

2021-2022 PennDOT Innovations Challenge

Background

Public engagement is a vital component of PennDOT's transportation planning and project development efforts and is outlined in detail in [Publication 295](#). With the changing landscape of public engagement in transportation, PennDOT is continuously faced with the challenge of how to best bridge technology and generational gaps by integrating a variety of convenient and affordable public engagement tools to broaden its reach and ensure all demographics are engaged in the transportation planning and project development process.

Your Challenge

Taking Pennsylvania's diverse demographics into consideration, develop a comprehensive and cost-effective public engagement strategy, beyond the current public engagement procedures, outlining innovative technologies and tools that PennDOT can implement to more effectively engage and connect with all age groups during the transportation planning and project development process.

Your Award

The statewide winning team will be chosen from among regional winning teams across the state. Each PennDOT regional office's winning team members will receive certificates. The regional winners will be invited to present their innovative solutions to the PennDOT Secretary and a panel of judges, who will determine the statewide winner. The statewide winning team members will receive certificates as well as their school receiving a traveling trophy and permanent trophy engraved with the school's name.

In addition, the Transportation Policy and Education Foundation, an educational arm of the [Associated Pennsylvania Constructors](#) (APC) organization is providing an award of **\$2,500** to the statewide winning team.

Think you have an innovative solution? Give the PennDOT Innovations Challenge your best effort!

Project & Submission Guidelines

Students must work together in teams (**minimum of two up to a maximum of four individuals**) to develop their innovative solution that addresses the identified challenge.

To enter the challenge, teams must complete the [2021-2022 PennDOT Innovations Challenge Submission Form](#), which includes attaching a description of **no more than 750 words** outlining the innovative solution and its benefits. **Note:** Each team must identify a faculty adviser who will need to submit the form on the team's behalf.

The submissions will be reviewed by regional PennDOT offices and up to five teams will be invited to **present their solutions virtually** to a team of judges from the **PennDOT regional office** depending on where their school district is located. **Note:** If your team is selected as a regional finalist, a PowerPoint presentation (or similar presentation software), consisting of no more than 15 slides must be created. Presentations must be no longer than 15 minutes. In addition, models, diagrams, videos, and other visual aids or supporting materials can be used as part of your presentation to demonstrate your team's innovative solution to the PennDOT regional office judges.

Winners will be selected from the PennDOT regional offices; regional winners will move on to compete in the statewide competition, where one statewide winner will be selected.

The challenge is open to **Pennsylvania high school freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors** in public, private or charter schools, and homeschooled students. **Note:** PennDOT employees and their family members (siblings, children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews) are ineligible to enter.

Depending on circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the regional and statewide judging events may be held virtually versus in person.

Deadline

Submissions must be received by PennDOT's Bureau of Innovations by **11:59 PM on December 17, 2021**.

Process and Timeline

1. By **December 17, 2021, at 11:59 PM**, complete and submit the [2021-2022 PennDOT Innovations Challenge Submission Form](#) to PennDOT's Bureau of Innovations.
2. By **January 28, 2022**, PennDOT regional offices will review initial submissions, select up to five finalists and invite them to present their innovative solutions either in person or virtually to a panel of judges. **Note:** These presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes and include a PowerPoint (or similar presentation software), consisting of no more than 15 slides. Models, diagrams, videos, and other visual aids or supporting materials to demonstrate the team's innovative solution can be used as part of your presentation to demonstrate the team's innovative solution to the PennDOT regional office judges.
3. By **March 4, 2022**, PennDOT regional offices will select winners for the **statewide judging in April 2022** to present, either in person or virtually, their innovative solutions to the PennDOT Secretary and a panel of judges, who will determine the statewide winner.

Judging Criteria

- **Effectiveness – 10 points**
 - Does the solution holistically address the challenge (develop a comprehensive and cost-effective public engagement strategy, outlining innovative technologies and tools)?
 - Could the solution be used by PennDOT without substantial revisions?
 - Does the solution address a problem that can be solved with the technology that is available today or being discussed as possible within the next five to 10 years?
 - If applicable, does the solution include a proposal for continued operation after implementation?
- **Public Outreach and Benefits to the Community – 10 points**
 - Does the solution take Pennsylvania's diverse demographics into consideration?
 - Does the solution include more than one form of public outreach/public engagement?
 - Does the solution serve communities across Pennsylvania?
 - Does the solution improve communications and/or interactions between PennDOT and the communities during the transportation planning and project development process?

- **Cost-Effectiveness – 10 points**
 - Is the solution cost-effective?
 - Does the solution include measures to determine cost-effectiveness?
 - Does the proposed solution result in additional time savings or efficiencies as part of the public outreach effort during the transportation planning and project development process?

- **Innovation – 10 points**
 - Does the solution inspire transportation progress?
 - Does the solution introduce an original or advanced concept?
 - Does the solution introduce a new or advanced strategy, business model, etc.?

- **Presentation – 10 points**
 - Were the presentation materials submitted completely?
 - Is the solution presented in a captivating manner?
 - Is the solution presented with clarity and forethought?
 - Did the presenters discuss all aspects of the solution from formulation through execution?
 - Did the group members answer questions from the judges completely, logically, and personably?
 - Did the solution’s brief write-up contain a clear, complete, and well-organized summary of the project?

Resources

- [Project Level Public Involvement Handbook \(Publication 295\)](#)
- www.TalkPAtransportation.com
- [2020 Public Participation Plan \(Publication 823\)](#)
- [PennDOT Regional Offices](#)
- [Federal Highway Administration Public Involvement/Public Participation](#)

Contact Information

For questions or more information, email PennDOT’s Bureau of Innovations at DOTInnovations@pa.gov.