Georgia Smart Communities Challenge Question and Answer Guide

Overview of Opportunity

Direct Funding Opportunity Summary:	Up to $50,000 in Direct Funding for four Local Governments within the State of Georgia to Conduct Smart Community Technology Projects
Funding Opportunity Title:	Georgia Smart Communities Challenge ("Georgia Smart")
Announcement Type:	This is the initial announcement of this funding opportunity. This is not a follow-on notice.
Application Due Date:	Applications due by 05/01/2018 at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time. Applications should be submitted online at http://smartcities.gatech.edu
Questions:	Submit Questions to: scii@ipat.gatech.edu

Index of Questions

1   What is Georgia Smart?

The Georgia Smart Communities Challenge ("Georgia Smart") is a funding and technical assistance program for local governments within the State of Georgia. Georgia Smart will fund up to four winning communities in Georgia for one year to develop smart communities planning studies. Georgia Smart will also supply winning communities with technical assistance, mentoring, networking opportunities, and access to global thought-leaders in smart community development.

2   What is a reasonable Georgia Smart project?

Georgia Smart projects are one-year projects that kick-start a community's smart transformation. These first-year projects should be planning studies. This means that communities should propose to do work under this first-year plan of action that allows the community to study its issues, enumerate specific solutions, assess alternatives, create implementation plans, estimate costs, identify and develop future resources, establish networks, and refine its guiding framework. Conversely, the first-year plan should not include developing, testing, piloting, or deploying smart communities technologies, other than as would be necessary to support the planning efforts described, above.

An example project will likely have several components. Such components may include identifying specific needs within the community; measuring, studying, and characterizing current conditions; identifying technology alternatives to address issues; studying the impacts of new technologies on the community and considering possible mitigations any potential ill-effects; engaging with community residents and businesses; networking with near-peers, mentors, and experts; participating in conferences and training sessions to grow smart cities expertise; identifying future opportunities; gathering resources and building capacity for future efforts; refining the smart community's framework and organizational makeup; and other activities.

The ultimate outcome of a Georgia Smart project should be a planning study document that details the community's implementation plan for evolving from its current state to its desired "smart" future state. The plan should address technologies that the community will implement and how they will be implemented in the long-term. The plan must be present a strategy and approach that is sustainable, visionary, research-oriented, data-driven, inclusive, equitable, and aligned with community needs and goals.

3   How do communities apply?

Communities must write a proposal for funding under Georgia Smart. Proposal guidelines and requirements are provided in the Terms and Conditions, which can be found on the Georgia Smart website. Proposals must be submitted using the Georgia Smart website's application portal. Communities must register on the application portal prior to submission. Lastly, communities must participate in at least one of the proposal development webinar/workshop sessions prior to the submission deadline.

4   What is required for the proposal?

Proposals comprise a project narrative, an execution plan, and supplemental documentation. The project narrative must address the community's vision, guiding principles, and a specific plan of action to be undertaken during the Georgia Smart program period. The execution plan must address the proposed budget and schedule for the activities undertaken during the Georgia Smart program period, as well as list the key personnel involved in these activities. Supplemental

documentation includes letters of support from key government officials, letters of understanding from non-government collaborators, and documentation of the source, type, and value of the community's matching funds. A template for the proposal and examples for the letters are provided on the Georgia Smart website.

5   What is the letter of support?

This is a letter from the highest-ranking leader of a participating government entity stating that the project team has that individual's support to participate in the Georgia Smart program. The highest-ranking leader may be, for example, a city's major, a county's commission chair, or an authorized delegate. This letter is required for all governments participating on any proposal.

6   What is the letter of understanding?

This is a letter from an authorized representative of a participating non-government entity stating that the project team has that individual's support to participate in the Georgia Smart program. This letter is required for all non-government entities participating on any proposal.

7   When are proposals due?

Proposals must be submitted on the Georgia Smart website no later than 5:00:00 PM EDT on May 1, 2018.

8   What are the major program dates?

The program officially launches on February 19, 2018. Georgia Smart will host two webinars, one proposal workshop, and an "office hours" event prior to the proposal deadline. The webinars will take place on March 15 and April 26, 2018. The workshop will be held on April 9, 2018, in Atlanta, Georgia. Office hours will be held on April 20, 2018, in Tifton, Georgia. Proposals are due on May 1, 2018, and winners will be announced in late May. Projects will begin in August 2018 and conclude in July 2019.

9   Can my community attend either workshop?

Yes, communities may attend either workshop (or the webinar), regardless of the community's regional designation. Communities are only required to send one participant to one of the three proposal development sessions, but teams may choose to send larger delegations and/or attend multiple sessions.

10   What defines a community?

The definition of a community under Georgia Smart is fairly flexible. Communities are collections of government and non-government entities within the State of Georgia—led by a city, county, or consolidated city-county government—that are geographically collocated, adjacent, or nearby and have common or complimentary goals, populations, interests, needs, and resources. This can include cities governments, county governments, regional authorities, citizens groups, neighborhood planning units, professional and community organizations, corporations, donors, and other partners, that have decided to team together to solve common problems in their community. Communities are either "Metropolitan Atlanta Communities" or "Georgia Communities," based on the location of the lead government.

11   Can a government participate in more than one proposal?

Yes, governments may collaborate on an unlimited number of proposals. However, a particular government may only be the lead on one proposal.

12   Can a non-government entity participate in more than one proposal?

Yes. There are no restrictions on the number of proposals on which a given non-government entity may collaborate.

13   Is there a limit to the number of collaborators on a proposal?

No, there are no restrictions on the number of collaborators (partnering governments, non-government entities, advisors, etc) for a single proposal.

14   What defines a "Metropolitan Atlanta" versus a "Georgia" community?

For the purposes of Georgia Smart, "Metropolitan Atlanta Communities" are those community teams that are led by a government that falls within the 20-county metro-Atlanta region, as defined by the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative. This includes the counties of (and cities within) Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Hall, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton. Communities that are led by a government located outside of this area are referred to as "Georgia Communities."

15   How does the program differ between regions?

Due to the nature of the program's various funding sources (Georgia Power and ARC LCI), are two main differences between the regions: funding mechanism and allowed topic areas.

Community grant funds for "Metropolitan Atlanta Communities" will be distributed as reimbursements for approved expenses. "Georgia Communities" will receive their funding in two blocks, with 50% distributed at the outset of the project (no later than August 2018) and the remaining 50% distributed at the project's end (no earlier than July 2019).

Additionally, "Metropolitan Atlanta Communities" are restricted to the "Smart Transit" topic area, whereas "Georgia Communities" are free to address either (or both of) the "Smart Transit" or "Smart Resilience" topic areas.

16   What is included in the "Smart Mobility" topic area?

Smart Mobility projects seek to improve how people and goods move, and how mobility infrastructure and services are operated, maintained, and (re)developed. This may include (but is not limited to) pedestrian and vehicle monitoring systems; electrified transit / electrified fleet; real-time parking data applications; first-/last-mile connectivity options for public transit users; technologies supporting multi-modal transit; remote signal management; and roadway monitoring systems to alert vehicles of emergent conditions.

17   What is included in the "Smart Resilience" topic area?

Smart Resilience projects seek to improve how communities function by addressing technologies that lead to the long-term viability and sustainability of vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous communities. This may include (but is not limited to) centralized data repositories to collect various public and private data streams; online public engagement platforms; mapping public safety data; building energy monitoring for public facilities; crowdsourcing for emergent

conditions within the community; emergency and disaster response programs; data-driven decision-making strategies; and technology-focused workforce development.

18   What do winning communities receive from Georgia Smart?

Winning communities will receive seed funding and access to technical assistance, expert advice, and a network of peers. Seed funding consists of both a community grant and a research grant. Seed funds provided by Georgia Smart must also be 100% matched by winning communities.

19   What is the value of the community grant?

Georgia Smart provides up to $50,000 in direct funding to winning communities to support planning activities.

20   How is the amount of funding determined?

The maximum financial support provided to each community will be the same, no matter how many partners or collaborators are involved in the proposal: up to $50,000 in direct funding. Additional support (e.g., research funding) will also be provided and will be the same for all winning communities.

21   What can the community grant be used to purchase and pay for?

Community grants must be used to support the community's planning efforts and activities. Such uses may include costs related to hosting workshops and community engagement events, covering conference and training fees, or paying for professional services (e.g., consulting). The funds cannot be used for direct procurement or to fund staff salaries. Any other uses of grant funds must directly support proposed planning efforts, studies, data collection, or some other clearly-related activity.

22   What is the research grant?

Georgia Smart provides research funding for winning communities to partner with Georgia Tech researchers. These researchers will help the communities fulfill the program's research goals and serve as advisors and mentors to the communities. This part of the grant is administered directly by Georgia Smart to the Georgia Tech researchers – the community does not directly receive these funds.

23   What is the value of the community match?

Winning communities must match at least 100% of the total value of their community grant funds (includes only the community grant, not the research grant or any other support), where the total value of the community grant may be up to $50,000.

24   What counts for the community match?

The local matching funds may comprise many sources and types of support. The local match is required to be a 20% cash-match, but the remaining 80% can be cash or non-cash, including budget allocations, private donations, volunteered labor hours, materials, supplies, equipment, software, professional services, land, event space, or other resources that are relevant to and may be used in the execution of the community's planned work. Communities must supply documentation with their application stating the source, nature, and value of the match, including letters of support or other documents guaranteeing the availability of such resources.

25 What is the research component?

The research component of Georgia Smart provides communities with an opportunity to work directly with Georgia Tech's research faculty – global leaders in smart communities thinking – to help solve local problems. The research should clearly benefit the community and its first-year plan, long-term vision, or both.

Communities will create their research plans in coordination with a Georgia Tech faculty partner or mentor who can provide guidance on what research may be relevant to the community and what may be achievable under the program's guidelines. Potential faculty collaborators will be available during the Georgia Smart proposal workshops to work with communities on their research plans.

26 How will communities find a Georgia Tech research partner?

Georgia Tech faculty partners, advisors, and mentors will be present at the Georgia Smart proposal workshops to form teams and provide assistance with proposals. Georgia Smart will also publish contact and research information for potential partners on its website so that communities may reach out directly to faculty partners with whom they wish to team.

27 What happens after a community wins a grant?

Within fourteen (14) days of being notified, winning communities must sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Georgia Smart. This MOU will establish a legal relationship between the community and Georgia Smart, which will define the requirements and expectations of each party during the execution phase of the program.

Teams are expected to begin work on the project in August 2018, with an initial field visit from Georgia Smart staff and kickoff meeting to be scheduled no later than August 31, 2018. Teams will be required to attend all quarterly workshops and bi-weekly meetings/calls. The dates and times of such events will be posted after winners have been announced.

A project close-out meeting will be held in July 2019 to review the final outcome of each project. Each team will also be required to participate in a public presentation of the projects in July 2019 to share results, outcomes, and future plans.

28 Can projects last longer than one year?

Communities must complete the Georgia Smart portion of the project – that which was proposed and funded under the program – within the initial year of the program, and a tangible and complete project artifact (i.e., the planning study and any associated artifacts) must be produced and submitted to Georgia Smart within this timeframe. However, communities are encouraged to think about the long-term plan for their community and, as such, may continue to develop or implement their plans after Georgia Smart has concluded. Preference will be given to proposals that articulate sustainable plans for the long-term evolution of their community, but work done or proposed outside of the initial program year will not be considered when scoring proposals.

29 Can projects last less than one year?

Yes. However, since communities are being encouraged to create plans for sustainable smart-communities development and future efforts, projects that last only one year (or less) and that do not plan for or envision future follow-on activities will be at a severe disadvantage. No preference will be given to projects that propose an accelerated schedule.