Dear SMART Grantees,

I hope you are all doing well. Many of the FY22 projects are deep in implementation and data collection for your projects, which is an exciting time for the program – and the FY23 projects have now executed their grant agreements and are getting started in earnest. This is the October update email - You can find all past update emails on the SMART website, and this and future emails will also be available there.

KEY DEADLINES

For all grantees: **quarterly milestone reporting and federal financial reporting is due 10/30/24.** You can find the instructions and links, as well as the calendar for the whole year's milestones on the website.

For FY23 Grantees: Data Management Plans and Evaluation Plans are due **12/15/24.**

Detailed guidance for the Data Management Plan and Evaluation Plan, along with other evaluation resources, are also available on the Resources for Grantees page. This page includes the recording from last month's webinar covering both plans in detail.

Your SMEs will review the Evaluation Plan and send back feedback. You **do not have to resubmit it**, but if, after your project has advanced further, you want to revisit and receive more input from your SME, you are welcome to do so.

EVENTS

Upcoming Webinar: **The Systems Engineering Approach for SMART Grants** with the Federal Highways Administration **(11/14, 1:00-2:30ET)**

Have all of your agency's technology-based projects been completed on time, on budget, and achieved expectations? If not, you should attend this webinar for SMART Grants recipients. Systems Engineering (SE) is a multi-discipline approach for the design, realization, technical management, operations, and retirement of a system. The purpose of this needs-focused and requirements-driven approach is to identify and correct defects as early as possible. The overall goals of systems engineering are to reduce risks, provide a common language between subject matter experts and system designers/technologists, and produce a system design that responds to **needs** and **requirements** instead of the reverse where our premature technology choices dictate our needs and requirements.

Other benefits of systems engineering include:

- more predictable outcomes from projects
- higher level of user engagement
- system functionality that meets their needs
- potential for shorter project cycles
- systems that can evolve with a minimum of redesign and cost
- better system documentation
- higher level of system reuse

This systems approach is applicable to any type of project, especially projects involving technology where the users needs may not be fully known or there are new technologies involved and risks to be resolved. Systems engineering applies to web-based traveler information systems, connected and automated vehicles, cloud-based

data exchange systems, operating centers, or traffic surveillance and signage systems. The level or degree of systems engineering effort will vary depending on what the unknowns are and the needs of the project.

This 90 minute webinar will feature speakers from the Federal Highways Administration and systems engineering practitioners. The panelists will provide an overview of the key benefits and of the approach, discuss ways to tailor the approach to the project's scope, and discuss examples and links to other resources.

Grant recipients, **contractors, and consulting partners** are encouraged to register and attend.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Updates to the SMART website:

We've updated our FAQ on Eligible Projects and Costs to include additional guidance around the prohibition of using SMART funds for parking enforcement or license plate readers.

We've added the Federal Financial Reporting form, SF-425, to the Resources page.

If you missed the Reporting webinar for FY23 grantees a few weeks ago (or you want a refresher!), the recording and slides are now available on the Resources page.

CONFERENCES

Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting 2025: If you will be attending TRB next year, especially if you are presenting on your SMART grant, please let us know! We would love to support your panel or presentation. Stan and I will be at the OST-R booth each day with open hours to meet and chat, and we are also looking to organize an informal SMART recipient mixer in a dedicated USDOT space.

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