POSITION DESCRIPTION

**ASSISTANT secretary for Research AND TECHNOLOGY, Department of Transportation**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the Department of Transportation is to serve the United States by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future. |
| Position Overview | The mission of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology(OST-R) is to transform transportation by expanding the base of knowledge to make America’s transportation system safer, more competitive and sustainable by:* Advancing innovation, technology development and breakthrough knowledge
* Conducting research and facilitating multimodal research collaboration
* Fostering technology transfer through partnerships within the department and with other partners
* Providing useful information and statistics to decision makers as they debate policies
* Developing a highly-skilled interdisciplinary transportation workforce for the nation

OST-R is the science, research and intellectual property coordinator for the Department of Transportation. It is a dynamic, world-class transportation resource with broad technical and institutional expertise not replicated elsewhere. |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5313)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Transportation |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | OST-R is part of the Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST). It comprises all the program offices and statistics and research activities previously administered by the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, which was transferred into OST by Congress in January 2014. The transfer was made to provide opportunities for increased research collaboration and coordination, uphold the integrity and impartiality of transportation statistical data and ensure that research activities and budgetary resources across the department are fully aligned with the department’s strategic goals and key interest areas. The following officials report to the assistant secretary for research and technology: * Director of the Intelligent Transportation System Joint Program Office
* Director of the Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing Coordination Office
* Director of the Transportation Safety Institute
* Director of the Office of Research, Development and Technology
* Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics
* Director of the Office of Technology Policy and Outreach
* Director of the Volpe National Transportation System Center
* Director of the Positioning, Navigation and Timing and Spectrum Management
* Deputy Director of the Office of Quality, Performance, and Oversight
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| Primary Responsibilities | OST-R is responsible for facilitating and reviewing the department’s research, development and technology portfolio as well as enhancing the data collection and statistical analysis programs to support data-driven decision making. OST-R is also responsible for positioning, navigation and timing (PNT) technology, PNT policy coordination and spectrum management, and it is the program manager for the Nationwide Differential Global Positioning System. OST-R oversees and provides direction to the following programs and activities: * The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), which manages and shares statistical knowledge and information on the nation’s transportation systems, including statistics on freight movement, geospatial transportation information and transportation economics. BTS is funded by an allocation from the Federal Highway Administration’s Federal-Aid Highways account.
* The Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office, which facilitates the deployment of technology to enhance the safety, efficiency, convenience and environmental sustainability of surface transportation. The ITS program carries out its goals through research and development, operational testing, technology transfer, training and technical guidance. The ITS Research Program is currently funded through the Federal Highway Administration.
* The University Transportation Centers (UTC), which advance U.S. technology and expertise in many transportation-related disciplines through grants for transportation education, research and technology transfer at university-based centers of excellence. The UTC Program funding is provided to OST-R through an allocation from the Federal Highway Administration.
* The National Transportation Library, which provides national and international access to transportation information, coordinates information creation and dissemination, and provides reference services for department employees and stakeholders.
* The Transportation Safety Institute (TSI), a fee-for service organization that operates without a direct appropriation and supports the Department of Transportation’s goal to reduce transportation-related deaths and injuries through quality instruction to those entrusted with enforcement and committed to compliance. TSI provides training to federal, state and local governmental, private sector and foreign transportation professionals on a cost-recovery basis.
* The Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, a unique federal agency that is 100 percent funded by sponsor projects and partners with public and private organizations to assess the needs of the transportation community, evaluate research and development endeavors, assist in the deployment of state-of-the-art transportation technologies and inform decision and policy making through comprehensive analyses.
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Experience with private-public partnerships
* Understanding of technology transfer
* Comprehensive understanding of transportation and/or energy policy
* Extensive understanding of complex systems
* Experience managing large organizations
* Background or experience in federal budgeting, acquisition and workforce management
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| Competencies | * Strong interpersonal and communication skills
* Ability to work under high pressure
* Ability to integrate large and distributed missions and organizations
* Ability to handle sensitive matters
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Sophie Shulman (Acting) (2016 to 2017) – Senior Policy Advisor, Office of the Secretary, Department of Transportation; Deputy Chief of Staff, Domestic Policy Council; [Deputy Press Secretary and Executive Secretary, Domestic Policy Council](https://www.linkedin.com/title/deputy-press-secretary-and-executive-secretary%2C-domestic-policy-council?trk=mprofile_title) |
| Gregory D. Winfree (2014 to 2016) – [Chief Litigation Counsel](https://www.linkedin.com/title/chief-litigation-counsel?trk=mprofile_title), Freeport-McMoran, Cooper&Gold; Director of Litigation; [Wyeth Pharmaceuticals](https://www.linkedin.com/company/1185?trk=prof-exp-company-name); Senior Litigation Counsel, Union Carbide; Trial Attorney, U.S. Department of Justice; Litigation Associate, Venable, Baetier, Howard & Civiletti |

# Endnotes

This position description was created with the help of MITRE Corporation, a not-for-profit company that provides innovative, practical solutions for some of the nation's most critical challenges in defense and intelligence, aviation, civil systems, homeland security, the judiciary, health care and cybersecurity.

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)