**Top 15 Tips PIs Should Know for TDOT Research Projects**

**Proposal:**

1. **Include the time to develop, write, and edit the final report in the project timeline in the proposal.** *Too often this happens after the anticipated completion date and adds another six – 12 months to the project.*
2. **Find out what costs can be reimbursed by TDOT before submitting the proposal.** *For more information on purchasing equipment, please refer to 2 CFR 200.318-200.326 and your research contract with TDOT.*
3. **Know what types of training are covered before submitting the proposal.** *For more information on training, please refer to 2 CFR 200 and your research contract with TDOT.*

**During Research Process:**

1. **Set a meeting schedule at the beginning of the project.** *Regular communication is critical to a successful outcome!*
2. **The TDOT Lead Staff is the primary contact for all research project related communication.** *For TDOT research projects there are generally two project managers: one in the Research Office and one in the technical office. Please make sure that these individuals are included in all correspondence and discussions.* ***Please also include*** [***TDOT.Research@tn.gov***](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov) ***on ALL email correspondence.***
3. **Set deadlines for responses to questions and for reviewing information.** *All project team members are expected to respond in a timely fashion. If there is a problem getting a response from TDOT Lead Staff, notify the Research Office immediately at* [*TDOT.Research@tn.gov*](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov).
4. **Notify the TDOT Lead Staff and Research Office as soon as problems come up on a project.** *Do not wait for the next meeting or quarterly report submission. It helps avoid unnecessary delays.* *We will promptly respond to your concerns to resolve any issues you may have. As a reminder, our email that should be copied on all issues/correspondence is* [*TDOT.Research@tn.gov*](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov)*.*
5. **Obtain approval for all out-of-state travel related to the research project.** A travel grant recipientmust be approved by the TDOT Research office in advance if it is an out-of-state travel. *Please complete the* ***Out of State Travel Permission Form and email the form to*** [***TDOT.Research@tn.gov***](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov)*.*

**Final Report:**

1. **Keep the customer in mind when writing the final report.** *The report is for TDOT staff so it should be concise (this is not a thesis or dissertation!), easy-to-read, and thoroughly edited. Avoid redundancies, difficult to understand terms, and equations (they can go in the appendix). As a reminder, our email that should be copied on all issues/correspondence is* [*TDOT.Research@tn.gov*](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov)*.*
2. **Include FHWA’s Technical Report Documentation Page AND proper disclaimer language in the final report.** *Each research project report should include the technical report documentation page and the disclaimer which should include the RES number given by TDOT and the title of the research project. Both of these requirements is standard for all FHWA-sponsored projects. Please complete* ***Form DOT F 1700.7 (8-72) AND TDOT Disclaimer for Final Report.***
3. **Please include a formal acknowledgement in any presentations made on TDOT sponsored projects and notify TDOT of any publications, papers, or media attention related to a TDOT sponsored project.** *The acknowledgement should state the research project has been done in conjunction with TDOT. When an article or a story appears in the media, TDOT’s Office of Customer Relations and Information often receives inquiries. It helps to let them know in advance so that they are not caught off guard and are prepared to respond.*
4. **Please allow sufficient time in your timeline for the final report.** *The TDOT Lead Staff, the TDOT Research Office, and FHWA ALL must review and comment on your final report. As a reminder, our email that should be copied on all issues/correspondence is* [*TDOT.Research@tn.gov*](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov)*.*

**Post Research:**

1. **The Research Office appreciates project photos.** *If you have good pictures from the lab or field visits, please email* [*TDOT.Research@tn.gov*](mailto:TDOT.Research@tn.gov)*. They can be used in the Research Annual Report and to help promote the research program and partnerships.*
2. **Understand how patents of project results work.** *Universities retain ownership of patents developed during the project. However, FHWA has a nonexclusive, nontransferable, irrevocable, paid-up license to use the subject invention for or on behalf of the United States. The Federal Government's license cannot be transferred to third parties. For more information on patents, please refer to 37 CFR part 401.*
3. **Understand how copyrights work.** *Universities may copyright any books, publications, or other copyrightable materials developed in the course of the FHWA planning and research funded project. FHWA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, the work for Government purposes. For more information on copyrights, please refer to 23 CFR 420.121 (b).*