



U.S. Department
of Transportation

How to Apply for an FY24 Stage 1 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant

May 28th, 2024

The SMART logo, where the letters 'S', 'M', and 'A' are in white, and the 'R' is a stylized graphic composed of a blue triangle and a green triangle. The letters 'T' and 'R' are also in white.

SMART

Audio

- To listen via computer:
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- All participants automatically join on mute and with cameras off
- **This webinar is being recorded. The recording will be posted to the SMART website.**

Technical Support

- Email webconference@dot.gov

Questions for Presenters

- Please type your questions into the Q&A box at the bottom of your screen. We will answer them at the end of the presentation.

Website

- For more information, please visit <https://www.transportation.gov/SMART>
- Subscribe to receive email updates on the SMART program

Agenda

1. SMART Program Overview
2. Program Structure & Details
3. FY23 Cohort Overview & Lessons Learned
4. Applying for a SMART Grant
5. Application Resources
6. Q&A

Today's Presenters



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U.S. Department of Transportation



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U.S. Department of Transportation

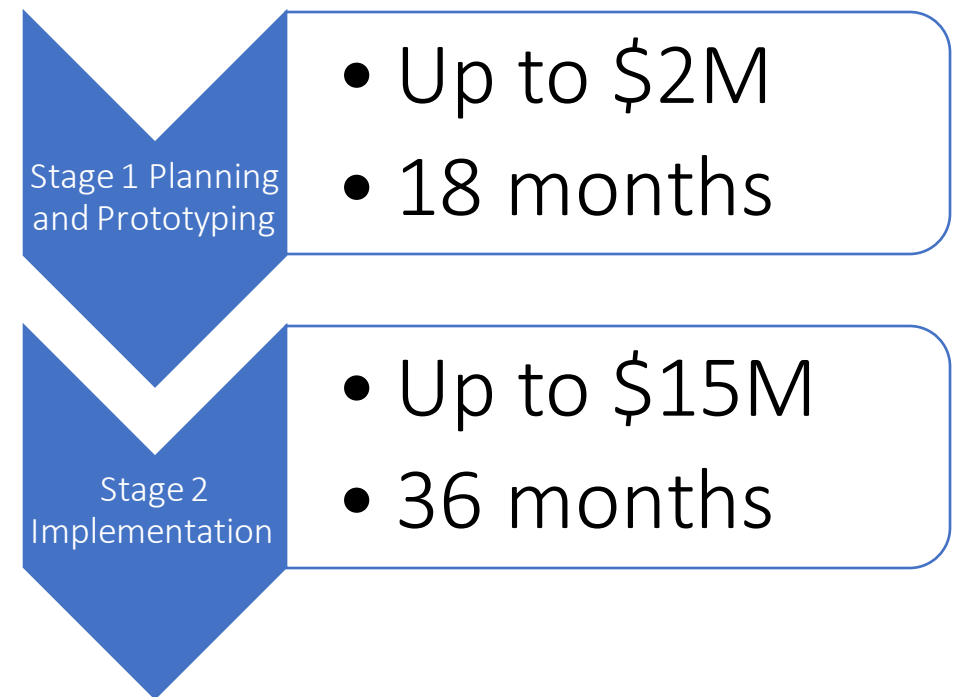


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SMART Grants Program Overview

Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART)

- SMART is a grant program created under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to fund demonstration projects focused on **advanced smart city or community technologies and systems**.
- Provides up to **\$100M annually** from FY2022 – 2026 to eligible projects
- SMART is a **two-stage program**. Only Stage 1 projects can apply for Stage 2.



Stage 1 SMART Grants NOFO Open

- The application window for the FY24 Stage 1 NOFO is [now open](#).
- To view the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), go to [click here](#). The NOFO is [also posted on Grants.gov](#). **USDOT anticipates this will be the final Stage 1 NOFO of the SMART Grants Program.**
- For more information on applying, see the resources under [How to Apply](#).
- USDOT anticipates this will be the **final year to apply for Stage 1**.

SMART Stage 1, FY24

1

This NOFO is open to Stage 1 applications.



DOT anticipates selecting up to 30 Stage 1 grants from the FY24 NOFO for award.



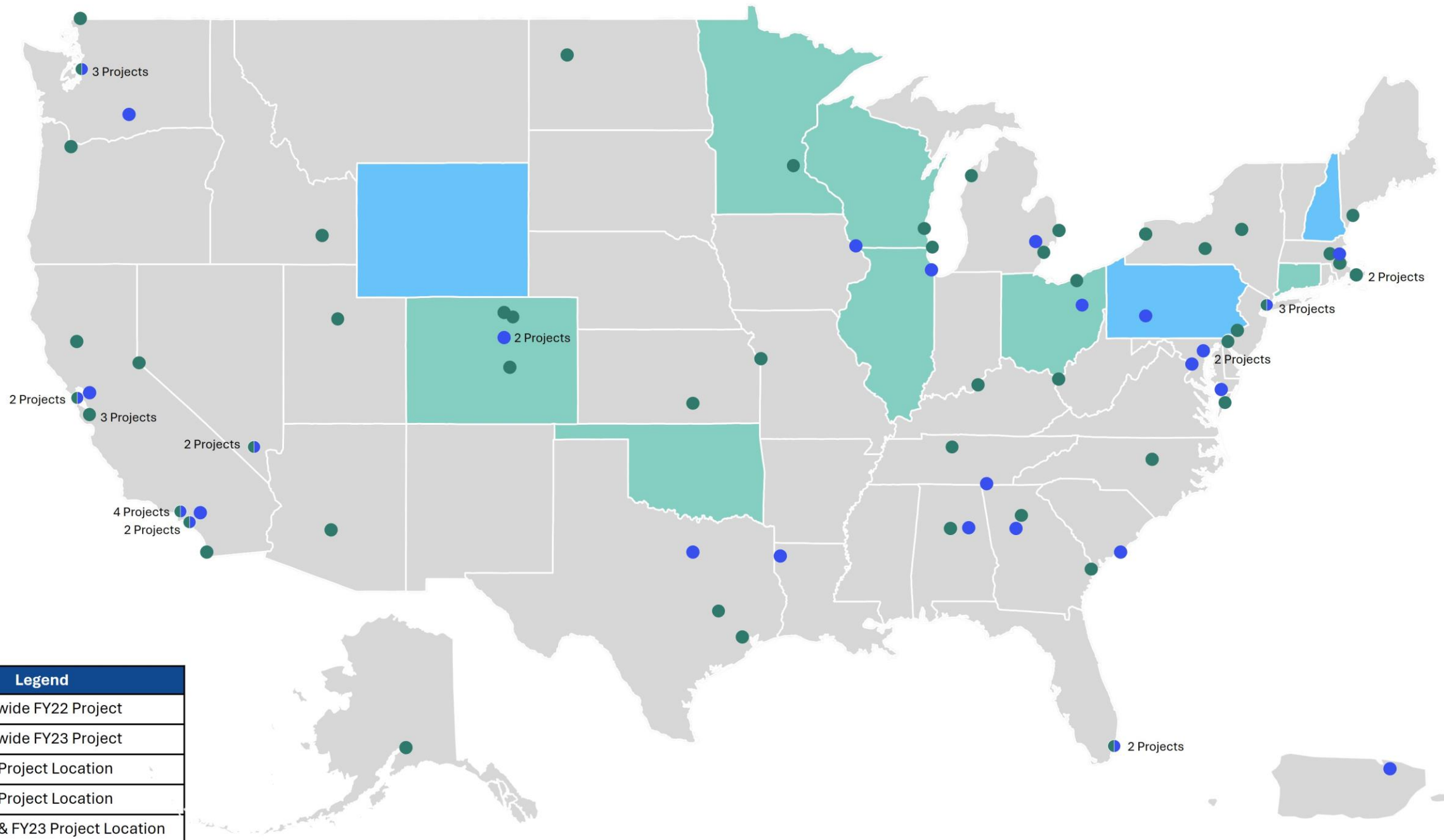
The NOFO opened on 05/13/2024 and will close at 5:00PM ET on 7/12/2024.

SMART Applications & Awards by the Numbers

SMART Applications			
	FY22	FY23	Total
# Applications	389	321	710
Funding Requested	\$570M	\$483M	\$1.05B
States Represented	49 + D.C.	48 + D.C., P.R.	50 + D.C., P.R.

SMART Awards			
	FY22	FY23	Total
# Awards	59 (15%)	34 (10%)	93 (13%)
Funding Awarded	\$94M (16.5%)	\$54M (11%)	\$148M (14%)
States Represented	33	22+ D.C., P.R.	39+ D.C., P.R.

Map of all SMART Projects





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SMART Grants Program Structure & Details

What type of organization do you represent?

- State government
- Local government
- Tribal government
- Federal government
- Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Nonprofit Organization or Academic Institution
- Public Transit Agency or Authority
- Airport or Port Authority
- Technology Vendor or Manufacturer/Consultant
- Other

Did your organization apply for an FY23 SMART Grant last year?

- Yes, my organization was a lead applicant
- Yes, my organization was a partner on an application
- Neither

Overview: Eligible Entities

Eligible applicants for the SMART Grants Program include:

- A. a State;
- B. a political subdivision of a State;
- C. a federally recognized Tribal government;
- D. a public transit agency or authority;
- E. a public toll authority;
- F. a metropolitan planning organization; or
- G. a group of two or more eligible entities listed above in Section C.1 applying through a single lead applicant (Group Application).

*The NOFO includes a **Collaborative Application** option in which eligible entities may choose to collaborate across different regions or geographies on similar projects that are **submitted in separate applications by each eligible applicant**. These projects may address similar problems and with similar technologies or potentially share common resources such as partnerships with industry, nonprofits, academic institutions, or community foundations.*



Are universities and academic institutions eligible applicants?

No. However, eligible applicants may choose to partner with universities and academic institutions.

What is the role of partners?

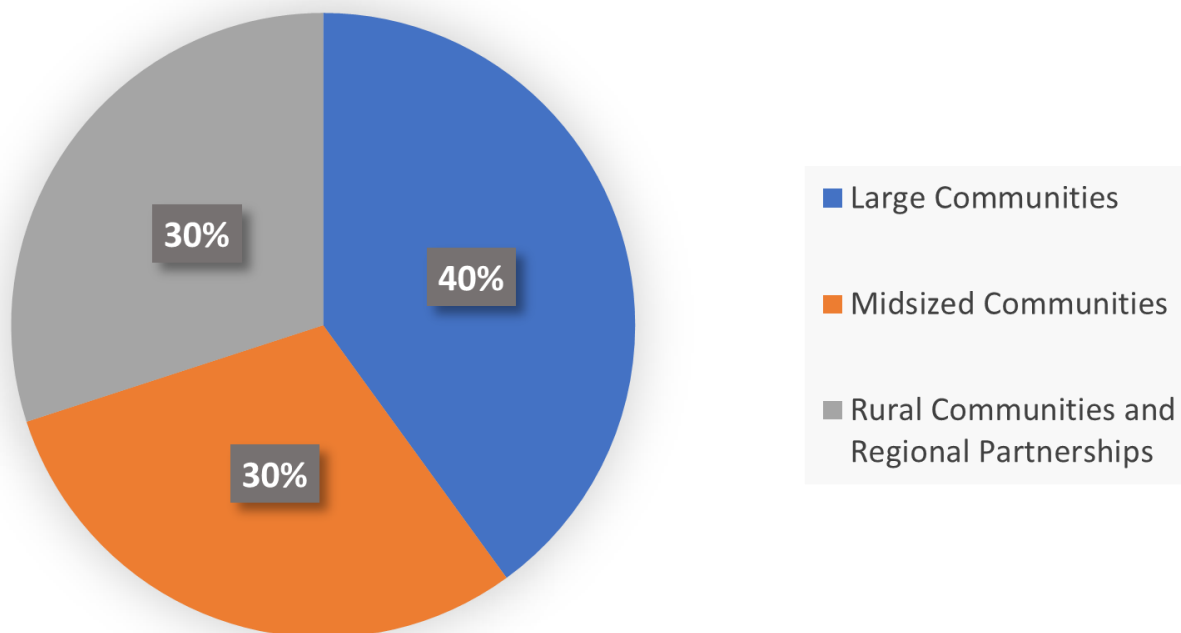
Partners are organizations that will not directly apply to the program as an eligible applicant, but they are committed to supporting a SMART Grants proposal in a meaningful way.

Who can be a partner?

Partners could include other eligible applicant types, and/or academic institutions, non-profit partners, state and local government agencies, utility providers, labor organizations, workforce organizations, or private sector organizations.

Geographic Priorities

SMART Funds Distribution, per BIL



BIL, SEC. 25005 (a):

(3) **Large community.**--The term ``large community'' means a community with a population of not less than 400,000 individuals, as determined under the most recent annual estimate of the Bureau of the Census.

(4) **Midsized community.**--The term ``midsized community'' means any community that is not a large community or a rural community.

(5) **Regional partnership.**--The term ``regional partnership'' means a partnership composed of 2 or more eligible entities located in jurisdictions with a combined population that is equal to or greater than the population of any midsized community.

(6) **Rural community.**--The term ``rural community'' means a community that is located in an area that is outside of an urbanized area (as defined in section 5302 of title 49, United States Code).



Program Structure

The structure is a **two-stage program**.

- Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping Grant: \$250,000 to \$2 million over 18 months
- Stage 2 Implementation Grant: up to \$15 million over 36 months

This NOFO is open to Stage 1 applications.

STAGE 1:

- Proof-of-concept
- Build & strengthen partnerships
- Move quickly and demonstrate capacity

STAGE 2:

- Scale prototypes to demonstrate benefits to community
 - Capture lessons learned
 - Evaluate benefits
- Work towards key performance indicators

BEYOND:

- Plan for widespread deployment of successful demonstrations

SMART Grants Program Values

The SMART Grants Program:



Funds
Demonstration
Projects



Addresses Real
World
Challenges



Aims for
Purpose Driven
Innovation



Builds Local
Technology
Capacity

More at www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-illustrative-use-cases

SMART Program Eligible Activities

Eight technology areas:

- Coordinated automation
- Connected vehicles
- Sensors
- Systems integration
- Delivery / logistics
- Innovative aviation
- Smart grid
- Traffic signals

Considerations across technology areas:

- Applicants should focus on **one or two technology areas**. They should not attempt to cover all areas in their proposals.
- Applicants will be **required to comply with applicable laws and regulations**, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and FAA regulations.
- Applicants should:
 - Address identified policy barriers
 - Clearly address data requirements
 - Consider workforce capacity building

Eligible Costs

- Planning
- Feasibility analyses
- Revenue forecasting
- Environmental review
- Permitting
- Preliminary engineering and design work
- Systems development or information
- Technology work
- Acquisition of real property
- Construction
- Reconstruction
- Rehabilitation
- Replacement
- Environmental Mitigation
- Construction Contingencies
- Acquisition of equipment, including vehicles

Note: All of these costs are eligible for Stage 1.

Overview: Prohibited Uses

A SMART grant shall **not** be used for the following:



To reimburse any pre-award costs or application preparation costs of the SMART grant application



For any traffic or parking enforcement activity



To purchase or lease a license plate reader

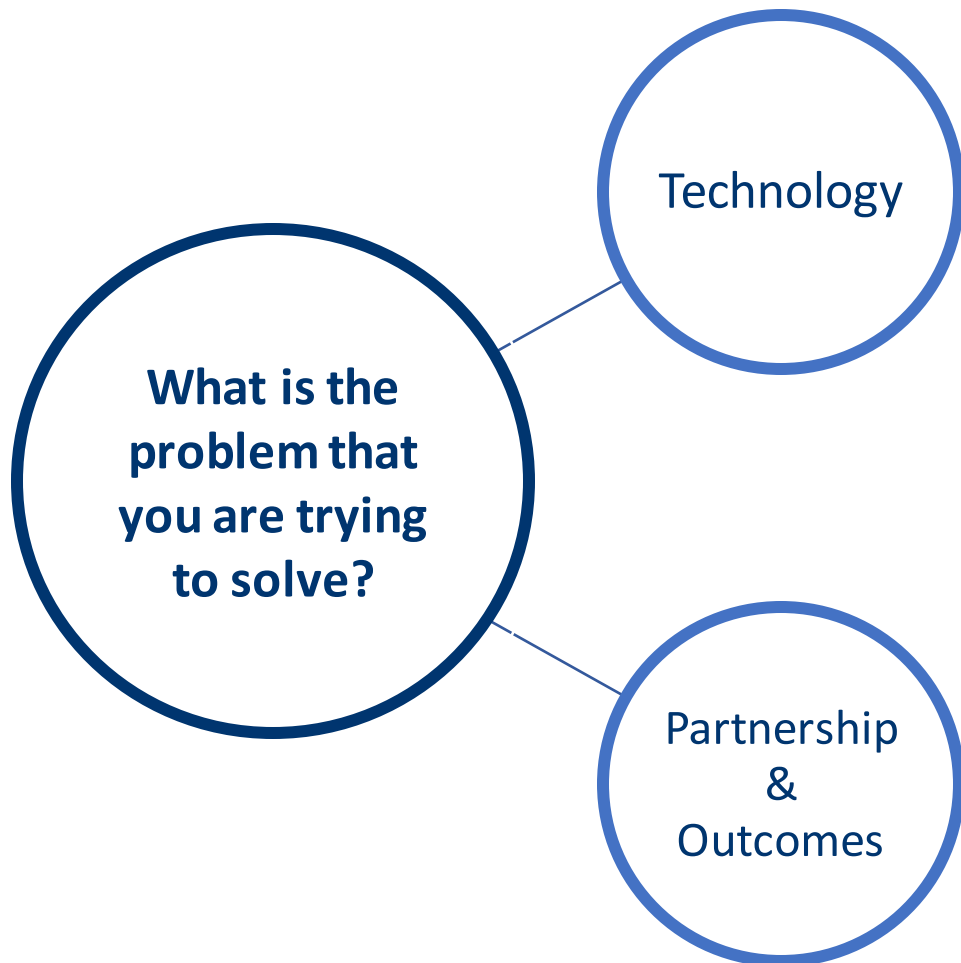
Do you intend to submit a SMART Grants application?

- Yes, as a lead applicant
- I plan to participate as a partner
- No
- I am not sure yet

What technology area does your potential project cover?

- Coordinated automation
- Connected vehicles
- Intelligent, sensor-based infrastructure
- Systems integration
- Commerce delivery and logistics
- Leveraging use of innovative aviation technology
- Smart grid
- Smart technology traffic signals
- I am not sure yet

Questions to Think About



- Is this technology an effective solution for an issue that your community faces?
- Will the technology deployment address a known problem?
- Will the technology deployment lead to a significant improvement over existing conditions?
- What obstacles existed in the past to implement these technologies?
- What partnerships exist or could exist?
- Can you complete your project in a reasonable timeframe?
- Will this project generate significant public benefits, and who will benefit from this project?
- How does your project address climate, equity, and safety priorities?



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FY 2023 Overview and Lessons Learned

Successful Applications: Lessons Learned

Applications that were Successful for Stage 1 Grants Demonstrated the Following:

- **Alignment with Program Structure:** Stage 1 activities would result in a prototype or deployment. The proposal provides a vision for Stage 2.
- **Purpose-Driven Innovation:** The project targeted specific existing problems; there was a clear reason for using the chosen technology to solve the problem; the project accounted for equity and policy considerations.
- **Transformational Approach:** The project leveraged existing technology through demonstration projects and innovative approaches.
- **Benefit to Community:** The applications demonstrated a clear context for the type of project; the project was rooted in the vulnerabilities of the applicant's own transportation system.
- **Alignment with Department and Program Priorities:** The applications clearly articulate a rationale for expected benefits that further Departmental and Program priorities (section A, part 3 of the NOFO)



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Applying for a SMART Grant

FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity

- The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) contains the instructions for developing and submitting a SMART Grant application.
- Applicants are encouraged to read the NOFO in its entirety.
- The NOFO can be found at Grants.gov using Opportunity Number #DOT-SMART-FY24-01.
- A copy of the NOFO can also be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/fy23-smart-stage-1-notice-funding-opportunity-nofo>
- Application Deadline: **5:00 PM ET on Friday July 12th, 2024.**
- **No matching funds are required for SMART Stage 1 Grants**

Changes from FY23 NOFO

- Section D.2 asks applicants to provide the Lead Applicant City, State, Zip Code, and County (Questions #3, #4, #5, and #6).
- Section D.2 asks applicants to provide a One Sentence Description and provides further detail on what should be included in the Brief Project Description (Questions #14 and #15).
- Section D.2 provides further considerations for determining the Size of Community Receiving Benefit (Question #19).
- Section D.2 adds Cambridge, MA, as a potential location for required in-person meetings.
- Section E.1 asks applicant to include consideration for transportation insecurity when outlining the project's Expected Benefits (Technical Merit Criterion #3).
- Section F.3 describes the requirements of a data management plan.
- Section F.4 adds guidelines and requirements for grant recipients employing project signage and public acknowledgements.

Unique Entity Identifiers

- All applicants will need to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) through GSA to apply for grant opportunities in grants.gov.
- On April 4, 2022 the federal government stopped using Dun & Bradstreet's proprietary Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) to identify contractors and grantees and began exclusively using the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).
- The process of obtaining a UEI can take **up to a month**, so applicants are encouraged to apply for the UEI now. If you previously had a DUNS number that you used at SAM.gov, your UEI has already been created and is available to view in SAM.gov.
- For more information, see <https://sam.gov/>.

Required Application Materials

1. Standard Forms

- a. Standard Form 424 (Application for Federal Assistance)
- b. Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)
- c. Certification Regarding Lobbying
- d. If applicable, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL).

2. Key Information Questions

3. Project Narrative

- Should not exceed 7 pages, not including optional cover page and optional table of contents
- Sections include: Overview/Project Description, Project Location, Community Impact, Technical Merit Overview, Project Readiness Overview

4. Appendices

- Resumes*
- Budget Narrative*
- Letters of Commitment
- Project Location File**

Full details can be found in Section D of the NOFO.

*These appendices are required
**This appendix is highly encouraged

Spotlight: Project Narrative and Appendices

3. Project Narrative

- Should not exceed 7 pages.
- Sections include:
 - Overview/Project Description
 - Project Location
 - Community Impact
 - Technical Merit Overview
 - Project Readiness Overview

4. Appendices - required

- Resumes
- Summary Budget Narrative
- Project Location File (*strongly encouraged*)
- Letters of Commitment (*optional*)

- **Technical Merit**
 - Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved
 - Appropriateness of Proposed Solution
 - Expected Benefits
- **Project Readiness**
 - Feasibility of Workplan
 - Community Engagement and Partnerships
 - Leadership and Qualifications
- **Additional Consideration: Benefit to Historically Disadvantaged Communities**

Letters of Commitment (Optional)

What are they?

- Statements describing commitments from a critical project partner.
- Commitments could include:
 - Financial support
 - Technical assistance
 - Independent evaluation process
 - Training programs
 - Research collaborations
 - Policy changes

Who can provide them?

- Universities and other educational institutions
- Non-profit partners
- State and local agencies
- Utility providers
- Private sector organizations

How should they be developed?

Letters of Commitment should:

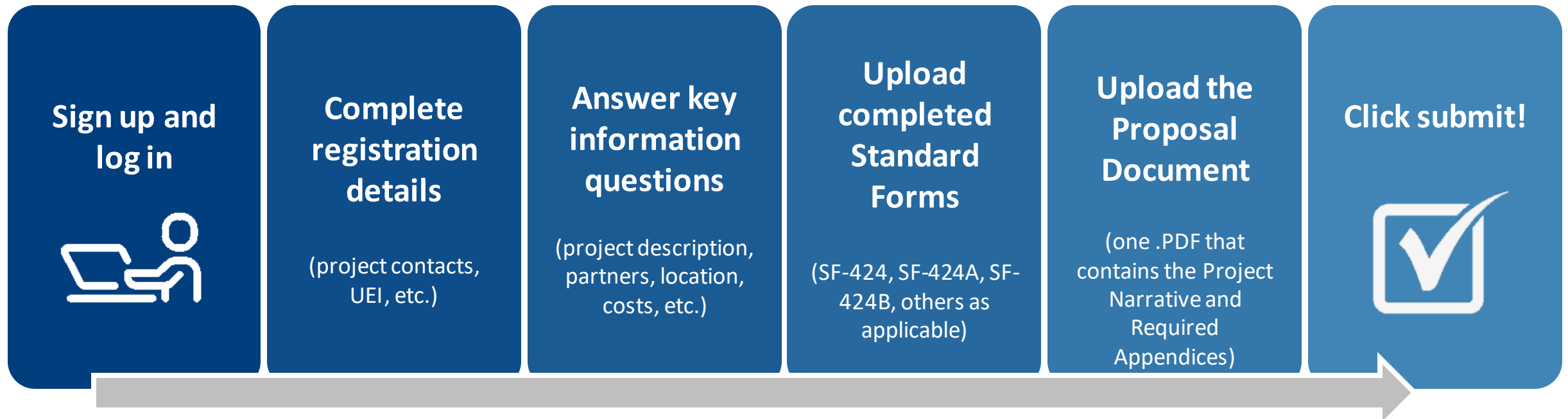
- Be 2 pages or less.
- Describe specific, measurable commitments.
- Explain the tangible benefits that will be generated by the commitment.
- Focus on quality over quantity.

To reduce the burden for applicants, the Stage 1: Planning and Prototyping Grant application does not request Letters of Support.

View the Letter of Commitment Template at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-letters-commitment-template>

Where to Submit the Application

All application materials must be submitted through ValidEval, an online submission proposal system used by USDOT, at
https://usg.valideval.com/teams/USDOT_SMART_2024/signup.



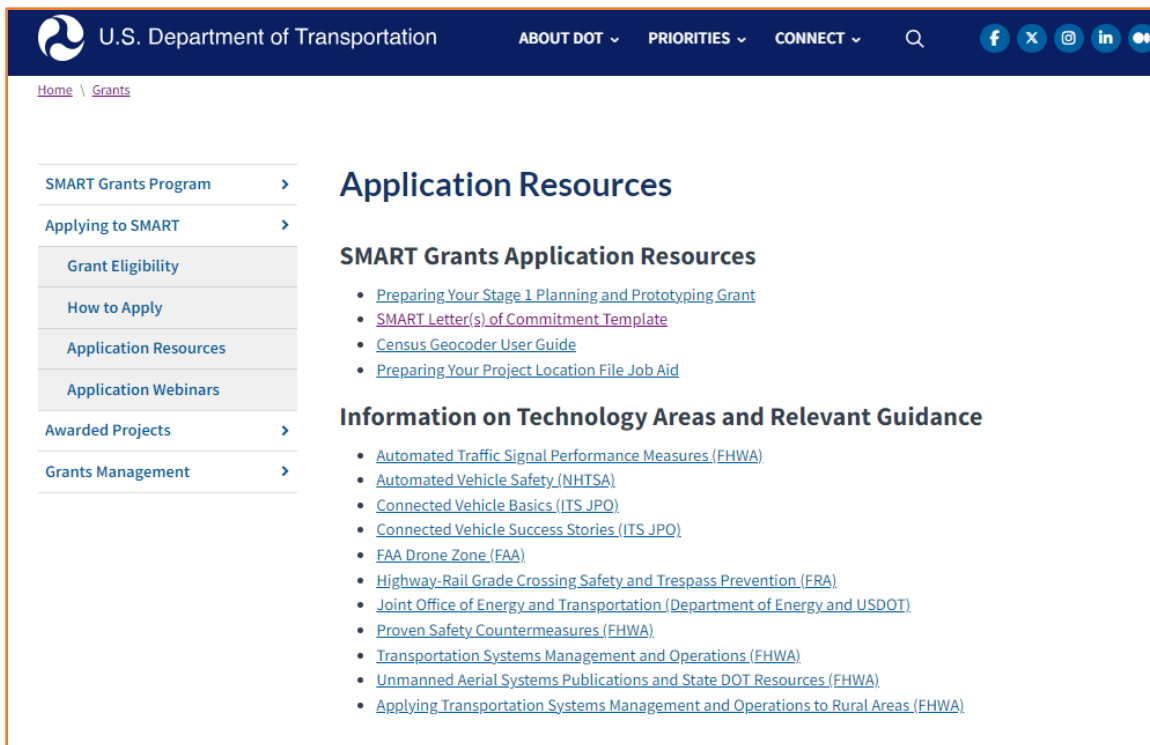
Do not submit your application any other way. Only Valid Eval submissions will be reviewed.



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Application Resources

SMART Resources Webpage



The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of Transportation website's SMART Resources page. The header includes the DOT logo, navigation links (ABOUT DOT, PRIORITIES, CONNECT), a search icon, and social media icons. The breadcrumb trail is 'Home > Grants'. A left sidebar contains a menu with 'SMART Grants Program', 'Applying to SMART', 'Grant Eligibility', 'How to Apply', 'Application Resources', 'Application Webinars', 'Awarded Projects', and 'Grants Management'. The main content area is titled 'Application Resources' and features two sections: 'SMART Grants Application Resources' with links to 'Preparing Your Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping Grant', 'SMART Letter(s) of Commitment Template', 'Census Geocoder User Guide', and 'Preparing Your Project Location File Job Aid'; and 'Information on Technology Areas and Relevant Guidance' with links to 'Automated Traffic Signal Performance Measures (FHWA)', 'Automated Vehicle Safety (NHTSA)', 'Connected Vehicle Basics (ITS JPO)', 'Connected Vehicle Success Stories (ITS JPO)', 'FAA Drone Zone (FAA)', 'Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention (FRA)', 'Joint Office of Energy and Transportation (Department of Energy and USDOT)', 'Proven Safety Countermeasures (FHWA)', 'Transportation Systems Management and Operations (FHWA)', 'Unmanned Aerial Systems Publications and State DOT Resources (FHWA)', and 'Applying Transportation Systems Management and Operations to Rural Areas (FHWA)'.

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ABOUT DOT ▾ PRIORITIES ▾ CONNECT ▾

Home > Grants

SMART Grants Program >

Applying to SMART >

Grant Eligibility

How to Apply

Application Resources

Application Webinars

Awarded Projects >

Grants Management >

Application Resources

SMART Grants Application Resources

- [Preparing Your Stage 1 Planning and Prototyping Grant](#)
- [SMART Letter\(s\) of Commitment Template](#)
- [Census Geocoder User Guide](#)
- [Preparing Your Project Location File Job Aid](#)

Information on Technology Areas and Relevant Guidance

- [Automated Traffic Signal Performance Measures \(FHWA\)](#)
- [Automated Vehicle Safety \(NHTSA\)](#)
- [Connected Vehicle Basics \(ITS JPO\)](#)
- [Connected Vehicle Success Stories \(ITS JPO\)](#)
- [FAA Drone Zone \(FAA\)](#)
- [Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespass Prevention \(FRA\)](#)
- [Joint Office of Energy and Transportation \(Department of Energy and USDOT\)](#)
- [Proven Safety Countermeasures \(FHWA\)](#)
- [Transportation Systems Management and Operations \(FHWA\)](#)
- [Unmanned Aerial Systems Publications and State DOT Resources \(FHWA\)](#)
- [Applying Transportation Systems Management and Operations to Rural Areas \(FHWA\)](#)

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/application-resources>

Project Location File Job Aid



Preparing your Project Location File

PURPOSE OF THIS JOB AID

- This job aid will provide applicants with step-by-step instructions on how to create a project location file for the Appendix IV: Project Location File section of the FY2023 SMART Grants application.
- This file will be used in coordination with other parts of the SMART Grants application. It will help the SMART Grants Program team better understand the location(s) of the project as well as the disadvantaged community designations described in the Key Information Questions and Project Narrative sections of the SMART Grants application.
- Acceptable file types are Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ. This file must be uploaded to Valid Eval along with the other required application components.
- Applicants can only submit one project location file as part of their application. This can be a zipped file.
- Applicants may use any GIS software or a publicly available online mapping tool, for example, [Google Earth](#) or [GEOJSON](#).

REQUIREMENTS

- Internet connection
- Internet browser (such as Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, or Firefox)
- A list of your project's location(s)
 - › Please be as specific as possible about project location(s). Example scenarios are listed on Page 2 of this job aid.

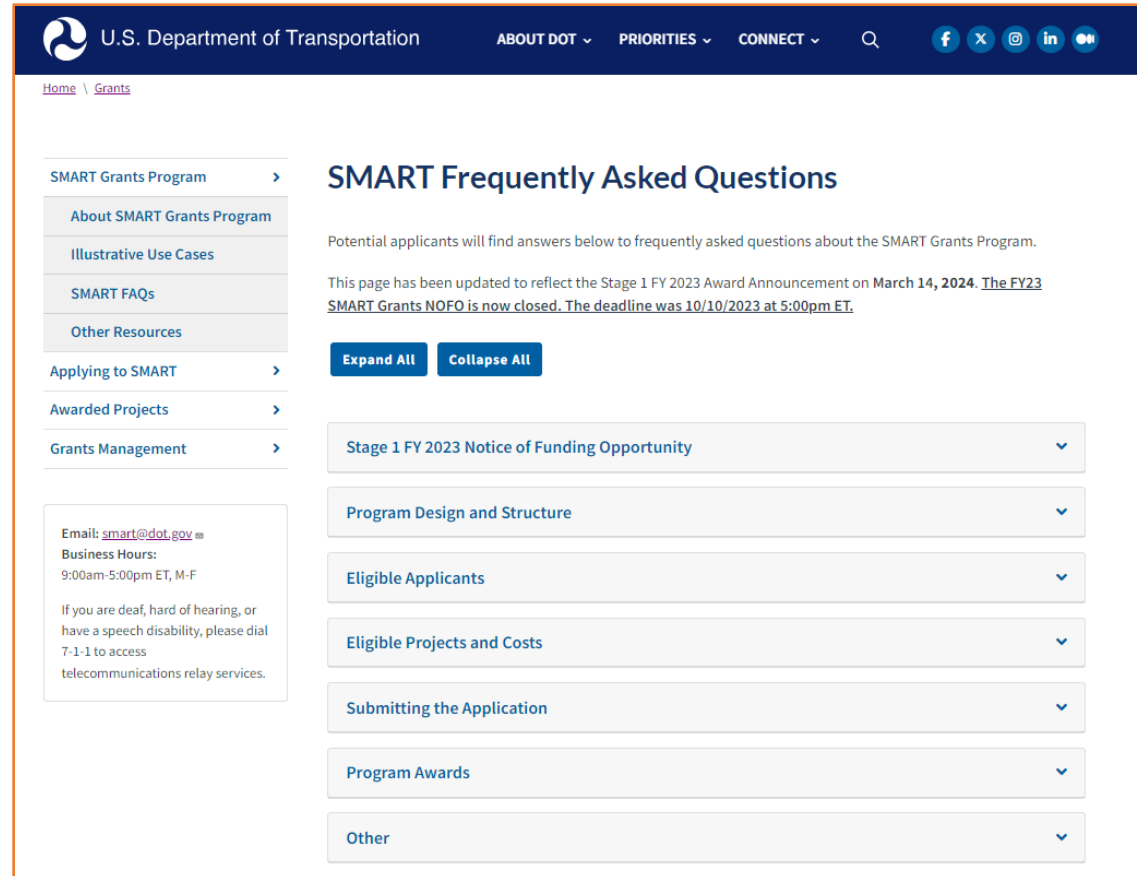
ABOUT THIS JOB AID

- USDOT does not have a preferred GIS software. Applicants may use any software that can produce a Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ. For the purposes of this Job Aid, Google Earth and Google Chrome will be used. USDOT does not specifically endorse Google. This is just one example of how an applicant could create a project location file.
- The screenshots and icons taken from Google are for informational purposes only and are not an endorsement of Google Maps nor an indication of any partnership with Google.

1

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/preparing-your-project-location-file-job-aid>

Visit our Frequently Asked Questions Page



The screenshot shows the U.S. Department of Transportation website's SMART Frequently Asked Questions page. The header includes the DOT logo, navigation links (ABOUT DOT, PRIORITIES, CONNECT), a search icon, and social media icons. The breadcrumb trail shows 'Home' and 'Grants'. A left sidebar contains a 'SMART Grants Program' menu with sub-links: 'About SMART Grants Program', 'Illustrative Use Cases', 'SMART FAQs', and 'Other Resources'. Below this are expandable sections for 'Applying to SMART', 'Awarded Projects', and 'Grants Management'. A contact box provides the email 'smart@dot.gov', business hours (9:00am-5:00pm ET, M-F), and accessibility information. The main content area is titled 'SMART Frequently Asked Questions' and includes an introductory paragraph, a notice about the Stage 1 FY 2023 Award Announcement, and a list of expandable FAQ topics: 'Stage 1 FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity', 'Program Design and Structure', 'Eligible Applicants', 'Eligible Projects and Costs', 'Submitting the Application', 'Program Awards', and 'Other'. 'Expand All' and 'Collapse All' buttons are located above the list.

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ABOUT DOT ▾ PRIORITIES ▾ CONNECT ▾

Home \ Grants

SMART Grants Program ▾

- About SMART Grants Program
- Illustrative Use Cases
- SMART FAQs
- Other Resources

Applying to SMART ▾

Awarded Projects ▾

Grants Management ▾

Email: smart@dot.gov
Business Hours:
9:00am-5:00pm ET, M-F

If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

SMART Frequently Asked Questions

Potential applicants will find answers below to frequently asked questions about the SMART Grants Program.

This page has been updated to reflect the Stage 1 FY 2023 Award Announcement on **March 14, 2024**. The FY23 SMART Grants NOFO is now closed. The deadline was 10/10/2023 at 5:00pm ET.

Expand All Collapse All

- Stage 1 FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity ▾
- Program Design and Structure ▾
- Eligible Applicants ▾
- Eligible Projects and Costs ▾
- Submitting the Application ▾
- Program Awards ▾
- Other ▾

<https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-frequently-asked-questions>

Key Dates

- Application Deadline: **Friday, 7/12/2024 at 5:00PM ET**
- Deadline to Submit Technical Questions to smart@dot.gov: **Friday, 6/28/2024 at 5:00PM ET**
- Remember: Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval. USDOT will not accept or review application materials submitted via Grants.gov.



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Questions and Answers

SMART

Questions & Answers

- Please type your questions into the Q&A box
- Technical Support: webconference@dot.gov
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are posted at <https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-frequently-asked-questions>.
- We will update the page with questions from this webinar.
- If you have additional questions after this webinar, you can email smart@dot.gov.
 - We strongly encourage you to review the NOFO and FAQs in full prior to submitting questions to the SMART inbox.
 - The deadline to submit technical questions to the SMART inbox is: **6/28/2024**.