BTS
has not established minimum or
maximum funding levels.
Given the amount of funds available,
applicants are strongly encouraged to
seek other funding opportunities to
supplement the federal funds.
Preference will be given to applicants
with cost sharing proposals from within
or outside their organizations.
The period of time of awards will vary
with the complexity of the project and
it is possible that grants will be awarded
for periods greater than one year.
VI. BTS Involvement
BTS involvement, if any, will vary by
award. If you anticipate BTS
involvement, you must note this in your
project narrative and any support BTS
provides will be specified in the award
agreement. BTS will assign a liaison to
serve as the primary contact regarding
the grant.
VII. Terms and Conditions of Award
(1) Prior to award, each grantee will
be required to complete additional
government application forms, such as
OMB SF–424B (Assurances—
Nonconstruction Programs) and with
the certification requirements of 49 CFR
Part 20, Department of Transportation
New Restrictions on Lobbying, and 49
CFR Part 29, Department of
Transportation Government-Wide
Debarment and Suspension (Non-
Procurement) and Government-Wide
Requirements for Drug Free Workplace
(Grants).
(2) Each grantee shall submit a
program implementation plan no more
than one month after award. The BTS
liaison will review and comment, if
necessary.
(3) Each grantee shall submit
quarterly progress reports, a draft final
report, and a final report that reflects the
BTS liaison’s comments.
Thank you for your interest in our
Transportation Statistics Research
Grants program.

Ashish Sen,
Director.

[FR Doc. 02–28092 Filed 11–4–02; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910–HY–P