

Smart Cities Innovation Partnership Frequently Asked Questions

Submitted questions are below in bold and followed immediately by the appropriate answers.

Updated on June 3, 2020

PROGRAM CONTACT INFORMATION

- General inquiries for NY Anchor Institutions, Municipal Testbeds and NY Technology Companies: smartcities@esd.ny.gov
- General inquiries for Israeli participants: Asaf.aharon@innovationisrael.org.il

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

- **Smart City**-For purposes of this Program, “Smart Cities” are defined as any incorporated municipality (not strictly limited to ‘cities’) that leverages technological solutions to promote public health, safety, and welfare, and improves quality-of-life for the residents of the municipality, especially traditionally underserved and underresourced populations and communities. Examples of Smart Cities technologies include but are not limited to: smart sensors to streamline traffic flow to reduce vehicle idling and emissions, clean water leakage detection systems to preserve clean drinking water, LED indoor farming lights to provide proper lighting for urban agriculture, and advanced air quality monitoring systems.
- **Eligible Municipal Testbed** – Any city, county, or other local government in New York State that is prepared to support the piloting and demonstration of various smart cities technologies. Testbeds can be both physical (e.g. street poles, fleet vehicles, buildings) or virtual (e.g. government networks, websites, datasets) assets on which technologies can be demonstrated and used to improve performance or service delivery.
- **Eligible Technology Companies** - Established or startup companies or nonprofits that can pilot or demonstrate technology solutions that improve government operations or resident quality of life. All companies interested in supporting a designated Municipal Testbed project may apply through the ESD website. To be eligible for ESD funding, organizations must be registered to do business and have a presence in New York State prior to the contracting period.
- **Eligible Anchor Institutions** – These are generally not-for-profit or public research institutions with broad technological expertise across the core focus areas outlined in the partnership. Anchor Institutions include labs and research institutions, incubators, and ESD-supported innovation assets. Anchor Institutions will participate as a partner in this program, including by engaging and supporting a Municipal Testbed applicant develop a proposal, disbursing grant funds, serving as technical experts and implementing projects. Non ESD-funded institutions are welcome to apply to be an Anchor Institution, including local and national laboratories or research groups.

Frequently Asked Questions

The concept of “Smart Cities” and urban technology deployment is very broad. What types of specific project types and technology applications qualify for funding?

While we’d like to employ the broadest definition of “smart cities” and urban technology for purposes of ensuring no NYS municipality is left out, we have identified 8 key areas that the program will specifically focus on. Those include:

- Cybersecurity
- Supply chain
- Real-time utility monitoring
- Water purification and contaminant removal
- Smart mobility (e.g. connected, autonomous, electrified) and traffic flow systems
- Unmanned aerial systems and drones
- Smart agriculture and clean food solutions
- Clean energy and environmental solutions

The Smart Cities Innovation Partnership will consider other related emerging technologies that have a significant impact on improving operations and services at the local level should a Municipal Testbed submit a project to address this technology area.

How do Municipal Testbed applicants work with Anchor Institutions?

A list of participating Anchor Institutions will be published on the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership website. Municipal Testbed applicants should reach out to the Anchor Institutions with expertise related to the smart cities solutions or problems the applicant is interested in exploring under the program. Together, Anchor Institutions and Municipal Testbeds can develop up to three projects to be funded through the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership. Localities may decide to reach out to an Anchor Institution based on their geographic proximity, specific technology focus areas, or simply because of a prior working relationship. If a project is selected for funding, the Anchor Institution will function as the project and funding administrator, receiving funding on behalf of the municipality from NYS and distributing it accordingly.

Can Technology Companies connect with Municipal Testbeds prior to applying to the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership?

To ensure that the integrity of the program is upheld, technology companies should not reach out to Municipal Testbeds before submitting a proposal to the program. After Technology Company solutions are matched with a Municipal Testbed and Anchor Institution both parties will be able to engage with each other to develop a full project plan. If a company has a question about program information or specific project details referenced on the website, they should submit that question to SmartCities@esd.ny.gov for a formal response.

Can you talk through the confidentiality associated with the information I provide?

All submissions will be subject to the State's Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), which provides the public right to access records maintained by government agencies with certain exceptions.

If you are a municipality submitting a proposal, we will only publish your project summaries and information online if you are selected a Municipal Testbed eligible for project funding; up to 5 Municipal Testbeds will be selected. Before publishing that information, we will consult with you to ensure non-public information is not shared.

If you're a company submitting a proposal, please mark any confidential information, trade secrets or other intellectual property appropriately in the instance that your submission is requested under FOIL. In those circumstances, content that is appropriately marked a confidential may be withheld.

Can you explain the incentives associated with program participation?

- For Municipal applicants, the program offers NYS recognition and funding, technical and strategic support from Anchor Institutions, and the opportunity to engage with world-class technology companies.
- For Anchor Institutions, the program offers an opportunity to support and co-lead the delivery of game-changing technology pilots across diverse municipalities around the state to improve resident quality of life.
- For Technology Companies, the program offers an opportunity to partner with local governments across the most innovative state in the country to validate and deploy emerging technologies for public good. Beyond project support and funding, validation in New York State enables small startups and large incumbents alike to demonstrate credibility in the fast-growing urban technology and smart cities industry space.

How does the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership overlap with other NYSTAR programs?

Participants of the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership can leverage the NYSTAR innovation ecosystem to develop and launch smart cities solutions. The NYSTAR network is comprised of over 70 assets that offer expertise, equipment, location and other resources necessary for the commercialization of technologies. We encourage interacting and collaborating with the NYSTAR network. For more information about the different assets available within NYSTAR please go to: <https://esd.ny.gov/doing-business-ny/innovation-development-support>.

How should my organization think about bringing partners to support our submission?

If you are a Municipal Testbed applicant, partnering with an Anchor Institution in your submission is required. Additional partnership support, from community organizations, resident groups, and nonprofits, is a positive sign that your projects have local support.

If you are a Technology Company, you may pursue partnerships or letters of support from community organizations, resident groups, or nonprofits in the Municipal Testbeds where you plan to pursue a project. Similarly, you may submit a joint proposal with

another company as a combined submission where your technologies, business models, or approaches are a strong match.

Who are judges or panelists for this? What are the evaluation criteria?

Evaluation of Municipal Testbed and Anchor Institution applications will be led by representatives from Empire State Development and the Governor's Executive Chamber team. They may consult additional internal subject matter experts as needed. Evaluation of Technology Company proposals will also be led by representatives from Empire State Development, the Governor's Executive Chamber team, and representatives from the Anchor Institution and Municipal Testbed where the project would take place. For Israeli companies, Israel Innovation Authority will provide input and insight based on their understanding of their performance and expertise in the Israeli market. However, final determinations on proposal selections will be made by New York State.

Can you describe the program schedule and general expectations from round to round?

Please refer to the schedules posted on the main page of our website. We will make all updates there.

Do companies need to have commercialized products in order for them to participate? What if their products are in development stage or only prototype stage?

We encourage companies with products in different stages of development to propose solutions as they see fit. If a product or solution has not been demonstrated in a real-world or commercial environment, companies are expected to offer data points, case studies, or other information that would demonstrate its viability to deliver on the stated goals of the Municipal Testbed project they want to pursue.

Can a Technology Company submit multiple proposals for different projects within the same Municipal Testbed? Can a company submit proposals for different Municipal Testbeds?

Yes, a Technology Company may submit a proposal across any of the Municipal Testbeds chosen. There is no cap on the number of projects to which a Technology Company may apply.

Do companies need to clear any certifications or regulatory approvals to participate? Do companies need to be incorporated in the United States?

Any Technology Company or organization receiving grant funding to deliver a pilot project with a Municipal Testbed in New York State should be certified to do business in New York State. Companies should have or will have, upon project award, a presence in New York State.

What types of Technology Companies are you looking for? Do I need to have experience working with the public sector to participate?

We are open to all innovative Technology Companies or organizations with a demonstrated expertise in the project area for which they are submitting a proposal. Small startups, mid-sized companies, large technology incumbents, and untraditional technology-focused nonprofits are all welcome. Experience working with public sector clients is not required.

Will a selected Technology Company have access to existing City-owned land, infrastructure, and technology?

Yes. If a Technology Company is selected to deliver a project in a Municipal Testbed they will have access to a physical or virtual space outlined in the Testbed project to deploy their solution and gather data that demonstrates its effectiveness for improving government operations or resident quality of life.

Is it possible that the Technology Company could provide the full match funding for the state grant in lieu of the municipal testbed's contribution?

Yes.

Is it possible for the Anchor Institution to provide any part of the match funding for the state grant?

Yes.

Will the Municipal Testbed application date of May 31st be extended due to NY PAUSE?

We've heard from many municipalities around the state who are excited about the program and need a little extra time to submit a proposal given the state's economic reopening plans. Because of this, the deadline has been extended to Monday June 8th at 5 PM ET.

Can a Municipality partner with multiple Anchor Institutions?

A Municipality can partner with multiple Anchor Institutions. In their application a Municipality can apply for up to three (3) Testbed Project Opportunities, and as part of the application will need to declare an Anchor Institution for each proposed opportunity along with an outline of their partnership. It is recommended (but not required) that an Anchor Institution be chosen that has technical expertise in the area of the proposed project.

Can a Municipality apply without collaborating with an anchor institution?

Though we recommend collaborating with an anchor institution, a municipality may apply without a partnership in place. Anchor institutions are intended to support cities as they develop and scope proposals, receive and disburse funds to pay vendors, and launch and monitor technical pilots. If your city or town is able to do this without the support of an anchor institution, either one of the ones listed on our website or via an existing relationship, that's fine.

Can a Technology Company apply to multiple Testbed Project Opportunities?

A Technology Company can apply to multiple Testbed Project Opportunities.

Can tech companies apply just focusing on one municipal testbed?

Technology companies will be able to apply to one or more project opportunities at their discretion. This stage of the program will begin after the Municipal Testbed sites are announced and the Testbed Project Opportunities are published (early to mid-July).

Who are the key individuals leading the grant process?

Each participating organization should designate a set of key individuals to lead the grant process. Individuals should be capable of supporting the program (e.g. decision making, program management, technical support).

Below is a summary of the key individuals leading the grant process to establish the Municipal Testbeds will be:

- Municipal Testbed participant – will lead the development of up to three (3) Testbed Project Opportunities and identify an Anchor Institution to partner with.
- Anchor Institution participant – will engage and support the Municipal Testbed applicant in the development of the proposal as technical experts.

After Municipal Testbeds are announced and Testbed Project Opportunities are published, the key individuals in the grant process will be:

- Technology Company participant – Will submit a proposal that resolves a Testbed Project Opportunity.

If the proposal is chosen: Municipal Testbed participant and Technology Company participant will formalize project details and timelines; and Anchor Institution participant will disburse grant funds and serve as technical experts in the implementation of projects.

If we apply as a Municipal Testbed but our preferred Anchor Institution is not listed on the website, can we lean on that existing relationship or must we work with a vetted Anchor Institution listed on the ESD website?

Municipalities are responsible for the submission of the Municipal Testbed application. As part of the program, a Municipality is encouraged to apply with at least one Anchor Institution. If your municipality has an existing partnership with a local non-profit, university, or other technical resource that is not already on the Anchor Institution list posted on ESD's website, please contact our team at smartcities@esd.ny.gov so that we can note that for our records.

Do Technology Companies need to partner with an Anchor Institution?

No, Municipal Testbed applicants are generally encouraged to partner with an Anchor Institution.

Does the Municipal Testbed Application Overview (Part 1 of the Full Application) have to be submitted with the application?

The Application Overview is due by June 8th at 5 PM ET and can be submitted with the application or on its own before that deadline.

Does the Municipality or the Anchor Institution submit the Municipal Testbed application?

Either one, however the contact information portion should be for the Municipality.

Does the Detailed Budget Attachment need to be filled out and submitted as part of the Municipal Testbed application?

Yes, please use that format.

Does each Municipality need 3 projects?

Each municipality should include up to 3 projects, but 3 projects are not required.

What will awards typically look like for each Smart City Testbed designation?

The total Smart City awards per Smart City Testbed designation will range from up to \$200K to up to \$350K based on the number of cities selected and the size and scope of projects. There is the potential of additional funding from the Israel Innovation Authority if criteria are met.

At what point do Tech Companies become involved?

After a Municipal Testbed is designated and projects are chosen, Tech Companies will be invited to apply to support and implement those projects. If a Municipal Testbed has knowledge of a specific Technology Company, solution, or technical application that may work for its proposal, it's fine to mention it in the proposal. Decisions on the type of Technology Company that will support a specific project will happen at a later date and will occur collaboratively between New York State and the Municipal Testbed team.

Is it correct that the Municipality doesn't need to partner with an Anchor Institution to apply?

Correct, however it is preferred. For example, some municipalities have complex procurement rules that limit their ability to disburse funds to single vendors without utilizing formal requests for proposals and other processes. Anchor Institutions should be able to support selected Municipal Testbeds in their ability to scope, administer, implement, and monitor funded projects.

Is the schedule on ESD's website still valid?

Yes, it's always the source of truth and will be updated if anything changes.

Is there a limit on the number of Municipalities an Anchor Institution can be involved with or support?

No, Anchor Institutions should lend their support and advice generously.

If the municipality were to provide a city-owned facility in which to develop the proposed project, can we use the donated fair-market value of the property (in the form of a one-year lease, for example) and associated costs (water, electricity, etc.) as part of the municipal match?

Yes.

The instructions for Testbed Applicants stated that "applicants may be asked to present their proposed projects to the Smart Cities Innovation Partnership selection committee in person in

May 2020.” Given that the Municipal application isn’t due until May 31, and notwithstanding any difficulty in meeting “in-person” requirements due to PAUSE, does this statement imply a scenario in which applicants present their projects to the selection committee prior to submitting their application? If so, how would that happen, exactly?

The deadline for municipality applications has been extended until June 8th. We anticipate holding virtual presentations in June 2020 after an initial review by the selection committee.

Are smartphone or mobile device applications eligible projects?

Yes!

Could the funding that New York State is matching come from the Anchor institution in lieu of matching funding from the city or locality?

Yes, the Anchor Institution can provide the full match for a project if it comes to an agreement with the municipality it’s working with to do so.

One of the agencies my city is working with has funding from a federal government grant to spend on projects. Would that funding count towards a match or does funding have to come directing from municipal budgets?

Yes it would count toward your match.

My city is interested in applying but we’d like to know whether our proposal should expect a Technology Company to provide the entire match that we are responsible for. Can we expect that?

We do not recommend that cities propose projects that require Technology Companies to cover the full match of the project costs. Cities should have a plan in place and associated funding to support a portion of project costs needed for their match. At the low end, that should be roughly 25% of project costs.

Are there any guidelines on what types of contributions are eligible for the match cities are responsible for?

Thank you for that question. In general, the budget template that’s included in the Municipal Testbed Application outlines several areas where cities can describe city contributions and overall project costs. Please ensure that your project match contributions and project costs generally align with the following principles:

- List only salaries or employee time for those directly and actively supporting a project.
- List only necessary materials and supplies.
- List only travel related to activities supported within the pilot.
- List only reasonable expenditures associated with operating the pilot, including shares of utilities, insurance, staff training and marketing, etc.

Is this grant open to artificial intelligence companies operating in physical security space? Our solution works over existing camera systems and can detect crowds gathering and dispersing, fighting, automobile accidents, fires etc.

We don't explicitly call out physical security as one of the categories of interest so it will not be an area of focus for this program. If your existing technology stack and AI solution can directly support one of those 9 categories and is a fit for one of the projects we publish in our website this summer, then we'd highly encourage you to apply. To stay in touch as we select and publish projects, please share your info here:

<https://esd.ny.gov/smart-cities-technology-companies>

What is the revised timeline for project implementation and cost? This grant seems more for municipalities and less for companies.

Thanks for that question! The full process and timeline is on our website here:

<https://esd.ny.gov/new-york-smart-cities-innovation-partnership#process-&-timeline>.

The grant is intended to support cities to pursue public-private partnerships with technology companies and organizations like yours to implement specific projects utilizing the technologies we outline on the program page. The funding formula requires that our grant is supplemented by a funding commitment from the city and from the participating company to ensure that the project is sustainable beyond the first year of its implementation. We are expecting to make funding decisions by end of this year and would like the cities and partner companies to begin projects by end of this year. To get on our mailing list, especially as we identify projects and solicit formal proposals from companies like yours, send us your info here: <https://esd.ny.gov/smart-cities-technology-companies>. We will be hosting a webinar over the summer with interested technology companies and will share that opportunity at a later date.

Is a council district in New York City too small to be considered? We could put together two or three council districts as well.

Your approach works well. We're not requiring the concept of a "testbed" to necessarily be city- or county-wide. In most cases, we expect a testbed to be defined by a specific physical or virtual space within one city.

Is there anyone currently focused on the North Brooklyn Area? How many testbeds do you expect in New York City?

While we can't share information about specific in-progress proposals or submissions from New York City, we can share that we're not ruling out selecting multiple testbeds in the same city or town.

On the "Application Title" field on the application form, is there something specific you're looking for in that field?

You can use the format "City/Town/County of XXXX, Smart Cities Application". This is a field used to distinguish among different proposals.

