

ARPA-I Ideas Challenge Stage 2— Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

March 13, 2026

- 1) Q: If a Stage 1 winning proposal was submitted with an individual as the Team Lead, could the Stage 2 application be submitted with an entity affiliated with that individual (e.g., a university, a company) as the Team Lead instead of the individual?**

A: No. Only Stage 1 winning Team Leads are eligible Team Leads for Stage 2.

- 2) Q: If a winning Stage 2 applicant wants prize money to be distributed to other entities or individuals that are members of the team, will U.S. DOT do that?**

A: No. If selected as a winner in Stage 2, the prize will be paid to the Team Lead and any further distribution between team members will be up to the Team Lead.

- 3) Q: Can the composition of a Stage 1 winning team change for Stage 2?**

A: Yes, as long as the Team Lead remains the same and all team members (both entities and individuals) each comply with the respective eligibility criteria for individuals and entities, including the restriction that they may only participate as a member of one Stage 2 team.

- 4) Q: Can Stage 2 teams make changes to team composition after submitting the Stage 2 application?**

A: No.

5) Q: Can Stage 1 winning teams, including individuals or entities from those teams, continue to engage with panelists from the Stage 1 Bootcamp event during Stage 2?

A: Yes, unless the panelists are from USDOT and are directly involved in the Stage 2 evaluation. Any Stage 1 Bootcamp panelists from USDOT who will participate in the Stage 2 evaluation will be instructed to terminate contact with applicants until Stage 2 is over.

6) Q: Is there a required Technology Readiness Level (TRL) or target TRL that ARPA-I expects for projects proposed in Stage 2?

A: No.

Draft Email to Stage 1 Winners

Subject: ARPA-I Ideas Challenge Stage 2 - Webinar Recording and FAQs

U.S. DOT ARPA-I Ideas Challenge Stage 1 Winners,

We are eagerly anticipating your Stage 2 applications. Please remember that the first deadline is April 13, 2026 at 5pm ET, for most application materials. Pitch Videos and transcripts are due the following week on April 20, 2026 at 5pm ET. Please see the [Challenge document](#) for all official rules.

We held an informational webinar on March 2 at 3pm ET. We hope that you were able to attend. You can access a recording of the webinar using the link and passcode below.

[Webinar Recording](#)

Passcode (period included): B@&QY1g.

We received a few questions that were not answered during the webinar, or were submitted via email afterwards. Please see below for a short Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) with answers to these questions. Please always refer to the Challenge document for official rules and requirements. You can continue to follow-up with us at ideas.ARPA-I@dot.gov if you have additional questions.

[insert text of FAQs from above]

Regards,

The ARPA-I Team