

# The California Local Technical Assistance Program



The California LTAP Center is based at the Center for International Trade & Transportation (CITT) at California State University Long Beach

*“We are keenly focused on expanding our Center’s reach and engagement and to be more receptive and responsive to the needs of a broader range of local public agencies in California, including those of underserved and disengaged smaller, rural, and tribal communities.”*

*— Tom O’Brien, Director, California LTAP*





# California Innovation: Building a Better Mousetrap

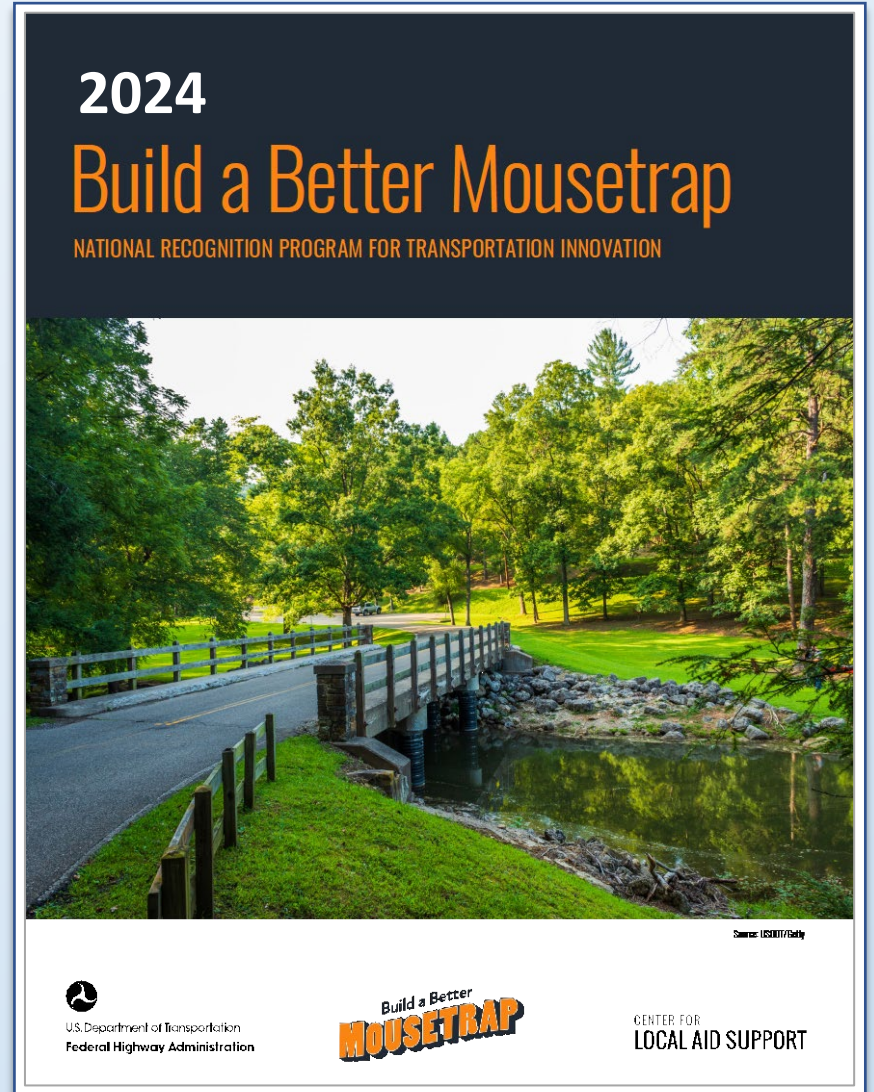




# The Build a Better Mousetrap Initiative

## Celebrating Local Innovation

- Spotlights transportation agency innovation
- Share solutions to everyday challenges that local & tribal transportation workers encounter
- Covers tool/equipment modifications or new processes that increase safety, reduce cost, and improve transportation system efficiency
- Statewide competition facilitated thru [CALTAP](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cla/caltap/)
- State winners advance to national competition
- <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cla/babm/>



# BABM in California: Our Statewide Contest

- Open to all California transportation agencies: state, local, and tribal
- Simple online application process  
<https://caltrans.brightidea.com/BuildaBetterMousetrap2024>
- Tell us about: the problem you solved, your approach, \$\$\$ or time saved, overall benefit/impact to community/agency
- Submission deadline: May 15<sup>th</sup>
- State winners receive free LTAP training, advance onward to national competition

## Application Categories

### **Innovative Project**

Addresses any part of project lifecycle in a way that makes it more effective or efficient

### **Bold Steps**

High-risk project/process that presents a break-through, high-reward solution

### **Smart Transformation**

“Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound” solution that improves efficiency

### **Pioneer**

Product/tool that’s first to solve a maintenance problem with a home-grown solution

# Last Year's National Winner: Walnut Creek

2023 BABM Winner

- The Challenge:  
Simplify checking the city's 100+ intersections for proper traffic signal sight distances
- The Idea:  
Use a dash-mounted smartphone to capture video while driving city streets, sync video to GPS for distance, validate signal imagery
- The Innovation:  
[Safe Sightings of Signs & Signals \(SSOSS\)](#), a low-cost, easy to replicate open-source solution
- The Impact:  
What took 15 to 45 min per intersection now takes one person a single day to complete



**Pioneer Award**  
WINNER  
City of Walnut Creek, CA

**Safe Sightings of Signs and Signals (SSOSS) Software**

Traffic signals are crucial to helping drivers properly and safely navigate the roadway system. They provide visual cues for when to stop, go, yield, giving the driver sufficient time to make informed decisions. When these traffic signals are obstructed in anyway, this can create major safety concerns. In Walnut Creek, California, traffic signal obstructions are a significant problem. The City of Walnut Creek, California, is addressing this issue by implementing the SSOSS software. Their Signal Sighting of Signs and Signals (SSOSS) software is an automated system that uses dash-mounted smartphones to capture video while driving city streets, sync video to GPS for distance, and validate signal imagery. This software-based system allows one person to check for obstructions at 350 approaches, providing clear insight about whether a signal is blocked or not. With this software-based system, all of our agency's intersections, about 350 approaches, can be checked for obstructions in a single day. This software-based system is a proactive approach to ensure traffic signals are visible to drivers, rather than a reactive approach that may leave traffic signals obstructed for longer than necessary."



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Congratulations to the City of Walnut Creek, CA for the innovative SSOSS software-based system. They are the Build a Better Mousetrap





## [It's Easy to Apply!](#)

1. Click “Submit an Innovation”
2. Register for a login (*email, password*)
3. Enter a catchy title, brief description
4. Provide your contact information
5. Upload a thumbnail image
6. Select an innovation category
7. Describe your development process
8. Upload 2 photos and a video if available

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# Build a Better Mousetrap 2024

A celebration of local transportation innovation  
2024 APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED

Submit an Innovation Browse Submitted Innovations

## BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP 2024

### BUILD A BETTER MOUSETRAP 2024

California's Local Technical Assistance Program ([CALTAP](#)), in partnership with the Caltrans Division of Research, Innovation & System Information ([DRISI](#)) and Division of Local Assistance ([DLA](#)), is excited to launch another year of FHWA's Build a Better Mousetrap ([BABM](#)) statewide competition.

Designed to celebrate local ingenuity on a national platform, BABM is a federally sponsored competition that recognizes agencies from across the country who are using innovation to solve transportation-related problems that improve job safety and efficiency.

Sponsor



<https://caltrans.brightidea.com/BuildaBetterMousetrap2024>

Last year, the [City of Walnut Creek](#) took the national contest by storm, bringing home the Pioneer Award for their automated approach to checking traffic signal sight distance with just a smartphone and laptop.



### TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Simply click the red "Submit an Innovation" button above, register to receive a login, then complete the online form as prompted. You can also view other agency submissions or check-out our sample application via the cyan "Browse Submitted Innovations" button.



# Have You Built a Better Mousetrap?

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## **BABM Support**

Scott Jakovich, CALTAP

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*Contact us if you have any questions or would like help submitting your application. Help us make California a national winner in 2024!*