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PHMSA Offering \$2 Million in University Research Grants for Pipeline Safety Solutions

Grants Support Agency's Recruitment Efforts

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) today announced that it is offering \$2 million in grants for students and faculty at nonprofit institutions of higher education to research pipeline safety solutions – more than twice the amount awarded last year. In addition to funding potential transportation solutions, PHMSA offers the grants to expose new engineers and scientists to the technical side of the energy transportation sector, supporting the agency's recruitment efforts.

“The time is now to start investing in long-term safety innovations and retain a highly skilled, federal workforce,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “These grants will encourage students to use innovation and explore new ways to envision pipeline safety solutions for our transportation problems.”

[The agency is hiring more than 100 new employees this year](#), most of whom will serve as pipeline safety inspectors. The [Competitive Academic Agreement Program](#) (CAAP) supports the agency's oversight of the nation's exponentially growing energy production and transportation, and helps address the need for new technically trained federal employees.

Launched in 2013, the CAAP has grown based on previous student accomplishments and university interest. To date, PHMSA has awarded more than \$1.5 million to nearly 80 students' multi-year research projects. This year's applicants may receive up to \$300,000 for their proposed studies. The awards are partially matched by non-federal funding.

A third of the federal workforce will be eligible to retire by 2017, [according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office](#).

“We're not simply offering grants through the Competitive Academic Agreement Program; we're demonstrating to engineering and technical students that their disciplines are in demand in

the energy pipeline sector,” said PHMSA Acting Administrator Timothy Butters. “PHMSA provides safety oversight for the country’s 2.6-million-mile pipeline network, and we need out-of-the-box thinkers.”

At least 48 hours prior to submitting proposals, applicants should [register on PHMSA’s Research & Development website](#). Official grant applications are due via [Grants.gov](#) on Monday, May 18, 2015. Applicants without a Grants.gov login access should [request registration](#) at least two weeks ahead of the grant deadline.

In consultation with other federal and state officials as well as other stakeholders, PHMSA is specifically seeking projects that address technical gaps in the following areas:

- **Preventing and Mitigating Pipeline Corrosion** – What innovative new solutions can be proposed in chemical treatments or materials to prevent or manage on-shore hazardous liquid and/ or natural gas pipeline corrosion?
- **Developing Locatable Plastic Pipelines** – Excavation damage to buried pipelines can be prevented when professionals detect and mark buried utility lines; however, many plastic pipes can go undetected with current above-ground technology. Are there effective ways to add or insert electro/mechanical/metallic material to plastic pipes to make it locatable above-ground? How would you innovate above-ground technology to detect plastic pipes?
- **Developing Inspection Tools to Quantify Pipe Strength and Toughness** – How would you develop tools to accurately quantify pipeline strength and toughness which would allow pipeline operators to better understand and manage risks?

Proposals are evaluated on their scientific merit and quality as well as the feasibility of their management plans, work tasks, budgets and schedules. In the long run, PHMSA intends to adopt the most promising findings into its core research program for further investigation. For more information, potential applicants should read the full grant solicitation on [Grants.gov](#). Users can find the solicitation and announcement by searching with CFDA number 20.724 or Funding Opportunity Number DTPH5615SN0003.

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The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration develops and enforces regulations for the safe, reliable, and environmentally sound operation of the nation's 2.6 million mile pipeline transportation system and the nearly 1 million daily shipments of hazardous materials by land, sea, and air. Please visit <http://phmsa.dot.gov> for more information.