SMART Grants Implementation Grants Notice of Funding Opportunity

AGENCY: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT or the Department)

ACTION: Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), Assistance Listing (formerly known as CFDA) #20.941

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to solicit applications for Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Implementation grants. There are two types of Implementation Grants under this program, Stage Two Implementation Grants and Automated Vehicle Implementation Grants.

Each section of this notice contains information and instructions relevant to the application process for SMART grants.

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1. Basic Information

SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF BASIC INFORMATION: Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Implementation Grant Opportunity	
Federal Agency Name	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology (OST-R), U.S. Department of Transportation
Funding Opportunity Title	Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Implementation Grant Opportunity
Assistance Listing Number	20.941
Program Overview	The purpose of this notice is to solicit applications for Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Implementation grants. This notice provides the opportunity to apply for two types of Implementation Grants: 1) Stage Two SMART Implementation Grants that are awarded, on a competitive basis, to eligible applicants to implement plans and prototypes previously developed in SMART Stage One that will advance smart community technologies and systems to improve transportation efficiency and safety; and 2) Automated Vehicle (AV) Implementation Grants that are awarded to eligible applicants, on a competitive basis, for AV or Automated Driving System (ADS) demonstration and deployment projects.
Goals and Objectives	As established in Sec. 25005 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (P.L. 117-58), projects funded by the SMART Grants Program use advanced data, technology, and applications to provide significant benefits to a local area, a State, a region, or the United States. These benefits are identified in IIJA: - Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public; - Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public; - Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care; - Connect or expand access for underserved communities and reduce transportation costs; - Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness; - Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems; - Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems; - Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service

	providers, to the extent practicable; • Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution; • Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and • Improve emergency response. The Department will prioritize SMART Grant funding applications that demonstrate the following characteristics, as identified in IIJA: • Demonstrate smart city or community technologies in repeatable ways that can rapidly be scaled; • Encourage public and private sharing of data and best practices; • Encourage private-sector innovation by promoting industry-driven technology standards, open platforms, technology-neutral requirements, and interoperability; • Promote a skilled workforce that is inclusive of underserved communities; • Allow for the measurement and validation of the cost savings and performance improvements associated with the installation and use of smart community technologies and practices; • Encourage the adoption of smart community technologies by communities; • Promote industry practices regarding cybersecurity, including toughening Positioning, Navigation and Timing systems; and • Safeguard individual privacy. Note that the SMART Grants Program is a demonstration program. Proposals seeking funding for systems and technologies that are already well-established and broadly adopted will be less competitive.
Eligible Applicants	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 applying through a single lead applicant (Group Application). There are two types of Implementation Grants under this program, Stage Two Implementation Grants and Automated Vehicle (AV) Implementation Grants. **Eligible Entities For SMART Stage Two Grants** Only recipients of SMART Stage One Planning and Prototyping Grants, or eligible entities designated by Stage One SMART recipients, awarded under the FY22 and FY23 SMART Stage One NOFOs, may apply for a Stage Two Implementation Grant. US DOT anticipates an additional Stage Two Implementation NOFO will

	be released in 2026, which other SMART Stage One recipients will be eligible to apply for. **Eligible Entities For SMART AV Implementation Grants** Eligible applicants (listed above) whose projects are focused on AV or ADS deployment. **Entities eligible for both Stage 2 and AV Implementation grants should apply to either the Stage 2 or the AV Implementation grant, whichever best aligns with their proposal, but not both.** Section 2.a provides additional applicant eligibility information.
Eligible Projects	The SMART Grants Program funds multiple technology areas, as listed below. **For Stage Two Implementation Grants**, projects must demonstrate at least one technology area and may demonstrate more than one technology area. USDOT will assess each application on its merits, and there is no expectation that applications demonstrate more than one technology area. • 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 **For AV Implementation Grants**, projects must demonstrate a project in the Coordinated Automation technology area. Section 2.d provides additional project eligibility information.

Funding Details	This Notice makes available approximately $150,000,000 for Implementation grants under the SMART Grants Program.
	• **$75,000,000 is available for Stage Two Implementation Grants**.
	   o USDOT expects to award approximately 5-8 Stage Two Implementation grants of up to $15,000,000 per award. There is an anticipated minimum award size of $2,000,000.
	• **$75,000,000 is available for AV Implementation Grants**
	   o USDOT expects to award approximately 5-8 AV Implementation grants of up to $15,000,000 per award. There is an anticipated minimum award size of $2,000,000.
	• DOT reserves the right to award any additional funding that may become available prior to the date of awards or award less total funding depending on the applications received.

Cost Share	Cost share is not required.

Key Dates	• Friday, November 28, 2025, at 5:00 PM ET: Deadline to submit technical questions to smart@dot.gov • Friday, December 12, 2025, at 5:00 PM ET: Application due A webinar describing how to apply will be held at 1:00pm ET on Tuesday, September 16, 2025. Register for the webinar here: https://usdot.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_N2I3NM78Qsy7wEKuraruFQ#/registration
Contact Information	Please contact SMART Grants Program staff via email at smart@dot.gov or call Thy Nguyen (202-875-0520). A telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) is available at 202-366-3993. In addition, USDOT may post answers to questions and requests for clarifications, as well as schedule information regarding webinars providing additional guidance, on the SMART Grants website at https://www.transportation.gov/smart.

DUE DATES: Applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM ET during the submission window dates below. Late applications will not be accepted.
  • Submission Window: October 14, 2025 – December 12, 2025
ADDRESSES: Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online submission proposal system used by USDOT at the following URLs:

For Stage Two Implementation Grants: at
https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_stage_2/signup.

For AV Implementation Grants: at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_AV/signup.

USDOT will not accept, or review application materials submitted via Grants.gov.

2. Eligibility Information

a) Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for the SMART Grants Program include:

A. a State[1];
B. a political subdivision of a State[2];
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).

There are two types of Implementation Grants under this program, Stage Two Implementation Grants and Automated Vehicle (AV) Implementation Grants.

Eligible Entities For SMART Stage Two Implementation Grants:
Only recipients of SMART Stage One Planning and Prototyping Grants, or eligible entities designated by Stage One SMART recipients, awarded under the FY22 and FY23 SMART Stage One NOFOs, **whose periods of performance began prior to April 2025,** may apply for this Stage Two Implementation Grant NOFO. Applicants must have received a SMART Stage One Award, or have been designated by a Stage One recipient, to be eligible to submit a SMART Stage Two Implementation Grant proposal. USDOT anticipates that an additional Stage Two NOFO will be released in 2026, which other SMART Stage One recipients will be eligible to apply for.

Eligible Entities For SMART AV Grants
Eligible applicants (listed above) whose projects are focused on AV or ADS deployment.

b) Cost Sharing or Matching
Cost sharing or matching is <u>not</u> required for this program.

c) Designating a Lead Applicant (for Stage Two Implementation Grants only)
Every Stage One SMART recipient is eligible to apply for a Stage Two Implementation Grant (Only FY22 and FY23 Stage One awardees are eligible for this NOFO, FY24 Stage One Awardees will be eligible for future Stage Two Implementation Grant NOFOs). If a project has evolved and a different eligible entity is a better fit to be the lead applicant for the Stage Two Implementation grant, the Stage One SMART recipient must designate the new lead applicant. Designated lead applicants must still be eligible based on the eligibility criteria above. The Stage One SMART

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[1] U.S. territories are eligible applicants.

[2] For the purposes of the SMART Grants Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, a political subdivision of a State is defined as a unit of government created under the authority of State law. This includes cities, towns, counties, special districts, and similar units of local government, such as public port or airport authorities, if created under State law.

recipient must provide a Letter of Designation, endorsing the new lead applicant as the appropriate party to take over the project in Stage Two, and stating the Stage One lead's continued support and involvement in the project as it is deployed. More details on Letters of Designation are provided in Section D and at www.transportation.gov/gov/grants/smart/smart-grants-stage-2.

Only one Stage Two Implementation Grant application may be submitted per SMART Stage Two Implementation Grant NOFO to expand and deploy a solution prototyped or planned in Stage One. The Stage Two Implementation Grant application must demonstrate that it continues the work of the designated Stage One project. Stage One projects not awarded in this NOFO may reapply to a future SMART Stage Two Implementation Grant NOFO.

For this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the Draft Implementation Report or Final Implementation Report (whichever is more current) completed by each Stage One Recipient will be assessed. Any applicant whose Stage One period of performance began after April 2025 will not be eligible submit an application for a Stage Two Implementation Grant under this NOFO but may apply to an anticipated future SMART Stage Two Implementation Grant NOFO.

d) Eligible Activities
The SMART Grants Program funds multiple technology areas, as listed below.

For Stage Two Implementation Grants: Projects must demonstrate at least one technology area and may demonstrate more than one technology area. US DOT will assess each application on its merits, and there is no expectation that applications demonstrate more than one technology area.

As stated in IIJA Section 25005 (e)(1), the following technology areas are eligible projects under SMART.

Technology Area	Definition from IIJA sec 25005 (e)(1)(A)
Coordinated Automation	Use of automated transportation and autonomous vehicles while working to minimize the impact on the accessibility of any other user group or mode of travel.
Connected Vehicles	Vehicles that send and receive information regarding vehicle movements in the network and use vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-everything communications to provide advanced and reliable connectivity.
Intelligent, Sensor-Based Infrastructure	Deployment and use of a collective intelligent infrastructure that allows sensors to collect and report real-time data to inform everyday transportation-related operations and performance.
Systems Integration	Integration of intelligent transportation systems with other existing systems and other advanced transportation technologies.
Commerce Delivery and Logistics	Innovative data and technological solutions supporting efficient goods movement, such as connected vehicle probe data, road weather data, or global positioning data to improve on-time pickup and delivery, improved travel time reliability, reduced fuel consumption and emissions, and reduced labor and vehicle maintenance costs.
Leveraging Use of Innovative Aviation	Leveraging the use of innovative aviation technologies, such as unmanned aircraft systems, to support transportation safety and

Technology	efficiencies, including traffic monitoring and infrastructure inspection.
Smart Grid	Developing a programmable and efficient energy transmission and distribution system to support the adoption or expansion of energy capture, electric vehicle deployment, or freight or commercial fleet fuel efficiency.
Smart Technology Traffic Signals	Improving the active management and functioning of traffic signals, including through: • Use of automated traffic signal performance measures; • Implementing strategies, activities, and projects that support active management of traffic signal operations, including through optimization of corridor timing; improved vehicle, pedestrian, and bicycle detection at traffic signals; or the use of connected vehicle technologies; • Replacement of outdated traffic signals; or • For an eligible applicant serving a population of less than 500,000, paying the costs of temporary staffing hours dedicated to updating traffic signal technology.

For AV Implementation Grants: Projects must demonstrate technology within the Coordinated Automation technology area.

Technology Area	Definition from IIJA sec 25005 (e)(1)(A)
Coordinated Automation	Use of automated transportation and autonomous vehicles while working to minimize the impact on the accessibility of any other user group or mode of travel.

AV Implementation Grants should focus on surface transportation and deploying AVs, preferably using a system capable of Society of Automotive Engineers(SAE) level 4 with limited supervision (supervision defined as a safety driver).

All projects must comply with relevant Federal, state, and local laws and regulations to be eligible. These vary by technology area, and it is the responsibility of the applicant to understand the requirements for their application. This section briefly discusses a few notable examples and is not comprehensive.

Innovative aviation projects must show understanding and awareness of, and comply with, all FAA and other Federal, state, and local regulations relevant to the technologies and usages thereof. For instance, in the case of innovative aviation projects involving small, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), applicants are responsible for complying with regulations which may include, and are not limited to the following, as necessary to achieve desired outcomes:[3]
- 14 CFR Part 91 General Operating and Flight Rules[4]

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[3] Other terminologies exist, using the FAA terminology "unmanned aircraft systems" for simplicity;
[4] 14 CFR Part 91 https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-91.

- 14 CFR Part 107 small UAS rule; Small UAS[5]
- UAS Operations over People rule; Operations Over People General Overview [6]
- UAS Remote identification rule; UAS Remote Identification Overview[7]

Proponents of innovative aviation projects are also responsible for using U.S. government tools and resources which may include, and are not limited to the following, as necessary to fulfill requirements to operate technologies and achieve desired outcomes:
- FAA DroneZone, used to register UAS[8]
- FAA Low Altitude Authorization and Notification Capability (LAANC), used to obtain airspace authorization to fly in controlled airspace[9]
- Part 107 Waiver Resources,[10] used to enable more complex UAS operations[11]

Projects that use communications technologies must either 1) use Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) services that utilize Cellular Vehicle-to-Everything (C-V2X) based technology designed to operate within the 30 MHz of spectrum (5.895-5.925 GHz) that are consistent with the rules established in waivers associated with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ET Docket No. 19-138 and Second Report and Order effective at the time when the Department selects projects for funding under the FY 2025 SMART Grants Program, or 2) leverage other communications technologies that can support V2X services and operate in spectrum outside of the 5.895-5.925 GHz range. USDOT will assess FY 2025 Stage Two proposals according to this language.

Projects involving motor vehicles must involve only vehicles and operations that comply with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSSs) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs), or vehicles that are exempt from the requirements in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and operation of the vehicles in the proposed project, or identify the necessary exemptions, submit a plan for obtaining them in their proposal, and secure all exemptions prior to award executions.

Implementation Grant applicants are required to identify all necessary exemptions, waivers, permits, or special permissions in their Implementation grant application. Applications will be assessed on the readiness and feasibility of the project with regard to legal, policy, and regulatory requirements (e.g., environmental permits and reviews; public outreach; State and local approvals; equity and accessibility requirements). It will strengthen an Implementation Grant application if the applicant can affirm that it has already received such permissions. See section 5.b for detailed assessment criteria.   Selection for NOFO funds does not guarantee that an exemption or waiver will be granted or otherwise impact the exemption or waiver review processes.

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[5] 14 CFR Part 107 https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-107
[6]FAA Operations Over People General Overview
https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators/operations_over_people. Last updated November 10, 2022.
[7]FAA Final Rule on Remote ID https://www.faa.gov/newsroom/remoteid-final-rule. Last updated April 21, 2021.
[8] FAA DroneZone; https://faadronezone.faa.gov/.
[9] FAA UAS Data Exchange (LAANC); https://www.faa.gov/uas/programs_partnerships/data_exchange.
[10] Part 107 Waiver resources; https://www.faa.gov/uas/commercial_operators/part_107_waivers.
[11] For additional questions or information, please contact the FAA UAS Support Center at
https://www.faa.gov/uas/contact_us.

e) Costs

USDOT reserves the right to make cost eligibility determinations on a case-by-case basis. Eligible development and construction activities for grant funding are the following:
- planning;
- feasibility analyses;
- revenue forecasting;
- environmental review;
- permitting;
- preliminary engineering and design work;
- systems development or information technology work;
- acquisition of real property (including land and improvements to land relating to an eligible project);
- construction;
- reconstruction;
- rehabilitation;
- replacement;
- environmental mitigation;
- construction contingencies; and
- acquisition of equipment, including vehicles.

The following are examples of <u>ineligible</u> costs for SMART Grants Program funding:
- reimbursement of any application preparation costs of the SMART grant application;
- Costs incurred prior to award announcement;
- traffic or parking enforcement activity; or
- purchase or lease of a license plate reader.

If a component of the project is explicitly intended to support current or future traffic or enforcement activities, it is not an eligible cost for the SMART Grants Program and cannot be included in an eligible proposal.

For grant recipients receiving an award, project assessment costs are allowable costs (either as direct or indirect), and such costs may include the personnel and equipment needed for data infrastructure and expertise in data analysis, performance, and assessment (2 CFR Part 200). For more information on required reporting, see Section 7.g. Recipients may not use more than 3 percent of the amount of a SMART grant for each fiscal year to achieve compliance with applicable planning and reporting requirements.

Broadly, allowable activity costs must comply with the cost principles set forth in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E (i.e., 2 CFR § 200.403 and § 200.405).

3. Program Description

a) Overview

Section 25005 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117–58, November 15, 2021) authorized and appropriated $100 million to the Department of Transportation (USDOT) each of the fiscal years for FY2022-FY2026 for the SMART Grants Program.

Under the SMART Grants Program, the Secretary shall provide grants to eligible entities to conduct demonstration projects focused on advanced smart city or community technologies and systems in a variety of communities to improve transportation efficiency and safety. [12]

b) Program Structure

The SMART Grants Program includes two stages: Planning and Prototyping Grants (Stage One grants) and Implementation Grants (Stage Two or AV grants- more information on each of these types of grants are below). The program structure is based on a belief that <u>planning, prototyping, and partnership are critical</u> to advancing the state of the practice for data and technology projects in the public sector.

Stage Two implementation projects should result in an at-scale deployment of the Stage One concept, integrating it with the existing transportation system and refining the concept such that it could be replicated by others.

The Stage Two Implementation Grant Applicant must have been either the lead applicant of a Stage One grant or a partner on the Stage One project team. In order for a Stage One partner to apply for a Stage Two grant as the lead applicant, the partner must be an eligible applicant listed in C.1 and provide a written designation from the Stage One lead. Each original Stage One recipient may submit only one Stage Two application for this Stage Two NOFO. Further details about Letters of Designation may be found in Section 4.a.iv.

AV Implementation projects should result in an at-scale deployment, integrating it with the existing transportation system and refining the concept such that it could be replicated by others. These applications should focus on surface transportation with AVs using a system preferably capable of SAE level 4 with limited supervision (supervision defined as a safety driver).

c) SMART Grants Priorities as Outlined in IIJA:

As established in IIJA, projects funded by the SMART Grants Program use advanced data, technology, and applications to provide significant benefits to a local area, a State, a region, or the United States. These benefits are identified in IIJA and align to the following categories:[13]

- Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public;
- Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public;
- Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care;
- Connect or expand access for underserved communities and reduce transportation costs;

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[12] For more information and illustrative use cases, please see www.transportation.gov/SMART.

[13] Sec 25005(d)(3)(A)(ii) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act [Page 135 STAT. 841] https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text

- Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness;
- Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems;
- Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems;
- Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service providers, to the extent practicable;
- Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution;
- Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and
- Improve emergency response.

The Department will prioritize SMART Grant funding applications that demonstrate the following characteristics, as identified in IIJA:[14]
- Demonstrate smart city or community technologies in repeatable ways that can rapidly be scaled;
- Encourage public and private sharing of data and best practices;
- Encourage private-sector innovation by promoting industry-driven technology standards, open platforms, technology-neutral requirements, and interoperability;
- Promote a skilled workforce that is inclusive of minority or disadvantaged groups;
- Allow for the measurement and validation of the cost savings and performance improvements associated with the installation and use of smart city or community technologies and practices;
- Encourage the adoption of smart city or community technologies by communities;
- Promote industry practices regarding cybersecurity, including toughening Positioning, Navigation and Timing systems; and
- Safeguard individual privacy.

To accomplish these objectives, the SMART Grants Program will fund projects that focus on using technology interventions to solve real-world challenges facing communities.

The SMART Grants Program focuses on building data and technology capacity and expertise for State, local, and Tribal governments. Technology investment is most beneficial when tailored to the needs of the community. SMART recognizes that many public sector agencies are challenged to find the resources and personnel to engage with new technologies; this is reflected in the program design, which builds in the time and support needed for projects to succeed. SMART will support and grow a strong, diverse, and local workforce.

Note that the SMART Grants Program is a demonstration program. Proposals seeking funding for systems and technologies that are already well-established and broadly adopted will be less competitive. Successful Implementation Grants will demonstrate deployment readiness and ability to execute a project within the maximum 3 year period of performance.

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[14] Sec 25005(d)(3)(B) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act [Page 135 STAT. 842] https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text

The Department intends to apply principles from the DOT Order, 2100.7 Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities when evaluating applications and making award selections.[15]

For more information about technical resources, and FAQs for Implementation Grants, please refer to the SMART Grants Implementation Grants page: www.transportation.gov/gov/grants/smart/smart-grants-stage-2.

4. Application Contents and Format

The application must include the following: Standard Forms (SF); Key Information Questions; and Project Narrative, including the required Appendices. Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online submission proposal system used by USDOT.

Application requirements differ slightly for Stage Two Implementation Grants and AV Implementation Grants. Instructions for are broken out by type of Implementation Grant below.

a. **For Stage Two Implementation Grants:** Applications must be submitted at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_stage_2/signup. Applications submitted to Grants.gov will not be accepted or reviewed.

More detailed information about each application material is provided below.

i) Standard Forms: All applicants, for both Stage Two Implementation Grants and AV Implementation Grants, must submit the following Standard Forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) or, if applicable, Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C), and the Certification Regarding Lobbying form. If applicable, applicants should also complete the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). These forms can be found on the Valid Eval application page.

Regarding signatures, we ask that authorized representatives either:
(a) Print the appropriate documents, physically sign the documents in ink, and re-upload the documents to Valid Eval OR
(b) Download the appropriate documents, provide a digital signature/digital certificate, and re-upload the documents to Valid Eval.

ii) **Key Information Questions:**

Key Information Questions for Stage 2 Implementation Grants: This is a preview list of the questions that are asked on USDOT's automated proposal website at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_stage_2/signup. After registering in

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[15] DOT Order 2100.7: Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities

the system, the applicant will be prompted to answer the following questions on the website:

Title	Instructions
1) Stage Two Project Name	Enter a concise, descriptive title for the project. This should be the same title used in the Grants.gov SF-424 submission and the application narrative. The SMART Grants Program recommends a unique title of 100 characters or less. Do not title your project 'SMART Grant' or similar.
2) Lead Applicant Name	This should be consistent with Q. 8.a. of the SF-424.
3) Lead Applicant Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	See Section 4.e for more information about obtaining a UEI from SAM.gov. The UEI must be current and not expired. The UEI must be in an "active" status, not "assigned."
4) Eligible Applicant Type	Indicate the eligible applicant type for your application: 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. If this is a group application, please identify the eligible applicant type of the lead applicant.
5) Is this the same lead applicant as the corresponding Stage One Application?	If No, list the new name of the lead applicant of the corresponding Stage One project.
6) Was a similar application submitted in the past two years, or do you anticipate a similar application will be submitted for funding in the coming year for this project under **any other USDOT discretionary grant programs** (not including the SMART Grants Program)?	If yes, please include the name of the discretionary grant program, the project title of the similar grant application, and the name of the lead applicant. Please also indicate the application status (Planned, Submitted, Selected, or Not Selected).
7) Other than the SMART Grants Stage One award, was any other Federal funding previously received for this project? This may include funding received from USDOT as well as other Federal agencies.	If yes, indicate the amount of Federal funding received and the relevant grant number.
8) What organizations will be considered partners on this project?	List all critical project partners. This could include other eligible applicant types (e.g., States, a political subdivision of a State, etc.) as well as those in

	industry, academia, nonprofits, and other traditional and non-traditional partners).[16]
9. One Sentence Description of Stage Two project	Describe your Stage Two project in one sentence using the following format: "This project will use X (technology(ies) to address Y (problem(s) to be solved) in Z (context or project area)." The sentence should describe the full implementation of the project as described in the Stage Two application. The One Sentence Description of successful applicants may be published by USDOT and, therefore, must not contain classified, proprietary, or confidential information.
10. Brief Project Description	Describe the project in plain language, using no more than 200 words. It is recommended that applicants use the following format: • One sentence on the problem to be solved. • One sentence on the anticipated or known impact of the Stage One project that received SMART funding. • One sentence describing the anticipated Stage Two activities and how these activities will build on success from Stage One. • One sentence describing the anticipated impacts of the Stage Two project. Please do not describe the project's benefits, background, or alignment with the selection criteria in this description field. A longer, narrative description will be provided in the Project Narrative. The Brief Project Description of successful applicants may be published by USDOT and, therefore, must not contain classified, proprietary or confidential information.
11. Primary Project Location	Identify the primary location where the project will take place. If more than one location, please list additional locations in the next question. 1. If your project will be conducted in a specific city, cities, or town(s), indicate the primary location at which the project will take place using [City, State] as the format. 2. If your project will be conducted at the county, regional, or MPO-level, please note the closest or most relevant [City, State] location for the project and indicate if this location represents a "county,"

	"region," or "MPO." This information will be used for mapping purposes. 3. If your project will be conducted Statewide, please indicate the name of the State. 4. If your project will be conducted in a tribal community, please note the closest or most relevant [City, State] location for the project. This information will be used for mapping purposes.
12. Other Project Locations	Identify additional project locations, if applicable, using the same instructions as the previous question. All additional locations should be in [City, State] format.
13. What congressional district(s) is your project located in?	Use the following format: StateAbbrv.-DistrictNumber (e.g., CO-1, TX-ALL)
14. Size of Community Receiving Benefits	Indicate the size of the community (large community; midsized community; regional partnership; or rural community) that will primarily benefit from the project. • Large Community: 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. • Midsized Community: Any community that is not a large community or a rural community. • 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, which defines "urbanized area" as an area encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an "urbanized area" by the Secretary of Commerce. Please use 87 FR 80114 to confirm that your project location is not delineated by the Census Bureau as a 2020 urbanized area based on 2020 Census of Population and Housing counts and density calculations. • Regional Partnership: A partnership composed of two or more eligible applicants located in jurisdictions with a combined population that is equal to or greater than the population of any midsized community.
15. Is the project located (entirely or	Indicate Yes, No, or Statewide Project. Only select

partially) in an Area of Persistent Poverty based on its location in a census tract identified as in "persistent poverty" in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification Tool. For the purposes of this NOFO the terms underserved or disadvantaged community will be defined as Areas of Persistent Poverty as noted in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification tool.	"Statewide Project" if the project will not have specific project sites within a State.
16. If you responded "Yes" to Question 15, please identify the relevant census tract(s) that contribute to this designation. Be sure to use the full census tract number identified in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification tool.	
17. Project Cost: Amount Requested	Total dollar amount requested (rounded to the nearest dollar).
18. Project Cost: Total Project Cost	Total project cost requested for Stage Two, including dollar amount requested and other funding contributions (rounded to the nearest dollar).
19. Proposed Duration of Stage Two Project (in months)	May be up to 36 months.
20. Primary Technology Area	Select the primary technology area with which your project aligns: A. coordinated automation; B. connected vehicles; C. intelligent, sensor-based infrastructure; D. systems integration; E. commerce delivery and logistics; F. leveraging use of innovative aviation technology; G. smart grid; or H. smart technology traffic signals
21. Secondary Technology Area(s) (if applicable)	Select the secondary technology area(s) with which your project aligns: A. coordinated automation; B. connected vehicles; C. intelligent, sensor-based infrastructure; D. systems integration; E. commerce delivery and logistics; F. leveraging use of innovative aviation technology; G. smart grid; or

	H. smart technology traffic signals I. N/A (if there is no secondary technology area) Note that applications are not rated on the number of technology areas indicated, so it is important to only select the area(s) with which your project aligns.
22. Does this project relate to traffic or parking enforcement; or license plate reader activities?	Indicate "Yes" or "No." Note that SMART grants shall <u>not</u> be used for any current or future traffic or parking enforcement activity, or to purchase or lease a license plate reader.
23. Is an exemption, waiver, permit, or special permission required to conduct the proposed project?	If yes, indicate the exemption, waiver, permit, or special permission obtained. If a waiver has not been obtained, please indicate the plan or process for obtaining it in your Project Narrative.
24. Anticipated Stage Two NEPA Class of Action and Requirements	Referencing the SMART NEPA Readiness Guidance https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-environmental-review-readiness-guidance, state the anticipated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) class of action for your Stage Two project as well as any anticipated environmental approvals and permits you have already acquired, or which will be needed for the proposed project. If you are unsure, please explain your expected coordination to determine this. The SMART Grants Program recommends that this section be 200 words or less.
25. What environmental risks or concerns (e.g. historical structures, local traffic / work zone impacts, etc.) do you expect during project implementation? How are you planning to mitigate the risks / concerns?	Refer to the SMART NEPA Readiness Guidance (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-environmental-review-readiness-guidance) to complete this answer. The SMART Grants Program recommends that this section be 300 words or less.

> **iii) Project Narrative:** The primary purpose of the Narrative is for the applicant to state their case for meeting the merit criteria laid out in Section 5. The Narrative should not exceed ten pages; this does not include the required appendices. A cover page and table of contents are not required but would not count toward the ten-page narrative if included. Figures are considered part of the ten-page narrative.

The Narrative and Appendices I-IV should be in PDF format, with a font size of no less than 12-point Times New Roman, single-spaced, minimum 1-inch margins on all sides, and page numbers. Appendix V should be uploaded to the application in Valid Eval as a Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ file. Suggested approximate lengths for each subsection of the Narrative are noted in parentheses.

Note: Each Stage Two proposal will also be assessed on the quality and content of the associated Stage One Draft or Final Implementation Report which is submitted separately from this NOFO.

The Draft or Final Implementation Report must be submitted to the SMART Grants Inbox (smart@dot.gov) by the designated deadline of one year or 18 months from the execution of the SMART Grant Agreement of the Stage One project associated with each Stage Two proposal. In addition to information provided by the applicant in response to this NOFO, reviewers will take into consideration findings and lessons learned from Stage One, as described in the Draft or Final Implementation Report, to determine the feasibility and applicability of the technology solution proposed at-scale for Stage Two.

(1) Overview/Project Description (suggested 2-3 pages)

This section should provide a clear, concise description of the project, the real-world issues and challenges to be addressed, and the proposed technology(ies) to be used. This should include a discussion of the activities and outcomes of Stage One, but focus on the anticipated outcomes for a potential Stage Two project. Applicants should also briefly discuss how the proposed project addresses the goals of the SMART Grants Program and how the project plans to improve upon the status quo of the transportation system. This section should address the Technical Merit Criteria: Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved (see Section 5).

(2) Project Location (suggested 1-2 paragraphs)

This section should provide a description of the geographic area or jurisdiction that the project will serve, including the community size (large, midsized, rural, or a regional partnership). The project location description should also narratively identify the following:

> (a); whether the project is located (entirely or partially) in an Area of Persistent Poverty[17] based on the BUILD Grant Project Verification tool.
> If applicable, the narrative must identify the relevant census tract(s) that contribute to this designation, as stated in Key Information Question #16. If the proposed project is Statewide and will not have specific sites within a State, please note this instead of listing all of the State's Areas of Persistent Poverty Census tracts.
> (b) the 2020 Census-designated urban area(s) where the project is located, if relevant. Please refer to 87 FR 80114 for a list of Census-designated urban areas.

Note that applicants are asked to provide precise locations for each project in the Key Information Questions Table. It is expected that by the time the applicant submits the Stage Two proposal precise location(s) for the demonstration will be known. However, if this is not the case, this section should explain and identify which geographic locations are under consideration for project to be implemented and what analysis will be used in a final determination.

(3) Technical Merit Overview (suggested 2-3 pages)

This section should provide an overview of the technical merit of the proposed project, responding to the criteria for assessment and selection in Section 5 of this Notice and including a compelling narrative to highlight how the application addresses the following Technical Merit criteria:

- Appropriateness of Proposed Solution
- Expected Benefits: Outcomes in alignment with IIJA Priorities in Section 3.c and below. Applicants are not expected to address all of these issues, however, please indicate which of these are addressed by the project in the narrative:

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[17] This definition is in 49 U.S.C. 6702(a)(1).

- o Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public;
- o Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public;
- o Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care;
- o Connect or expand access underserved communities and reduce transportation costs;
- o Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness;
- o Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems;
- o Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems;
- o Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service providers, to the extent practicable;
- o Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution;
- o Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and
- o Improve emergency response.

Applicants for Stage 2 Implementation grants should describe the assessed benefits of the Stage One activities, and learnings from Stage One as to whether the planned or prototyped solution(s) proved appropriate. Applicants are encouraged to expand on lessons learned that are described in their Draft Implementation Reports.

(4) Project Readiness Overview (suggested 3 pages)
This section should provide an overview of the project readiness, responding to the criteria for assessment and selection in Section 5.b. of this Notice and including a compelling narrative to highlight how the application addresses the following Project Readiness criteria:
- • Feasibility of Workplan
  - o Applicants for Stage 2 Implementation Grants should include reflection on learnings from the Stage One activities and how they inform the workplan for Stage Two, including awareness of relevant legal, policy, and regulatory requirements associated with the project activities; their Stage One timeline feasibility learnings; and the feasibility of completing the Stage Two activities within the anticipated timeline, including and potential impacts due to supply chain and purchasing delays. This section should also cover the applicant's plans for cybersecurity and protecting the privacy and physical safety of the public.
- • Community Engagement and Partnerships
  - o Discuss project partners, their roles, and activities for community engagement.
- • Leadership and Qualifications
  - o Discuss the leadership team and their qualifications to successful execute the proposed project.

In the event that a Stage Two application is submitted by a designated lead applicant that is not the Stage One recipient, the Stage One recipient should remain involved in the Stage Two project. Stage Two project leadership should include at least 1 representative of the Stage One recipient organization.
  - iv) Appendices

a. Appendix I: Resumes – maximum 3 pages or less

Applicants shall submit the abbreviated resumes of the key individuals involved in the project. This appendix should be no more than three pages.

b. Appendix II: Summary Budget Narrative – maximum 3 pages or less

Applicants shall provide a summary budget narrative that corresponds to and describes information contained in the applicant's SF-424A and/or SF-424C. The narrative should describe all planned project costs for Stage Two (e.g.., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, and other) and how these planned costs relate to the project scope. Note that the SF-424A and the budget narrative should include travel costs that assumes three in-person meetings in Washington, D.C. or Cambridge MA (one annually for the period of the grant).

The information needed in the budget narrative is as follows and directly corresponds with the format of the SF-424A or SF-424C. Applicants shall use the below categories as headings in their budget narrative but are encouraged to explain in detail how funds will be used in support of the project goals:

1. **Personnel** – Provide the cost breakdown of how this figure was calculated (e.g., hours/position/rate).
2. **Fringe Benefits** – Provide the fringe benefits rate.
3. **Travel** – Provide a cost breakdown of the number of trips, location, number of personnel, etc., if applicable. Please include travel costs which assume three in-person meetings in Washington, D.C. or Cambridge MA for up to four people.
4. **Equipment** – Provide a detailed estimate of tangible personal property costs as described in 2 CFR § 200.33. This should include items with a per-unit acquisition cost of $10,000 or more (including information technology systems). If your agency has a different threshold for equipment purchases, please provide information about your agency's equipment threshold policy.
5. **Supplies** – Please provide an estimate of tangible personal property costs that have a unit cost of less than $5,000.
6. **Contractual** – Provide the cost of any contractual support, if applicable.
7. **Construction** – Describe construction activities as listed on an SF-424C, if applicable.
8. **Other** – Provide a description of any costs listed as "other." This could include training or other expenses that the applicant wishes to include separately.
9. **Indirect Charges** – Provide the indirect cost calculations, including a description of the base (i.e., Modified Total Direct Cost).

The summary budget narrative must be sufficiently clear, concise, and detailed to describe how funds will be spent on the project. Applicants are expected to account for data and performance reporting in their budget submission.

The Department may share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

c) Appendix III: Letter of Designation– no more than two pages per letter; no more than one letter per application

If a Stage One recipient determines a partner organization is better positioned to be the lead applicant for a Stage Two application, the Stage One recipient must provide a Letter of Designation as part of the Stage Two application. The Letter of Designation must identify the Stage One project and recipient that is designating the new lead applicant, should describe why the designated entity is the correct lead applicant for Stage Two, and how the Stage One recipient will remain involved in the Stage Two activities. No Stage Two applicant that is not either 1) a Stage One recipient OR 2) includes a Letter of Designation in their Stage Two application, will be considered eligible for a Stage Two SMART Grant.

All applicants must be eligible entities per section 2.a of this NOFO. A template for Letters of Designation is available on the SMART Grants website at www.transportation.gov/gov/grants/smart/smart-grants-stage-2.

d) **Appendix IV: Letters of Commitment – no more than two pages per letter; no more than 10 pages for the complete Appendix IV.**

Applicants should submit letters of commitment for **critical partners involved in the project.** This appendix should be no more than 10 pages, and each letter should be no more than 2 pages. For the purposes of the SMART Grants Program, critical partners are organizations that will not directly apply to the program as an eligible applicant but are committed to supporting a SMART Grants proposal in a meaningful way.

Letters of Commitment that are attached to a SMART Grants application will be reviewed for the quality of their commitments, not necessarily the quantity. A template for Letters of Commitment is available on the SMART Grants website at https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-letters-commitment-template.

Letters of Support include letters from members of Congress. To reduce the burden for applicants, the SMART Implementation Grants application NOFO does not require Letters of Support. However, a member of Congress may email a Letter of Support to **USDOT's Office of Government Affairs at OSTGovAffairs@dot.gov. The sender should copy smart@dot.gov on the email.** The letter should be addressed to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

e) **Appendix V: Project Location File**

Applicants should submit one of the following file types with project location identification: Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ. This file will be uploaded to Valid Eval along with the other required application components.

The project area(s) identified in the project location file should be as specific as is possible at the time of application submittal. The SMART Grants Program recognizes that not all projects will be able to identify exact project sites. The project location file should represent all geographic locations under consideration for the project.

In order to prepare one of these files, these are the suggested instructions:
1. Use GIS software, or open a publicly available online mapping tool, for example, Google Earth or GEOJSON. USDOT does not endorse any particular software or online mapping tool.

2. Identify the project location(s). Use the tools to add a polygon to represent the project area(s).
3. Export, save, and upload the attachment to the application on Valid Eval in one of the acceptable formats (zipped shapefile, GEOJSON, KML/KMZ).

Please refer to the job aid(s) on the SMART Grants Website for additional guidance on how to develop a project location file.

Additional appendices will not be reviewed.

b) **For AV Implementation Grants:** Applications must be submitted at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_AV/signup. Applications submitted to Grants.gov will not be accepted or reviewed.

More detailed information about each application material is provided below.

i) Standard Forms: **All applicants, for both Stage Two Implementation Grants and AV Implementation Grants, must submit the following Standard Forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) or, if applicable, Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C), and the Certification Regarding Lobbying form. If applicable, applicants should also complete the Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL). These forms can be found on the Valid Eval application page.**

Regarding signatures, we ask that authorized representatives either:
(a) Print the appropriate documents, physically sign the documents in ink, and re-upload the documents to Valid Eval OR
(b) Download the appropriate documents, provide a digital signature/digital certificate, and re-upload the documents to Valid Eval.

Key Information Questions for AV Implementation Grants: This is a preview list of the questions that are asked on USDOT's automated proposal website at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_AV/signup. After registering in the system, the applicant will be prompted to answer the following questions on the website:

Title	Instructions
1) AV Project Name	Enter a concise, descriptive title for the project. This should be the same title used in the Grants.gov SF-424 submission and the application narrative. The SMART Grants Program recommends a unique title of 100 characters or less. Do not title your project 'SMART Grant' or similar.
2) Lead Applicant Name	This should be consistent with Q. 8.a. of the SF-424.
3) Lead Applicant Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)	See Section 4.e for more information about obtaining a UEI from SAM.gov. The UEI must be current and

	not expired. The UEI must be in an "active" status, not "assigned."
4) Eligible Applicant Type	Indicate the eligible applicant type for your application: 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. If this is a group application, please identify the eligible applicant type of the lead applicant.
5) Was a similar application submitted in the past two years, or do you anticipate a similar application will be submitted for funding in the coming year for this project under **any other USDOT discretionary grant programs**	If yes, please include the name of the discretionary grant program, the project title of the similar grant application, and the name of the lead applicant. Please also indicate the application status (Planned, Submitted, Selected, or Not Selected).
6) Was any other Federal funding previously received for this project? This may include funding received from USDOT as well as other Federal agencies.	If yes, indicate the amount of Federal funding received and the relevant grant number.
7) What organizations will be considered partners on this project?	List all critical project partners. This could include other eligible applicant types (e.g., States, a political subdivision of a State, etc.) as well as those in industry, academia, nonprofits, and other traditional and non-traditional partners).[18]
9. One Sentence Description of AV project	Describe your AV project in one sentence using the following format: "This project will use X (technology(ies) to address Y (problem(s) to be solved) in Z (context or project area)." The sentence should describe the implementation of the project as described in the AV application. The One Sentence Description of successful applicants may be published by USDOT and, therefore, must not contain classified, proprietary, or confidential information.
10. Brief Project Description	Describe the project in plain language, using no more than 200 words. It is recommended that applicants use the following format: - One sentence on the problem to be solved. - One sentence describing the anticipated AV Implementation project activities.

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[18] Letters of Commitment should be written for critical partners only. For a Letter of Commitment template, see www.transportation.gov/SMART.

	• One sentence describing the anticipated impacts of the AV Implementation project. Please do not describe the project's benefits, background, or alignment with the selection criteria in this description field. A longer, narrative description will be provided in the Project Narrative. The Brief Project Description of successful applicants may be published by USDOT and, therefore, must not contain classified, proprietary or confidential information.
11. Primary Project Location	Identify the primary location where the project will take place. If more than one location, please list additional locations in the next question. 1. If your project will be conducted in a specific city, cities, or town(s), indicate the primary location at which the project will take place using [City, State] as the format. 2. If your project will be conducted at the county, regional, or MPO-level, please note the closest or most relevant [City, State] location for the project and indicate if this location represents a "county," "region," or "MPO." This information will be used for mapping purposes. 3. If your project will be conducted Statewide, please indicate the name of the State. 4. If your project will be conducted in a tribal community, please note the closest or most relevant [City, State] location for the project. This information will be used for mapping purposes.
12. Other Project Locations	Identify additional project locations, if applicable, using the same instructions as the previous question. All additional locations should be in [City, State] format.
13. What congressional district(s) is your project located in?	Use the following format: StateAbbrv.-DistrictNumber (e.g., CO-1, TX-ALL)
14. Size of Community Receiving Benefits	Indicate the size of the community (large community; midsized community; regional partnership; or rural community) that will primarily benefit from the project. • Large Community: 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. • Midsized Community: Any community that is not a large community or a rural community.

	• 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, which defines "urbanized area" as an area encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an "urbanized area" by the Secretary of Commerce. Please use 87 FR 80114 to confirm that your project location is not delineated by the Census Bureau as a 2020 urbanized area based on 2020 Census of Population and Housing counts and density calculations. • Regional Partnership: A partnership composed of two or more eligible applicants located in jurisdictions with a combined population that is equal to or greater than the population of any midsized community.
15. Is the project located (entirely or partially) in an Area of Persistent Poverty based on its location in a census tract identified as in "persistent poverty" in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification Tool. For the purposes of this NOFO the terms underserved or disadvantaged community will be defined as Areas of Persistent Poverty as noted in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification tool.	Indicate Yes, No, or Statewide Project. Only select "Statewide Project" if the project will not have specific project sites within a State.
16. If you responded "Yes" to Question 15, please identify the relevant census tract(s) that contribute to this designation. Be sure to use the full census tract number identified in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification tool.	
17. Project Cost: Amount Requested	Total dollar amount requested (rounded to the nearest dollar).
18. Project Cost: Total Project Cost	Total project cost requested for AV Implementation Grant, including dollar amount requested and other funding contributions (rounded to the nearest dollar).
19. Proposed Duration of AV Implementation Project (in months)	May be up to 36 months.

22. Does this project relate to traffic or parking enforcement; or license plate reader activities?	Indicate "Yes" or "No." Note that SMART grants shall <u>not</u> be used for any current or future traffic or parking enforcement activity, or to purchase or lease a license plate reader.
23. Is an exemption, waiver, permit, or special permission required to conduct the proposed project?	If yes, indicate the exemption, waiver, permit, or special permission obtained. If a waiver has not been obtained, please indicate the plan or process for obtaining it in your Project Narrative.
24. Anticipated Stage Two NEPA Class of Action and Requirements	Referencing the SMART NEPA Readiness Guidance https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-environmental-review-readiness-guidance, state the anticipated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) class of action for your Stage Two project as well as any anticipated environmental approvals and permits you have already acquired, or which will be needed for the proposed project. If you are unsure, please explain your expected coordination to determine this. The SMART Grants Program recommends that this section be 200 words or less.
25. What environmental risks or concerns (e.g. historical structures, local traffic / work zone impacts, etc.) do you expect during project implementation? How are you planning to mitigate the risks / concerns?	Refer to the SMART NEPA Readiness Guidance (https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-environmental-review-readiness-guidance) to complete this answer. The SMART Grants Program recommends that this section be 300 words or less.

ii) **Project Narrative:** The primary purpose of the Narrative is for the applicant to state their case for meeting the merit criteria laid out in Section 5. The Narrative should not exceed ten pages; this does not include the required appendices. A cover page and table of contents are not required but would not count toward the ten-page narrative if included. Figures are considered part of the ten-page narrative.

The Narrative and Appendices I-III should be in PDF format, with a font size of no less than 12-point Times New Roman, single-spaced, minimum 1-inch margins on all sides, and page numbers. Appendix IV should be uploaded to the application in Valid Eval as a Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ file. Suggested approximate lengths for each subsection of the Narrative are noted in parentheses.

(1) Overview/Project Description (suggested 2-3 pages)

This section should provide a clear, concise description of the project, the real-world issues and challenges to be addressed, and the proposed technology(ies) to be used. This should focus on the anticipated outcomes for a potential AV Implementation project. Applicants should also briefly discuss how the proposed project addresses the goals of the SMART Grants Program and how the project plans to improve upon the status quo of the transportation system. This section should

address the Technical Merit Criteria: Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved (see Section 5).

(2) Project Location (suggested 1-2 paragraphs)

This section should provide a description of the geographic area or jurisdiction that the project will serve, including the community size (large, midsized, rural, or a regional partnership). The project location description should also narratively identify the following:

(a); whether the project is located (entirely or partially) in an Area of Persistent Poverty[19] based on the [BUILD Grant Project Verification tool.](#)

If applicable, the narrative must identify the relevant census tract(s) that contribute to this designation, as stated in Key Information Question #16. If the proposed project is Statewide and will not have specific sites within a State, please note this instead of listing all of the State's Areas of Persistent Poverty Census tracts.

(b) the 2020 Census-designated urban area(s) where the project is located, if relevant. Please refer to [87 FR 80114](#) for a list of Census-designated urban areas.

Note that applicants are asked to provide precise locations for each project in the Key Information Questions Table. It is expected that when the applicant submits the AV Implementation proposal, precise location(s) for the demonstration will be known. However, if this is not the case, this section should explain and identify which geographic locations are under consideration for the project to be implemented and what analysis will be used in a final determination.

(3) Technical Merit Overview (suggested 2-3 pages)

This section should provide an overview of the technical merit of the proposed project, responding to the criteria for assessment and selection in Section 5.b of this Notice and including a compelling narrative to highlight how the application addresses the following Technical Merit criteria:

- Appropriateness of Proposed Solution
- Expected Benefits: Outcomes in alignment with IIJA Priorities in Section 3.c and below. Applicants are not expected to address all of these issues, however, please indicate which of these are addressed by the project in the narrative:
  - Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public;
  - Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public;
  - Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care;
  - Connect or expand access underserved communities and reduce transportation costs;
  - Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness;
  - Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems;
  - Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems;
  - Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service providers, to the extent practicable;
  - Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution;
  - Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and

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[19] This definition is in 49 U.S.C. 6702(a)(1).

    o Improve emergency response.

Applicants should describe the anticipated benefits of the full implementation proposed in the application.

    (4) Project Readiness Overview (suggested 3 pages)

This section should provide an overview of the project readiness, responding to the criteria for assessment and selection in Section 5.b of this Notice and including a compelling narrative to highlight how the application addresses the following Project Readiness criteria:

- Feasibility of Workplan
  - o Applicants should include a detailed workplan that demonstrates awareness of relevant legal, policy, and regulatory requirements associated with the project activities and the feasibility of completing the AV Implementation activities within the anticipated timeline, including and potential impacts due to supply chain and purchasing delays. Applicants should also include a description of their plans to procure or lease the AVs to be used in the project, or if the AVs are already procured or leased, that information should be included in this section. This section should also cover the applicant's plans for cybersecurity and protecting the privacy and physical safety of the public.
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
  - o Discuss project partners, their roles, and activities for community engagement.
- Leadership and Qualifications
  - o Discuss the leadership team and their qualifications to successful execute the proposed project.

5) Appendices
  b. Appendix I: Resumes – maximum 3 pages or less

Applicants shall submit the abbreviated resumes of the key individuals involved in the project. This appendix should be no more than three pages.

  c. Appendix II: Summary Budget Narrative – maximum 3 pages or less

Applicants shall provide a summary budget narrative that corresponds to and describes information contained in the applicant's SF-424A and/or SF-424C. The narrative should describe all planned project costs for Stage Two (e.g.., personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, construction, and other) and how these planned costs relate to the project scope. Note that the SF-424A and the budget narrative should include travel costs that assumes three in-person meetings in Washington, D.C. or Cambridge MA (one annually for the period of the grant).

The information needed in the budget narrative is as follows and directly corresponds with the format of the SF-424A or SF-424C. Applicants shall use the below categories as headings in their budget narrative but are encouraged to explain in detail how funds will be used in support of the project goals:

1. **Personnel** – Provide the cost breakdown of how this figure was calculated (e.g., hours/position/rate).
2. **Fringe Benefits** – Provide the fringe benefits rate.

3. **Travel** – Provide a cost breakdown of the number of trips, location, number of personnel, etc., if applicable. Please include travel costs which assume three in-person meetings in Washington, D.C. or Cambridge MA for up to four people.
4. **Equipment** – Provide a detailed estimate of tangible personal property costs as described in 2 CFR § 200.33. This should include items with a per-unit acquisition cost of $5,000 or more (including information technology systems). If your agency has a different threshold for equipment purchases, please provide information about your agency's equipment threshold policy.
5. **Supplies** – Please provide an estimate of tangible personal property costs that have a unit cost of less than $5,000.
6. **Contractual** – Provide the cost of any contractual support, if applicable.
7. **Construction** – Describe construction activities as listed on an SF-424C, if applicable.
8. **Other** – Provide a description of any costs listed as "other." This could include training or other expenses that the applicant wishes to include separately.
9. **Indirect Charges** – Provide the indirect cost calculations, including a description of the base (i.e., Modified Total Direct Cost).

In addition to the categories listed above, please complete this AV specific breakout below.

10. **AV or ADS Costs**- please provide details on the anticipated cost of procuring or leasing the vehicles to be used in the project. If you have an existing agreement or term sheet from a current vendor, please include in addition to filling out this table. The term sheet or current agreement submitted will not be included in the page limit for this section.

	Type of Vehicle	Type of Vehicle	Type of Vehicle	Notes
Number of Vehicles				
Lease or Purchase?				
For Purchases: Purchase Cost Per Vehicle (if Applicable)				
For Purchases: Yearly Cost Operations and Maintenance per Vehicle				
For Leases: Yearly Lease Cost				
Status of Procurement/Lease	Completed/In force or Pending or Not Started			

The summary budget narrative must be sufficiently clear, concise, and detailed to describe how funds will be spent on the project. Applicants are expected to account for data and performance reporting in their budget submission, consistent with section 7.g. of this NOFO.

The Department may share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

f) **Appendix III:**
Letters of Commitment – no more than two pages per letter; no more than 10 pages for the complete Appendix III.
Applicants should submit letters of commitment for **critical partners involved in the project.** This appendix should be no more than 10 pages, and each letter should be no more than 2 pages. For the purposes of the SMART Grants Program, critical partners are organizations that will not directly apply to the program as an eligible applicant but are committed to supporting a SMART Grants proposal in a meaningful way.

Letters of Commitment that are attached to a SMART Grants application will be reviewed for the quality of their commitments, not necessarily the quantity. A template for Letters of Commitment is available on the SMART Grants website at https://www.transportation.gov/grants/smart/smart-letters-commitment-template.

Letters of Support include letters from members of Congress. To reduce the burden for applicants, the SMART Implementation Grants NOFO does not require Letters of Support. However, a member of Congress may email a Letter of Support to **USDOT's Office of Government Affairs at OSTGovAffairs@dot.gov. The sender should copy smart@dot.gov on the email.** The letter should be addressed to the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

g) **Appendix IV: Project Location File**
Applicants should submit one of the following file types with project location identification: Shapefile, GEOJSON, or KML/KMZ. This file will be uploaded to Valid Eval along with the other required application components.

The project area(s) identified in the project location file should be as specific as is possible at the time of application submittal. The SMART Grants Program recognizes that not all projects will be able to identify exact project sites. The project location file should represent all geographic locations under consideration for the project.

In order to prepare one of these files, these are the suggested instructions:
1. Use GIS software, or open a publicly available online mapping tool, for example, Google Earth or GEOJSON. USDOT does not endorse any particular software or online mapping tool.
2. Identify the project location(s). Use the tools to add a polygon to represent the project area(s).
3. Export, save, and upload the attachment to the application on Valid Eval in one of the acceptable formats (zipped shapefile, GEOJSON, KML/KMZ).

Please refer to the job aid(s) on the SMART Grants Website for additional guidance on how to develop a project location file.

Additional appendices will not be reviewed.

c) **Identifying Private Vendors**

Applicants are welcome to identify private sector vendors in the application but are not required to select vendors in advance. The SMART Grants Program does not require any particular procurement process beyond compliance with the requirements of 2 CFR Part 200.

When procuring property and services under a Federal award, a State must follow the same policies and procedures it uses for procurements from its non-Federal funds. The State will comply and ensure that every purchase order or other contract includes any clauses required. All other non-Federal entities, including subrecipients of a State, must follow the procurement standards in 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart D. The non-Federal entity must have and use documented procurement procedures, consistent with State, local, and tribal laws and regulations and the standards of this section, for the acquisition of property or services required under a Federal award or subaward. The non-Federal entity's documented procurement procedures must conform to the procurement standards identified in 2 CFR Part 200.

d) **Sharing of Application Information**

The Department may share application information within the Department or with other Federal agencies if the Department determines that sharing is relevant to the respective program's objectives.

e) Application Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Address to Request Application Package
All grant application materials can be accessed at grants.gov under the Notice of Funding Opportunity Number DOT-SMART-FY25-02. However, applications should not be submitted on Grants.gov, and USDOT will not review any applications submitted via Grants.gov. Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online submission proposal system used by USDOT at the following URLs:

For Stage Two Implementation Grants: at
https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_stage_2/signup.

For AV Implementation Grants: at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_AV/signup.

Potential applicants may also request paper copies of materials at:

Telephone: 202-875-0520
Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
E37-303
Washington, DC 20590

f) Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)
Each applicant is required to: (i) be registered in SAM (https://sam.gov/content/home) before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The UEI must be current and not expired. The UEI must also be in an "active" status, not "assigned." To request a UEI, please visit SAM.gov. Note that this may take up to thirty days.

USDOT may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time USDOT is ready to make an award, USDOT may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

g) Submission Date and Time
Applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM ET on Friday, December 12, 2025.

h) Funding Restrictions
Per IIJA requirements, of the funds awarded each fiscal year for the SMART Grants Program, not more than forty percent shall be used to provide SMART grants for eligible projects that primarily benefit large communities; not more than thirty percent shall be provided for eligible projects that primarily benefit midsized communities; and not more than thirty percent shall be used to provide SMART grants for eligible projects that primarily benefit rural communities or regional partnerships.

In addition, an eligible applicant may not use more than three percent of the amount of a SMART grant for each fiscal year to achieve compliance with applicable planning and reporting requirements.

i) Other Submission Requirements
Applications must be submitted via Valid Eval, an online submission proposal system used by USDOT at the following URLs:

For Stage Two Implementation Grants:
at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_stage_2/signup.

For AV Implementation Grants: at https://usg.valideval.com/teams/usdot_smart_AV/signup.

5) Application Review Information
a) Responsiveness Review
For each application, an initial review will assess whether the applicant is eligible (based on eligibility information in Section 2 and contains all the information requested in Section 5 for a complete application. Eligible and complete applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for their merit based on the selection criteria in Section 6b.

b) Review Criteria
This section specifies the criteria USDOT will use to assess and select applications for Implementation SMART grant awards. These include Technical Merit Criteria, Project Readiness and Other Considerations. The criteria for Stage Two Implementation Grants and AV Implementation Grants differ slightly and are divided into two sections below

   i) Stage Two Implementation Grants:
      (1) Technical Merit Selection Criteria

Stage Two Grants will be assessed against three technical merit criteria:

- **Technical Merit Criterion #1: Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved**
  - The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of existing conditions, which includes baseline data collected in Stage One to illustrate the need for an at-scale implementation. This could include the current or historic levels of performance for key goal areas (e.g. safety goals, mobility goals, etc.).
  - The proposed solution addresses a documented and critical problem or need.
  - The applicant describes the Stage One activities and the preliminary evidence around how those activities affected the problem(s), making the case that expanding the project as described will continue to impact the problem(s) positively.
- **Technical Merit Criterion #2: Appropriateness of Proposed Solution**
  - Technologies proposed are sufficiently developed such that there is good reason to anticipate public benefits from their use, and that they can be repeated and scaled.
  - The applicant describes lessons learned from the Stage One activities that illustrate the appropriateness of the proposed solution (e.g. selecting a specific equipment model after testing several in local conditions).
  - The proposed solution represents a demonstrable improvement over the status quo, and evidence is provided from Stage One to support this claim.
  - The proposed solution is appropriate for the location's population density and existing transportation system, including public transportation.
- **Technical Merit Criterion #3: Expected Benefits**
  - The application clearly explains the rationale for expecting that the proposed project will use advanced data, technology, and applications to provide significant benefits in alignment with IIJA Priorities in Section 3.c and below. Applicants are not expected to address all of these issues, however they should indicate which of these are addressed by the project in the narrative:
    - Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public;
    - Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public;
    - Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care;
    - Connect or expand access underserved communities and reduce transportation costs;
    - Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness;
    - Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems;
    - Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems;
    - Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service providers, to the extent practicable;
    - Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution;
    - Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and
    - Improve emergency response.

o The rationale is accompanied by preliminary findings from the assessment of the Stage One activities and material presented in the Draft or Final Implementation Report, as applicable.

o The application identifies several robust performance metrics that align with the project's expected benefits and community impacts (as well as performance improvements and cost savings) and could be used to assess whether full scale implementation of the project would advance Departmental and Program Priorities.

(2) Project Readiness Selection Criteria

Project Readiness focuses on the extent to which the applicant will be able to substantially execute and complete the full scope of work in the Stage Two Implementation Grant application within 36 months of when the grant is executed.

- **Project Readiness Criterion #1: Feasibility of Workplan**
  o The application clearly describes a thorough and realistic workplan and timeline. The application should also demonstrate the ability to complete the project in the proposed period of performance and includes learnings from the Stage One activities that may inform or impact the feasibility of the Stage Two timeline.
  o The application identifies and understands the legal, policy, and regulatory requirements and identifies and accounts for any relevant exemptions, waivers, permits, or special permissions required to conduct the proposed project. The applicant provides a clear plan to acquire any necessary exemptions, waivers, permits, or special permissions if they have not already been acquired in the course of the Stage One activities
  o The application adequately accounts for relevant cybersecurity and privacy concerns, particularly as pertains to personal privacy and data of members of the public.
  o The application includes an appropriate and reasonable budget for the proposed solution.
- **Project Readiness Criterion #2: Community Engagement and Partnerships**
  o The application shows a plan to build sustainable partnerships across sectors and governmental jurisdictions and collaborate with industry, academia, and nonprofits, such as community and workforce development organizations.
  o The applicant engages relevant private sector stakeholders and technical experts and elicits their perspective on the implementation of the proposed solution.
  o The application establishes commitment partner(s), if relevant, as identified in the project narrative. This should be demonstrated by a Letter of Commitment submitted as an attachment to the proposal. A key partner may be a public agency, utility company, private sector company, or some other entity that is central, and critical to the project.
- **Project Readiness Criterion #3: Leadership and Qualifications**
  o The application demonstrates relevant and necessary technical expertise of the project team.
  o The application details relevant experience of leadership in managing multi-stakeholder projects.

o The application shows continuity of committed leadership and the applicant's functional capacity to carry out the proposed project and, where applicable, to maintain and operate the project after the conclusion of Stage Two.

o If the lead applicant is not a Stage One recipient, the application establishes clear reasoning and line of succession for the designation of the Stage Two Applicant organization through the Letter of Designation as described in Section D. If lead applicant is the Stage One recipient, this criterion does not apply.

(3) Additional Selection Considerations

Among projects of similar merit, DOT will prioritize SMART Grant funding applications that demonstrate the following characteristics, as identified in IIJA:

(a) Demonstrate smart city or community technologies in repeatable ways that can rapidly be scaled;

(b) Encourage public and private sharing of data and best practices;

(c) Encourage private-sector innovation by promoting industry-driven technology standards, open platforms, technology-neutral requirements, and interoperability;

(d) Promote a skilled workforce that is inclusive of minority or disadvantaged groups;

(e) Allow for the measurement and validation of the cost savings and performance improvements associated with the installation and use of smart city or community technologies and practices;

(f) Encourage the adoption of smart city or community technologies by communities;

(g) Promote industry practices regarding cybersecurity, including toughening Positioning, Navigation and Timing systems; and

(h) Safeguard individual privacy.

The Department also intends to apply principles from DOT Order 2100.7, Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities , when evaluating applications and making award selections. To the maximum extent permitted by law, OST will prioritize projects that are in alignment with the principles outlined in DOT Order 2100.7.

In addition, The Department intends to comply with principles from E.O. Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking such that:

- Applicants should commit to complying with administration policies, procedures, and guidance respecting Gold Standard Science.

- Discretionary awards should include clear benchmarks for measuring success and progress towards relevant goals and, as relevant for awards pertaining to scientific research, a commitment to achieving Gold Standard Science.

ii) **AV Implementation Grants:**

(1) Technical Merit Selection Criteria

AV Grants will be assessed against three technical merit criteria:

- **Technical Merit Criterion #1: Identification and Understanding of the Problem to Be Solved**
  - The applicant demonstrates a thorough understanding of existing conditions, which includes baseline data illustrate the need for an at-scale implementation. This could include the current or historic levels of performance for key goal areas (e.g. safety goals, mobility goals, etc.).
  - The proposed solution addresses a documented and critical problem or need.
- **Technical Merit Criterion #2: Appropriateness of Proposed Solution**
  - Technologies proposed are sufficiently developed such that there is good reason to anticipate public benefits from their use, and that they can be repeated and scaled.
  - The applicant describes the appropriateness of the proposed solution (e.g. selecting a specific equipment model after testing several in local conditions).
  - The proposed solution represents a demonstrable improvement over the status quo, and evidence is provided to support this claim.
  - The proposed solution is appropriate for the location's population density and existing transportation system, including public transportation.
- **Technical Merit Criterion #3: Expected Benefits**
  - The application clearly explains the rationale for expecting that the proposed project will use advanced data, technology, and applications to provide significant benefits in alignment with IIJA Priorities in Section 3.c and below. Applicants are not expected to address all of these issues, however they should indicate which of these are addressed by the project in the narrative:
    - Reduce congestion and delays for commerce and the traveling public;
    - Improve the safety and integration of transportation facilities and systems for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the broader traveling public;
    - Improve access to jobs, education, and essential services, including health care;
    - Connect or expand access underserved communities and reduce transportation costs;
    - Contribute to medium- and long-term economic competitiveness;
    - Improve the reliability of existing transportation facilities and systems;
    - Promote connectivity between and among connected vehicles, roadway infrastructure, pedestrians, bicyclists, the public, and transportation systems;
    - Incentivize private sector investments or partnerships, including by working with mobile and fixed telecommunication service providers, to the extent practicable;
    - Improve energy efficiency or reduce pollution;
    - Increase the resiliency of the transportation system; and
    - Improve emergency response.
  - The application identifies several robust performance metrics that align with the project's expected benefits and community impacts (as well as performance improvements and cost savings) and could be used to assess whether full scale implementation of the project would advance Departmental and Program Priorities.

(2) Project Readiness Selection Criteria

Project Readiness focuses on the extent to which the applicant will be able to substantially execute and complete the full scope of work in the AV Implementation Grant application within 36 months of when the grant is executed.

- **Project Readiness Criterion #1: Feasibility of Workplan**
  o The application clearly describes a thorough and realistic workplan and timeline. The application should also demonstrate the ability to complete the project in the proposed period of performance and includes a detailed and realistic timeline for exemptions, waivers and AV procurement processes.
  o The application identifies and understands the legal, policy, and regulatory requirements and identifies and accounts for any relevant exemptions, waivers, permits, or special permissions required to conduct the proposed project. The applicant provides a clear plan to acquire any necessary exemptions, waivers, permits, or special permissions if they have not already been acquired at the time of application.
  o The application clearly explains how the AVs to be used in the project will be procured or leased, or if they have already been procured or leased. Applications that demonstrate AVs are already procured or leased or clearly demonstrate a realistic plan to procure or lease in timely manner (e.g. a draft, published or concurrent RFP process and/or advanced engagement with applicant's internal procurement office) will be rated more favorably.
  o The application adequately accounts for relevant cybersecurity and privacy concerns, particularly as pertains to personal privacy and data of members of the public.
  o The application includes an appropriate and reasonable budget for the proposed solution.
- **Project Readiness Criterion #2: Community Engagement and Partnerships**
  o The application shows a plan to build sustainable partnerships across sectors and governmental jurisdictions and collaborate with industry, academia, and nonprofits, such as community and workforce development organizations.
  o The applicant engages relevant private sector stakeholders and technical experts and elicits their perspective on the implementation of the proposed solution.
  o The application establishes commitment partner(s), if relevant, as identified in the project narrative. This should be demonstrated by a Letter of Commitment submitted as an attachment to the proposal. A key partner may be a public agency, utility company, private sector company, or some other entity that is central, and critical to the project.
- **Project Readiness Criterion #3: Leadership and Qualifications**
  o The application demonstrates relevant and necessary technical expertise of the project team.
  o The application details relevant experience of leadership in managing multi-stakeholder projects.
  o The application shows committed leadership and the applicant's functional capacity to carry out the proposed project.

3) Additional Selection Considerations

Among projects of similar merit, DOT will prioritize SMART Grant funding applications that demonstrate the following characteristics, as identified in IIJA:

(i) Demonstrate smart city or community technologies in repeatable ways that can rapidly be scaled;

(j) Encourage public and private sharing of data and best practices;

(k) Encourage private-sector innovation by promoting industry-driven technology standards, open platforms, technology-neutral requirements, and interoperability;

(l) Promote a skilled workforce that is inclusive of minority or disadvantaged groups;

(m) Allow for the measurement and validation of the cost savings and performance improvements associated with the installation and use of smart city or community technologies and practices;

(n) Encourage the adoption of smart city or community technologies by communities;

(o) Promote industry practices regarding cybersecurity, including toughening Positioning, Navigation and Timing systems; and

(p) Safeguard individual privacy.

The Department also intends to apply principles from DOT Order 2100.7, [Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities](), when evaluating applications and making award selections. To the maximum extent permitted by law, OST will prioritize projects that are in alignment with the principles outlined in DOT Order 2100.7.

In addition, The Department intends to comply with principles from [E.O. Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking]() such that:

- Applicants should commit to complying with administration policies, procedures, and guidance respecting Gold Standard Science.
- Discretionary awards should include clear benchmarks for measuring success and progress towards relevant goals and, as relevant for awards pertaining to scientific research, a commitment to achieving Gold Standard Science.

iii) Review and Selection Process

This section addresses the IIJA requirement to include a full description in the NOFO of the method by which applicants will be assessed. The SMART grant program review and selection process consists of intake, draft implementation report review, merit criteria review, senior review, and selection and award. The Secretary, or their designee, makes the final selections.

iv) Eligibility Review

For each application, an initial review will assess whether the applicant is eligible (based on eligibility information in Section 2 and contains all the information requested in Section 4 for a complete application. Eligible and complete applications received by the deadline will be reviewed for their merit based on the selection criteria in Section 5.

v) Draft and Final Implementation Reports (For Stage Two Implementation Applicants only)

When a Stage One recipient applies for a Stage Two award, the Draft or Final Implementation Report that is required as part of Stage One reporting, along with the Subject Matter Expert (SME) assessment of the Draft or Final Implementation Report, will be provided to the assessment team

for inclusion in the Stage Two assessment For this Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Draft Implementation Report or Final Implementation Report (whichever is more current) completed by each Stage One Recipient will be assessed. SMART Draft or Final Implementation Reports are due depending on when Stage One recipients began their period of performance. All recipients have twelve months to submit their Draft Implementation Reports and 18 months to submit their Final Implementation Reports. If the deadline for the Draft or Final Implementation Report occurs after the deadline for applications to this NOFO, the Draft or Final Implementation Report will be assessed and forwarded to the assessment team once it is received on its due date.

Draft or Final Implementation Reports must be received by the SMART Program Office by their due date in order to be assessed and included in the assessment. If the Draft or Final Implementation report is not received on time and therefore not reviewed by the assessment team, the application will be judged to be incomplete and ineligible for award. The Draft or Final Implementation Report is not required to be submitted through Valid Eval as part of the Stage Two application package, but to the SMART inbox at smartreports@dot.gov no later than 12 months (for Draft Implementation Reports) or 18 months (for Final Implementation Reports) after execution of the Stage One grant. SMART program staff will confirm receipt and include the assessment of the Draft or Final Implementation Report by the SMEs in the materials provided to Stage Two reviewers.

Any applicant whose period of performance began after April 2025 will not be eligible to respond to this Notice of Funding Opportunity but may apply to a future Stage Two SMART NOFO.

vi) Technical Merit and Project Readiness Criteria Ratings

Teams comprising USDOT staff, Federal inter-agency partner staff, and contractor staff review all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline for a Technical Merit and Project Readiness Review and assign ratings as described in the table below. For each criterion, USDOT will consider whether the application narrative is responsive to the selection criterion focus areas which will result in a rating of 'superior,' 'satisfactory,' 'marginal,' or 'unsatisfactory.'

Rating Scale	Superior	Satisfactory	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Description	The application is substantively and comprehensively responsive to the criterion. It makes a strong case about advancing the program goals as described in the criterion descriptions.	The application is moderately responsive to the criterion. It makes a moderate case about advancing the program goals as described in the criterion descriptions.	The application is minimally responsive to the criterion. It makes a weak case about advancing the program goals as described in the criterion descriptions.	The application is counter to the criterion or does not contain sufficient information. It does not advance or may negatively impact criterion goals.

After the individual assessments are completed, the assessment team will come to an overall consensus rating of 'Highly Recommended,' 'Recommended,' 'Not Recommended,' or 'Ineligible' for each application. The overall consensus rating will be assigned based on the individual criteria ratings. Stage Two Implementation Grants review will include consideration of the SME assessment of the Draft or Final Implementation Report,

Applications determined to be 'not recommended' will receive no further consideration for award.

vii) Senior Review Team (SRT) Phase

Once every eligible and complete application has been assigned an overall rating based on the methodology above, all "Highly Recommended" and selected "Recommended" applications will be included in a list of Applications for Consideration. The SRT will review whether the list of "Highly Recommended" applications is sufficient to ensure that of the funds awarded each fiscal year for the SMART Grants Program, not more than forty percent will be used to provide SMART grants for eligible projects that primarily benefit large communities; not more than thirty percent will be used to provide SMART grants for eligible projects that primarily benefit midsized communities; and not more than thirty percent will be used to provide SMART grants for eligible projects that primarily benefit rural communities or regional partnerships. "Recommended" applications may be added to the proposed list of Applications for Consideration until a sufficient number of applications are on the list to ensure that all legislative requirements as well as program objectives can be met. Among projects of similar merit, DOT will prioritize projects that have strong benefits in the Selection Consideration areas. To ensure the funding awards align, to the extent practical, to the departmental goals the SRT may review "Recommended" applications The Department will also consider the diversity of technology areas across all applications when reviewing recommendations.

The SRT will consider the list of Stage 2 Implementation applications and the list of AV Implementation Grant applications separately to determine which projects will be forwarded for Secretarial Review.

viii)   Compliance with DOT Order 2100.7, Ensuring Reliance upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities

The Department intends to apply principles from DOT Order 2100.7, Ensuring Reliance Upon Sound Economic Analysis in DOT's Policies, Programs and Activities , when evaluating applications and making award selections. To the maximum extent permitted by law, DOT will prioritize projects that are in alignment with the principles outlined in DOT Order 2100.7.

In addition, The Department intends to comply with principles from E.O. Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking such that:
- Applicants should commit to complying with administration policies, procedures, and guidance respecting Gold Standard Science.
- Discretionary awards should include clear benchmarks for measuring success and progress towards relevant goals and, as relevant for awards pertaining to scientific research, a commitment to achieving Gold Standard Science.

ix) Applications for USDOT Secretary's Review

The SRT will present the list of Applications for Consideration to the Secretary or their designee, as well as a list of all eligible applications, either collectively or through a representative of the SRT. The SRT may advise the Secretary on any application on the list of Applications for Consideration, including options for reduced award amounts, and the Secretary will make final selections. The Secretary's selections identify the applications that best address program requirements and are most worthy of funding. As required by IIJA, the Secretary will consider contributions to geographic diversity among grant recipients, including the need for balancing the needs of rural communities, midsized communities, and large communities. The Secretary also may consider geographic and organizational diversity when selecting SMART Grants Program awards.

The Secretary shall evaluate applications for SMART grants based on:
   (a) the extent to which the eligible entity or applicable beneficiary community--
   (b) has a public transportation system or other transit options capable of integration with other systems to improve mobility and efficiency;
   (c) has a population density and transportation needs conducive to demonstrating proposed strategies;
   (d) has continuity of committed leadership and the functional capacity to carry out the proposed project;
   (e) is committed to open data sharing with the public; and
   (f) is likely to successfully implement the proposed eligible project, including through technical and financial commitments from the public and private sectors.

x) Risk Review

Prior to entering into a grant agreement, each selected applicant will be subject to a risk assessment as required by 2 CFR § 200.206. The Department must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System [FAPIIS]). An applicant may review information in FAPIIS and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered. The Department will consider comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in FAPIIS, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants. Because award recipients under this program may be first-time recipients of Federal funding, USDOT is committed to implementing the program as flexibly as permitted by statute and to providing assistance to help award recipients through the process of securing a grant agreement and delivering SMART Grant projects. Award recipients are encouraged to identify any needs for assistance in delivering the projects and strategies so that USDOT can provide directly, or through a third party, sufficient support and technical assistance to mitigate potential execution risks.

The program office will evaluate any timeline or project readiness risks associated with the NEPA review processor or domestic sourcing requirements.

6) **Award Notices**

Following the assessment, the Secretary will announce awarded applications by posting a list of selected recipients at www.transportation.gov/smart. The posting of the list of selected award recipients will not constitute an authorization to begin performance. Following the announcement, the Department will contact the point of contact listed in the applicant SF-424 to initiate the negotiation of a grant agreement.

    a) Availability of Funds

Grant funding obligation occurs when a selected applicant and USDOT enter into a written grant agreement after the applicant has satisfied applicable administrative requirements. SMART funding is provided via reimbursement. Any costs incurred prior to USDOT's award announcement are ineligible for reimbursement. SMART Grant funds are available during the period of performance of the project (36 months).

    b) Start Dates and Period of Performance

USDOT expects to obligate SMART award funding via a signed grant agreement between the Department and the recipient as flexibly and expeditiously as possible. USDOT expects that recipients will be ready for a signed grant agreement no later than six (6) months after the announcement of awards, and recipients must fully liquidate grant funds by the end of the project's Period of Performance. If a recipient is unable to meet either of these deadlines, USDOT may de-obligate and/or reallocate any such funds. The expected period of performance for Stage 2 SMART grant agreements is up to 36 months.

7) Post-Award Requirements and Administration

    a) Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Critical Infrastructure Security, Cybersecurity, and Resilience

It is the policy of the United States to strengthen the security and resilience of its critical infrastructure against all hazards, including both physical and cyber threats, consistent with the - National Security Memorandum on Critical Infrastructure Security and Resilience (NSM-22), Executive Order 13905, 'Strengthening National Resilience Through Responsible Use of Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Services', and Space Policy Directive 7, 'The United States Space-Based Positioning, Navigation, and Timing Policy'. Each applicant selected for Federal funding under this notice must demonstrate, prior to the signing of the grant agreement, efforts to consider and address physical and cyber security risks relevant to the transportation mode and type and scale of the project. Projects that have not appropriately considered and addressed physical and cyber security and resilience in their planning, design, and project oversight, as determined by the Department of Homeland Security, will be required to do so before receiving funds.

    b) Domestic Preference Requirements

As expressed in Executive Order 14005, 'Ensuring the Future Is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers' (86 FR 7475), the executive branch should maximize, consistent with law, the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States. Funds made available under this notice are subject to domestic preference requirements based on the Operating Administration that administers the project, including 23 U.S.C. 313 (FHWA projects); 49 U.S.C. 5323(j) (FTA projects); 49 U.S.C. 22905(a) (FRA projects); and section 70914(a) of the Build America, Buy America Act (all projects). The Department expects all applicants to comply without needing a project-specific waiver for domestic preference requirements.

For additional information, please see the SMART Grant Recipient Domestic Preference Requirements Guidance. The Department expects all applicants to comply with these requirements.

  c) Civil Rights and Title VI

As a condition of a grant award, grant recipients should demonstrate that the recipient has a plan for compliance with civil rights obligations and nondiscrimination laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and implementing regulations (49 CFR part § 21) including any amendments thereto, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, all other civil rights requirements, and accompanying regulations. This should include a current Title VI plan, completed Community Participation Plan, and a plan to address any legacy infrastructure or facilities that are not compliant with ADA standards. DOT's and the applicable Operating Administrations' Office of Civil Rights may work with awarded grant recipients to ensure full compliance with Federal civil rights requirements.

  d) Federal Anti- Discrimination
   1. Except where prohibited by court order, pursuant to Executive Order 14173, Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity, as a condition of grant award, each Recipient must agree that its compliance in all respects with all applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws is material to the government's payment decisions for purposes of section 3729(b)(4) of title 31, United States Code
   2. Except where prohibited by court order, pursuant to Executive Order 14173, Ending Illegal Discrimination And Restoring Merit- Based Opportunity, as a condition of grant award, each Recipient must certify that it does not operate any programs promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives that violate any applicable Federal anti-discrimination laws.

  e) eCFR :: 2 CFR Part 1201 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards

All awards will be administered pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found in 2 C.F.R part 200, as adopted by DOT at 2 C.F.R part 1201. Federal wage rate requirements included in subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, U.S.C., apply to all projects receiving funds under this program, and apply to all parts of the project, whether funded with SMART Grant funds, other Federal funds, or non-Federal funds.

In connection with any program or activity conducted with or benefiting from funds awarded under this notice, recipients of funds must comply with all applicable requirements of Federal law, including, without limitation, the Constitution of the United States; the conditions of performance, non-discrimination requirements, and other assurances made applicable to the award of funds in accordance with regulations of the Department of Transportation; and applicable Federal financial assistance and contracting principles promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget. In complying with these requirements, recipients, in particular, must ensure that no concession agreements are denied or other contracting decisions made on the basis of speech or other activities protected by the First Amendment. If DOT determines that a recipient has failed to comply with

applicable Federal requirements, DOT may terminate the award of funds and disallow previously incurred costs, requiring the recipient to reimburse any expended award funds.

Additionally, applicable Federal laws, rules and regulations of the relevant operating administration administering the project will apply to the projects that receive SMART grant awards, including planning requirements, Service Outcome Agreements, Stakeholder Agreements, Buy America compliance, and other requirements under DOT's other highway, transit, rail, and port grant programs. For projects that are eligible under SMART but are not eligible under DOT's other programs or projects that are eligible under multiple DOT programs, the SMART program will determine the appropriate requirements to ensure the project is delivered consistent with program and Department goals. In particular, Executive Order 14005 directs the Executive Branch Departments and agencies to maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in, and services offered in, the United States through the terms and conditions of Federal financial assistance awards. If selected for an award, grant recipients must be prepared to demonstrate how they will maximize the use of domestic goods, products, and materials in constructing their project.

SMART grant projects involving vehicle acquisition must involve only vehicles that comply with applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and Federal Motor Carriers Safety Regulations, or vehicles that are exempt from Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards or Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in a manner that allows for the legal acquisition and deployment of the vehicle or vehicles.

f) Compliance with Federal Law and Policies

Except where prohibited by court order, the applicant assures and certifies, with respect to any application and awarded Project under this NOFO, that it will comply with all applicable Federal laws, regulations, executive orders, policies, guidelines, and requirements as they relate to the application, acceptance, and use of Federal funds and will cooperate with Federal officials in the enforcement of Federal law, including cooperating with and not impeding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other Federal offices and components of the Department of Homeland Security in and the enforcement of Federal immigration law.

g) Reporting

This section discusses reporting requirements for SMART.[20] USDOT will provide additional information and detail regarding reporting requirements and formats to recipients. All final reports under this agreement will be made publicly available. All publications resulting from this program shall follow USDOT publication guidelines and comply with the current USDOT Public Access Plan. In addition, data from these efforts are expected to be made widely available where appropriate, also in accordance with the USDOT Public Access Plan.[21]

i) Progress Reporting on Grant Activities

Each applicant selected for an Implementation Grant must submit quarterly progress reports and Federal Financial Reports (SF-425) to monitor project progress and ensure accountability and

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[20] Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) urges federal awarding agencies and federal assistance recipients and subrecipients to use program assessment as a critical tool to learn, to improve equitable delivery, and to elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle.

[21] https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/Official%20DOT%20Public%20Access%20Plan.pdf

financial transparency in the SMART Grants Program. A standard reporting format for the quarterly progress reports will be provided for recipients to summarize status updates including activities accomplished during the quarter, financial and schedule reporting, anticipated activities for the next quarter, and a description of project challenges and lessons learned.

ii) Assessment and Data Management Plans

To meaningfully document and measure their progress towards agency priority goals, recipients and subrecipients are required to incorporate program assessment from the outset of program design. This should include associated data collection activities[22]. Each applicant selected for a Stage Two Grant must submit an assessment plan and data management plan no later than three months after receiving the grant that provides an overview of how the project will be assessed, and how the data being collected will be managed and stored[23].

The assessment plan must describe the anticipated impact areas (i.e., goals) of the project as it is implemented at scale and the methods that will be used to estimate the anticipated benefits and costs associated with implementation. Based on these project goals, the plan must include robust performance metrics and measurable targets based on the project goals to provide continuous assessment of the deployment.

Data management plans must describe the data to be collected, format and metadata standards to be employed, policies for access, (re)use and derivatives, and plan for archiving and preservation of the data generated by the project, and an overview of data sharing opportunities[24].. The updated plans must also provide more detailed information on the types of data being collected and how that data will be managed and stored (e.g., cybersecurity practices, how privacy is protected, and entities that have access to the data).

iii) Implementation Report

Each applicant selected for an Implementation Grant must submit an annual implementation report that assesses the anticipated costs and benefits of the project and demonstrates the feasibility of at-scale implementation. The first report must be submitted 12 months after the Implementation grant begins and then annually thereafter. Per IIJA requirements, grant recipients must submit implementation reports that describe the deployment and operational costs of each project as compared to the benefits and savings from the project. The reports must describe:[25]

- The deployment and operational costs of each eligible project carried out by the eligible entity, as compared to the benefits and savings from the eligible project; and
- The means by which each eligible project carried out by the eligible entity has met the original expectation, as projected in the SMART grant application, including:
  - o Data describing the means by which the eligible project met the specific goals for the project, such as:
    - Reducing traffic-related fatalities and injuries;
    - Reducing traffic congestion or improving travel-time reliability;

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[22] Assessment means "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency." 5 U.S.C. § 311.

[23] Credible program assessment activities are implemented with relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics (OMB Circular A-11, Part 6 Section 290).

[24] Data sharing opportunities may include either interagency data sharing or open data sharing with the public.

[25] Section 25005(f) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act [Page 135 STAT. 844] https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text

- Providing the public with access to real-time integrated traffic, transit, and multimodal transportation information to make informed travel decisions; or
- Reducing barriers or improving access to jobs, education, or various essential services;
  - The effectiveness of providing to the public real-time integrated traffic, transit, and multimodal transportation information to make informed travel decisions; and
  - Lessons learned and recommendations for future deployment strategies to optimize transportation efficiency and multimodal system performance.

Implementation reports will provide an analysis of the anticipated costs and benefits and address project expectations by providing:
1. Data on the performance metrics for the deployment, so progress can be regularly assessed ;
2. Baseline data for assessment of the deployment,
3. Anticipated and/or estimated impact and effectiveness of the project based on the performance metrics;
4. Identification of challenges, opportunities, or best practices learned as the project progresses that related to the replicability of the project to other regions, including identifying additional partners or areas where the recipient would consider supporting further replication.

During the Implementation project, grant recipients may uncover previously unknown institutional barriers or technical limitations. In the implementation reports, recipients will describe the requirements for successful deployment and assess impact on the at-scale implementation. The assessment will include identified strategies or demonstrated progress in addressing the following implementation feasibility and readiness factors for consideration by others seeking to replicate the project elsewhere:
a. Legal, Policy, and Regulatory Requirements (e.g., environmental permits and reviews; public outreach; State and local approvals)
b. Procurement and Budget (e.g., availability of suppliers and equipment; an analysis of the cost differential to comply with Build America Buy America and/or Buy American Act; reliability of cost estimates; critical property acquisition)
c. Partnerships (e.g., MOUs for stakeholder coordination; private sector and user adoption and acceptance)
d. Technology Suitability (e.g., systems engineering including Concept of Operations [ConOps] and Detailed Design; reliability and maturity of technology; compatibility with existing infrastructure, procurement processes)
e. Data Governance (e.g., storage capability; database analytic capability; integration requirements; sharing agreements; cybersecurity and privacy protocols)
f. Workforce Capacity (e.g., availability of workers for development, installation, operations and maintenance; availability of workforce training; agency capacity for deployment, operation, and assessment); and an assessment of how full implementation at the conclusion of Stage Two will harness beneficial impacts and mitigate negative impacts of new technologies on the availability of good-paying jobs with a free and fair choice to join a union)

g. Internal Project Coordination (e.g., agency/institutional capacity for continued operations following the grant funded period; revenue needs for continued operations)
h. Community Impact (e.g., distribution of benefits and negative impacts across the community, including disadvantaged communities; meaningful community engagement efforts, including strategies to provide access to persons with disabilities and limited English proficient individuals)
i. Other Relevant Factors.

The final implementation report must also describe initial project goals, challenges, and lessons learned related to implementation. It should include an analysis of the success, challenges, and validity of the initial approach; any changes or improvements they would make to ensure successful continued maintenance and operations (i.e., after the Implementation grant funds have been expended).

iv) Performance and Program Assessment

As a condition of grant award, grant recipients may be required to participate in an assessment undertaken by USDOT or another agency or partner. The assessment may take different forms such as an implementation assessment across grant recipients, an impact and/or outcomes analysis of all or selected sites within or across grant recipients, or a benefit/cost analysis or assessment of return on investment. USDOT may require applicants to collect data elements to aid the assessment and/or use information available through other reporting. As a part of the assessment, as a condition of award, grant recipients must agree to: (1) make records available to the assessment contractor or USDOT staff; (2) provide access to program records, and any other relevant documents to calculate costs and benefits; (3) in the case of an impact analysis, facilitate the access to relevant information as requested; and (4) follow assessment procedures as specified by the assessment contractor or USDOT staff.

Recipients and subrecipients are also encouraged to incorporate program assessment including associated data collection activities from the outset of their program design and implementation to meaningfully document and measure their progress towards meeting an agency priority goal(s). Title I of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Evidence Act), Pub. L. No. 115-435 (2019) urges Federal awarding agencies and Federal assistance recipients and subrecipients to use program assessment as a critical tool to learn, to improve equitable delivery, and to elevate program service and delivery across the program lifecycle. Assessment means "an assessment using systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs, policies, and organizations intended to assess their effectiveness and efficiency" per 5 U.S.C. § 311. Credible program assessment activities are implemented with relevance and utility, rigor, independence and objectivity, transparency, and ethics (OMB Circular A-11, Part 6 Section 290).
Reporting of Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance
If the total value of a selected applicant's currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds $10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then the applicant during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the SAM that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently FAPIIS) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings described in paragraph 2 of this award term and condition. This is a statutory requirement under section 872 of Public Law 110-417, as amended (41 U.S.C. 2313). As

required by section 3010 of Public Law 111-212, all information posted in the designated integrity and performance system on or after April 15, 2011, except past performance reviews required for Federal procurement contracts, will be publicly available.

v) Other Activities and Acknowledgements
Knowledge Transfer Activities
In order to disseminate lessons learned to the public and to encourage collaboration between recipients, USDOT will coordinate various knowledge transfer activities which may include webinars, peer exchanges or attendance at conferences and meetings. The activities will be tailored to address the needs and interests of the recipients and serve as a resource for connecting recipients facing similar technical and institutional challenges. Recipients will share status updates and technical knowledge, and exchange information about their progress, challenges, and lessons learned.

vi) Data Collection Requirements
Data Management
To fulfill the reporting requirements and in accordance with the Public Access Plan (https://ntl.bts.gov/ntl/public-access/managing-rights), award recipients must consider, budget for, and implement appropriate data management for data and corresponding outputs acquired or generated during the grant. Applicants are expected to account for data and performance reporting in their budget submission. Requirements include a project:
- Providing at a minimum the data and corresponding outputs to: (1) reproduce significant results (whether positive or negative); (2) measure the outcomes or objectives of the project, as well as the NOFO; and (3) add potential value to future deployments or research and to support evidence-based policy or actions;
- Defaulting to open access when appropriate (exceptions include protecting personally identifiable information [PII];
- Protecting PII, intellectual property rights, and CBI;
- Utilizing, when possible, open licenses and protecting USDOT's non-exclusive copyright to data and corresponding outputs (Managing Rights | Bureau of Transportation Statistics);
- Making the source code or tools necessary to analyze the data available to the public, if relevant;
- Developing an expanded data management plan, providing relevant metadata (in a DCAT-US https://resources.data.gov/resources/dcat-us/ file, and, optionally, a discipline-appropriate metadata standard file), and data documentation (README.txt files, data dictionaries, code books, supporting files, imputation tables, etc.); and
- Where applicable, considering contributing data to voluntary resources such as NHTSA's AV TEST Initiative.

Projects should implement data management best practices including, but not limited to, implementation of published data specifications and standards (formal and informal); increasing data discoverability and data sharing; posting data in a timely fashion on publicly accessible resources; and enabling interaction of systems, interoperability, and integration of data systems. Award recipients can use the data management plans developed in Stage One as the basis for the expanded Stage Two plan, which should include robust performance metrics and targets for the at-scale implementation and an overview of data sharing opportunities. The updated plan must also

provide more detailed information on the types of data being collected and how that data will be managed and stored (e.g., cybersecurity practices, how privacy is protected, entities that have access to the data).

8) Other Information
a) Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

For further information concerning this notice, please contact the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology via email at smart@dot.gov no later than 05:00PM ET on Friday, September 19, 2025. In addition, up to the application deadline, the Department may post answers to common questions and requests for clarifications on the Department's website at www.transportation.gov/smart. To ensure applicants receive accurate information about eligibility or the program, the applicant is encouraged to contact the Department directly with questions, rather than through intermediaries or third parties. Department staff may also conduct briefings on the SMART grant selection and award process upon request. On request of an eligible applicant that submitted an application per Section 2 with respect to a project that is not selected for a SMART grant, Department staff will provide to the eligible applicant technical assistance and briefings relating to the project application.

User-friendly information and resources regarding USDOT's discretionary grant programs relevant to applicants can be found on the DOT Navigator at https://www.transportation.gov/dot-navigator and the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success (ROUTES) website at https://www.transportation.gov/rural.

b) Definitions

Term	Definition
Areas of Persistent Poverty and Underserved Community	Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP)[26] are defined as: - Any county that has consistently had greater than or equal to 20 percent of the population living in poverty during the 30-year period preceding November 15, 2021, as measured by the 1990 and 2000 decennial census and the most recent annual Small Area Income Poverty Estimates as estimated by the Bureau of the Census - Any census tract with a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as measured by the 2014 – 2018 5-year data series available from the American Community Survey of the Bureau of the Census - Any territory or possession of the United States Underserved Community will use the same definition as APP for purposes of this NOFO. For the purposes of this NOFO the terms underserved or disadvantaged community will be defined as Areas of Persistent Poverty as noted in the BUILD Grant Project Location Verification tool.
Large Community	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.
Midsized Community	Any community that is not a large community or a rural community.
Political Subdivision of	A unit of government created under the authority of State law. This includes cities, towns, counties, special districts, and similar units of local

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[26] This definition is in 49 U.S.C. 6702(a)(1).

a State	government, such as public port or airport authorities, if created under State law.
Regional Partnership	A partnership composed of two or more eligible entities located in jurisdictions with a combined population that is equal to or greater than the population of any midsized community.
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, which defines "urbanized area" as an area encompassing a population of not less than 50,000 people that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census as an "urbanized area" by the Secretary of Commerce. Please use 87 FR 80114 to confirm that your project location is not delineated by the Census Bureau as a 2020 urbanized area based on 2020 Census of Population and Housing counts and density calculations.
Resiliency	The ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions and withstand, recover, and reorganize rapidly from disruptions to a community (e.g., population, economy, etc.). Resilience includes the ability to withstand and recover from manmade and naturally occurring threats or incidents, including widespread and long-term threats or incidents.

c) **Protection of Confidential Business Information**

All information submitted as part of or in support of any application shall use publicly available data or data that can be made public and methodologies that are accepted by industry practice and standards, to the extent possible. If the applicant submits information that the applicant considers to be a trade secret or confidential commercial or financial information, the applicant must provide that information in a separate document, which the applicant may cross-reference from the application narrative or other portions of the application. For the separate document containing confidential information, the applicant must do the following: (1) state on the cover of that document that it "Contains Confidential Business Information (CBI);" (2) mark each page that contains confidential information with "CBI;" (3) highlight or otherwise denote the confidential content on each page; and (4) at the end of the document, explain how disclosure of the confidential information would cause substantial competitive harm. DOT will protect confidential information complying with these requirements to the extent required under 51 applicable law. If DOT receives a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the information that the applicant has marked in accordance with this section, DOT will follow the procedures described in its FOIA regulations at 49 CFR § 7.29. Only information that is in the separate document, marked in accordance with this section, and ultimately determined to be confidential under § 7.29 will be exempt from disclosure under FOIA.