

Iowa DOT Research Request for Proposal (RFP)

It is the intent of Iowa DOT Research to enter into agreement with the responsible bidder whose submitted proposal is the most advantageous, cost and other factors considered. Other factors include but are not limited to meeting or exceeding mandatory requirements, proposed staffing, and meeting required time schedule.

- Original RFP is posted at [the Iowa DOT Research Requests for Proposal page](#).
- Questions should be submitted to the project manager, identified below.
 - o Questions are due no later than 14 calendar days prior to the proposal due date. Questions and responses will be posted on [the Iowa DOT Research Requests for Proposal page](#) no later than 7 calendar days prior to the proposal due date.
- Responses must be submitted in pdf form to Proposal.Research@iowadot.us.
 - o Use the following naming convention for the PDF submission:
 - o **ResearchRFPNumber_Agency_PrincipalInvestigatorLastName.pdf**
- Responses must comply with the proposal guidelines in “Required Format for Iowa DOT Research Proposals.” Please refer to [the Iowa DOT Research Proposal & Deliverable Guidelines page](#).

RFP #: SWZDI-2027b

RFP Title: Implementation Guidance for Automated Flagger Assistance Devices - AFADs

RFP Posted: September 15, 2026

Proposals Due: On or Before November 1, 2026 at 12:00 Noon Central Standard Time.

Project Manager: Khyle Clute, khyle.clute@iowadot.us, (515)-239-1646

Budget

- ☐ Funding limitations have been established. Proposed budgets shall not exceed \$_____.
- ☒ Proposed budgets are not limited. They will be considered during the evaluation process.

Timeline

- ☐ Timing limitations have been established. Proposed timelines shall not extend beyond _____.
- ☒ Proposed timelines are not limited. They will be considered during the evaluation process.

Literature Review

- ☐ A Literature Review has been performed as part of project development and should not be included as a task in the proposal. The Literature Review is available for download here:
- ☒ A Literature Review has not been performed and may be included as a task in the proposal.

Data Management Plan

- ☐ Development of a Data Management Plan (DMP) is a required task in the proposal.
Refer to [Iowa DOT DMP guidance](#) section for more information.
- ☒ Development of a Data Management Plan is not a required task in the proposal.

Problem Statement

Automated flagger assistance devices (AFADs) are remotely operated temporary traffic control equipment used in work zones. The current Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) identifies two types of AFADs. One type involves the use of a STOP/SLOW sign and the other type uses red and yellow lenses. The use of AFADs is intended to enhance worker safety by replacing flaggers who are near approaching traffic in a work zone. Some state DOTs have begun to implement AFADs in work zones, but additional guidance on the use of one or both options would be beneficial.

Objectives

The objective of this research is the development of additional guidance on the use of one or both AFAD options that supplements current MUTCD content. The guidance developed should include the use cases most suitable for AFADs and any operational considerations connected to them. Some examples of the factors and operational considerations that might be investigated include, but aren't limited to, traffic volume, work duration, daytime versus nighttime operations, AFAD placement, deployment methods (e.g., AFAD at both ends versus AFAD at one end and flagger at the other end), and motorist compliance. In addition, the project results should include a summary of existing implementation guidance being used by state DOTs for one or both types of AFADs and the identification of situations where typical flagger operations may be the more appropriate option. The development of this guidance should be of value to agencies that implement AFADs.

Minimum Project Tasks

1. None pre-determined

Products and Deliverables

1. Quarterly Progress Reports
2. Draft Final Report
3. Final Report
4. Technology Transfer Technical Brief
5. Research Implementation Plan(s)
6. Photo or Image Files

Note: All products and deliverables shall comply with ADA accessibility and Section 508 requirements, regardless of funding source. Section 508 is an amendment to the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 mandating that all electronic and information technology developed, procured, maintained, or used by the federal government be accessible to people with disabilities. Refer to 29 U.S.C 794d for additional information.

Additional Information

- This RFP is funded through the Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative (SWZDI) under a multi-state pooled fund led by Iowa DOT as TPF-5(545). Information about the current SWZDI pooled fund is available on [the Smart Work Zone Deployment Initiative pooled fund page](#).
- SWZDI encourages those proposing to reach out to the DOTs in the states noted below if the proposal includes possible piloting or field demonstration activities. Provide the name, title and email of the DOT contact if they support or provide possible locations for those activities.
- ****Proposal Restrictions****

- o Proposals are limited to 8 pages. Resumes of the principal investigator and other named team members, along with other relevant materials, may be provided for additional information in appendices, but the proposal itself shall be a stand-alone document. The proposer should not expect the reviewers to read appendices to be able to evaluate the merit of a proposal.
- o The proposing entity must be a college or university located in one of the states pledging funds to the SWZDI TPF-5(545) pooled fund: Alaska, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, or Wisconsin. The principal investigator and any co-principal investigator(s) must be a faculty or professional staff employed by the proposing entity.
- o Proposals submitted by current SWZDI principal investigators that have projects one year or more behind their originally contracted end date will not be considered.
- o Individual respondents are limited to submitting on only one SWZDI proposal per year as either a principal investigator or co-principal investigator.

Non-Discrimination Statement

Iowa DOT ensures non-discrimination in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Any person who believes that they are being denied participation in a project, being denied benefits of a program, or otherwise being discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, low income and limited English proficiency, or needs more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact Iowa DOT Civil Rights at 515-239-7970 or by email at civil.rights@iowadot.us.