

DATE: September 12, 2022

TO: Accredited Colleges/Universities in Vermont

FROM: Office of Civil Rights & Labor Compliance, Vermont Agency of Transportation

RE: Request for Grant Applications (RFG) for the 2023-2024 National Summer Transportation Institute Program

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Civil Rights Office (CR) partnering with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is seeking accredited Vermont colleges/universities that would like to host the 2023-2024 Vermont National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) Programs. Colleges/Universities are encouraged to submit a completed application packet to CR.

The purpose of the NSTI program is to create awareness and stimulate interest in transportation career opportunities among middle and high school students. The goal is to help each student realize existing career opportunities in today's transportation industry, participate in transportation-related STEM-based academic activities, and to encourage students to pursue transportation-related course work at the college or university level. The Vermont NSTI Program should be designed to introduce students to all modes of transportation-related careers and work.

The program can be either residential or nonresidential. The NSTI can range anywhere from 2-4 weeks and can be classified as a middle school (rising grades 6-8) and/or high school (rising grades 9-12) program. **NSTI is offered free to participants.** Host Sites may not charge fees of any kind, even if the fee is reimbursable to the participants.

Historically, VTrans has offered highly successful, 2 to 4-week NSTI in-person programming to high school and middle school students. The Vermont NSTI has been held at Vermont Technical College, University of Vermont, and Champlain College, in partnership with the college/university as well as programs such as Upward Bound. Due to the state's mitigation requirements for the COVID-19 public health crisis, the 2020 NSTI programming moved to a virtual format. Even though the public health crisis is anticipated to be over before the summer of 2024, we encourage NSTI Host Site applicants to be innovative with their program design so it can provide hands-on, participatory instruction and experiences in a virtual environment, if necessary.

The Host Site(s) is responsible for:

- Selecting Project Director and Staff
- Developing program and proposal for funding consideration
- Executing and implementing all aspects of the program
- Preparing final report (annual report)
- Budgeting and expenditure (must comply with OMB Circular A-21)

VTrans' vision for the future is to build on past success and to effectively reach as many students as meaningfully possible. An emphasis should be made on a pipeline of options to keep the students' interest in transportation careers through schooling to employment. To best meet this vision, it is preferred that we continue to offer both a high school and middle school program and to explore partnerships with entities committed to increasing opportunity and career development for youth.

VTrans intends to select one Vermont college/university to serve as a host site and will enter into a grant agreement to provide this program. All aspects of the program shall be accomplished in accordance with the National Summer Transportation Institute Program Desk Reference and the terms of the Grant Agreement, including Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants.

The fiscal year 2023 federal grant allocation to VTrans for NSTI has been set at **Fifty Thousand (\$50,000)**. Colleges/universities are encouraged to seek partnerships with other entities for additional budget or in-kind contributions.

The application submission deadline is **Tuesday, October 11, 2022 by 5:00 P.M.** Application packages should be emailed to And.Morse@Vermont.gov. The application and tables should be submitted in the Microsoft Word format and Microsoft Excel spreadsheet provided on our website: <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/civil-rights/education/youth-programs/nsti>.

Important Dates:

October 11, 2022	Deadline for host site Applications
October 2022	Applications reviewed and ranked by VTrans
October 2022	Ranked Applications submitted to FHWA Local Division office
March-May 2023	VTrans and Host Site sign Grant Agreement
May 2023 – Spring 2024	Host Site Planning and Recruitment activities
Summer 2024	NSTI Sessions
September 2024	Host site is required to prepare the Final Report (annual report) with the results of the activities and submit to VTrans for review
October 2024	VTrans submits Final Report to FHWA

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated by VTrans employees. The host site will be selected considering the following criteria:

- Program Curriculum
 - Required to consist of both classroom and hands on activities to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) and transportation-related skill development.
 - Should include exposure to all modes of transportation: land, air, water, and incorporate safety throughout.
 - Should include enhancement program opportunities including leadership skills, time management, scholastic preparation (test preparation, college search info, etc.), career exploration, communication skills, and financial literacy.
 - Proposed field trips
 - Residential programs are required to include a sports and recreation component to the curriculum.

- Innovation - New approaches to curriculum, scheduling, partnership, and uses of technology that allow VTrans to meet its stated goals.
- Methods for recruiting and selecting diverse participants
- Implementation schedule
- Student/Staff ratio and structure
- Process for evaluating program success

VTrans prefers to be a part of the student recruitment and selection process to help ensure program participants represent a diverse pool of students covering a spectrum of gender, age, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic standing, and other factors. *If Colleges/Universities are proposing a non-residential program and plan on offering lunch to the participants (to ensure all have equal access to nutritious food regardless of socio-economic status) they must clearly state this in their Statement of Work and their budget.*

VTrans will assist the selected Host Site with planning, arranging for speakers, field trips, partners and sponsors and will provide technical assistance and guidance.

National Summer Transportation Institute Program Application Checklist

Applicants are required to use the application forms provided on the Vermont NSTI website. Please use this checklist to ensure you have completed all steps before submitting your application package.

√	Checklist for Application Submission
	Contact Information
	Section A – Program Information
	Section B – Program Overview Narrative
	Section C – Program Administration Narrative and Budget Table responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative responses for #1 and #7
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses in MS Excel budget tables for items #2-6

VTrans reserves the right to seek clarification of any application submitted and to select the application considered to best promote the public interest.

All Applications become the property of VTrans upon submission. The cost of preparing, submitting and presenting an application is the sole expense of the College/University. VTrans reserves the right to reject any and all applications received as a result of this solicitation, to negotiate with any qualified source, to waive any formality and technicalities or to cancel this solicitation in part or in its entirety if it is in the best interests of VTrans. This solicitation of applications in no way obligates VTrans to award a grant.

All questions or requests for clarification related to this RFG shall be made in writing to the VTrans Point of Contact, And Morse, at And.Morse@vermont.gov.

And Morse
Civil Rights Program Manager