

Aurora Pooled Fund

2026 Project Idea Solicitation

The [Aurora Pooled Fund Program \[TPF-5\(543\)\]](#) is a partnership of State Departments of Transportation (DOT) that collaborate on research, development, deployment, and advocacy of road weather information systems (RWIS) to improve the efficiency, safety, and reliability of highway transportation.

Aurora is soliciting research project ideas for the 2026 funding cycle. Project ideas may be submitted for the following topic areas.

- Weather data and related information dissemination protocols and technologies
- Road weather decision support systems
- Weather modeling and analysis methods, validation, and techniques
- RWIS equipment evaluations, standards, and architecture
- Innovative road condition monitoring and performance measures

Aurora projects are typically one to two years in duration and can vary in cost, with recent projects ranging from \$40,000 to over \$200,000. Aurora does not fund the development of proprietary processes or products.

Idea Submission

The provided form, “Aurora Project Idea Description 2026”, is required for all idea submission(s). Submissions must be limited to two-pages and be written in plain, non-technical language for a diverse audience. All ideas are due to Zachary Hans (zhans@iastate.edu) by **Friday, February 27, 2026**.

Timeline

By mid-March 2026, the Aurora Board will review and rank all ideas. In some cases, submitted ideas may be incorporated into open requests for proposals (RFPs). Researchers with highly ranked ideas may be invited to submit formal, technical proposals. Each idea advancing to the formal proposal stage will be eligible for a brief virtual or pre-recorded presentation to Aurora Board during their Spring meeting (May 19 – 21, 2026). Funding decisions are expected in late-May 2026. Contract negotiations will be made through Iowa DOT as the lead pooled fund state.

Aurora Pooled Fund

Proposed Idea / Problem Statement Title

Proposal Contact: Author, Agency, Email, Phone Number

Project Area: Identify the topic(s) that your project idea best fits.

Decision Support Systems
Weather Modeling and Analysis
Standards and Architecture
Equipment Evaluation
Information Dissemination Technologies
Road Condition Monitoring
Other (Please specify)

Problem Statement: Describe the issue(s) that lead to the identification of this research topic and the importance/urgency of the topic, as well as a short and concise statement of the specific problem to be addressed.

Research Objective: Clearly describe the project objective(s).

Research Approach: Describe the approach you recommend for conducting the research.

Deliverables: Describe the anticipated deliverables and how Aurora Pooled Fund members would use, implement, or benefit from them.

Participants: Identify public and private agencies or organizations that may be involved in the research.

Duration: Estimate the duration of the proposed research project.

Requested Funding: Estimate the total project cost, as well as the funding requested from Aurora, if different from the total cost. Aurora's funding is limited, so identification of other sources of funding is encouraged.

Acknowledgment: Provide a statement confirming that the proposed work does not request Aurora funding to develop proprietary processes or products.