

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

FOR

**The Science, Mathematics and Research for
Transformation (SMART) Scholarship-for-Service
Program Cooperative Agreement**



W911NF-27-R-A001

ISSUED BY:

U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground Research
Triangle Park Division on behalf of Army Research Office
and the

Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (Science &
Technology Foundations Office)

Issued: 30 September 2026

Application Inquiries and Questions (Deadline): 24 November 2026

Applications Due: 3 December 2026

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I. OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Required Overview Content

Agency Name

Office of the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (OUSW(R&E))

Issuing Acquisition Office

U.S. Army Contracting Command-Aberdeen Proving Ground, Research Triangle Park (ACC-APG-RTP) Division

Opportunity Title

The Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarship for Service Program

Announcement Type

This is the initial announcement.

Opportunity Number

W911NF-27-R-A001

Assistance Listing Number (ALN) and Title

12.631 – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Educational Program: Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART)

Response Dates

Applications must be received by 3:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST), 3 December 2026.

The following is an estimated summary of the events and dates associated with the SMART Cooperative Agreement (CA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO):

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Public Announcement Issued	30 September 2026
Opportunity Day	29 October 2026
Application Inquiries and Questions Deadline	24 November 2026
Applications Due	3 December 2026
Evaluations Completed	12 February 2027
Award	3 June 2027

Opportunity Day will be held virtually on 29 October 2026 from 1300 to 1600 EST. To register, email osw.smart@mail.mil with subject heading W911NF-27-R-A001 Opportunity Day. More details will be provided prior to the event.

Funding

The NOFO issued is subject to the availability of funds. The NOFO provides the estimated funding levels for the CA. The Government has submitted the requisite documents to request

funding for the period covered by the CA; however, applicants are reminded that this request is subject to Presidential, Congressional and Departmental approval. **The funding levels provided in the NOFO are for application preparation purposes only. The actual funding level of the CA will be updated annually as part of the appropriation process.**

Cost Share or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this NOFO.

Profit/Fee

Profit/fee is not permitted under the CA.

Place of Performance

Historically the SMART Scholarship Program has had an estimated amount of 50-60 Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) to provide support under the SMART CA. This is a historical figure. The Applicant will use their own understanding of the fundamental elements to develop their proposed level of effort.

At least four (4) of these FTEs will liaise with the Department of War (DoW) Components (Army, Navy, Air Force, and 4th Estate). Though there is no requirement for these DoW Component liaisons to be physically located on-site at a DoW facility, they should be eligible to obtain Common Access Cards (CACs) and access DoW networks, if required. Work for the remainder of the personnel shall be performed at the Recipient's facility or another authorized location.

B. Additional Overview Information

Short Description of Funding Opportunity

The DoW seeks innovative applications to cooperatively partner with eligible entities in the implementation and execution of the SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program¹. The Department intends to award ONE (1) CA award, with a maximum award of up to \$1,300M over a ten-year period of performance.

Background Information

The National Defense Education Program (NDEP) supports the Department's priorities to improve lethality, warfighting, and readiness by developing America's future technical workforce poised to create advanced technologies, tools, and capabilities necessary to ensure the United States (U.S.) military remains the most powerful and advanced, capable of deterring adversaries and protecting American interests at home and abroad. NDEP is executed by OUSW(R&E) and ensures the Department's ability to develop and access high-quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) talent vital to addressing key areas of national defense and supporting the warfighter.

NDEP activities provide authentic DoW-relevant learning experiences through a variety of DoW STEM initiatives in the form of scholarships, internships, enrichment activities, project/research-based competitions, and mentorships. One of the main NDEP efforts in addressing talent development and recruitment is through the SMART Program, pursuant to Section 4093 of Title

¹ <https://www.smartscholarship.org>

10, United States Code (U.S.C.).

The SMART Program enables the Department to transform its STEM workforce while addressing near-term workforce demands. Per 10 U.S.C. 4093, the SMART program awards highly competitive scholarships for undergraduate and graduate degrees in any of the 22 STEM academic disciplines critical to national security. Upon graduation, and subject to DoW component requirements, scholars may be considered for a one-for-one employment service commitment within the DoW Civilian workforce. SMART scholars perform many aspects of the national security mission including science and technology, research and development, manufacturing, test and evaluation, maintenance and in-service support, medical research, warfighter support, infrastructure and construction, material decommission and disposal, and intelligence gathering and analysis activities.

The SMART program ensures the Department has a steady infusion of high-quality technical talent, prepared in areas of critical importance, and ready to apply their technical knowledge, skills, and abilities to fulfill the DoW mission. Since its inception in Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, SMART has awarded over 8,000 scholarships to students pursuing undergraduate and graduate STEM degrees. To date, over 4,900 scholars have completed their academic pursuit and transitioned into DoW Workforce.

II. DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

A. Program Description

The SMART program is a DoW scholarship-for-service program supporting STEM disciplines critical to national security functions (10 U.S.C. § 4093 and Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 1025.09). This unique and prestigious program provides scholarships to both existing DoW Civilian employees (retention participants) and prospective employees (recruitment participants) pursuing a STEM degree. The scholarship includes tuition and annual stipend, book and health allowance, and opportunities for summer internships. The post-graduation employment commitment is equal to or greater than the amount of time the participant received scholarship funding under this program.

Scholarships are awarded to applicants who are pursuing a degree in, or closely related to, one of the following STEM disciplines²:

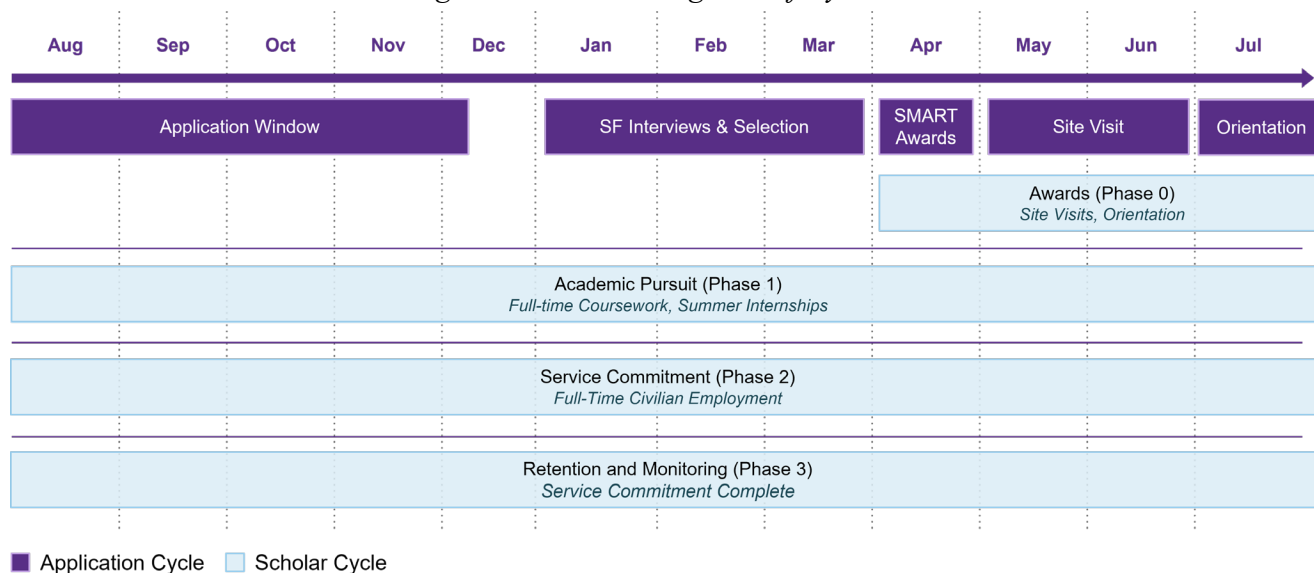
- Aeronautical and Astronautical Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Biosciences
- Chemical Engineering
- Chemistry
- Civil Engineering

² The Government may revise disciplines from year to year to ensure they remain relevant to the Defense mission.

- Cognitive, Neural, and Behavioral Sciences
- Computer and Computational Sciences/Computer Engineering
- Data Science and Analytics
- Electrical Engineering
- Geosciences
- Industrial and Systems Engineering (technical tracks only)
- Information Sciences
- Materials Science and Engineering
- Mathematics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering
- Nuclear Engineering
- Oceanography
- Operations Research (technical tracks only)
- Physics
- Software Engineering

As part of the SMART experience, scholars engage in internships that allow for relevant hands-on research and work experiences in DoW facilities, thereby enhancing their educational experience. Participants perform research as summer interns at participating DoW sponsoring facilities (SFs) and return to those laboratories/facilities after graduation to complete a period of obligated employment service. This provides scholars with a unique opportunity to perform research in their respective areas of study.

Figure 1. SMART Program Lifecycle



The activities for each program award cycle are detailed in Figure 1. The application period for each cohort starts in August and closes in December. During the selection period, SFs submit a selection list of scholars, and then award offers are sent out in April. There may be a second round of awards issued, depending on the number of declinations and the program budget. New

awardees in Phase 0 participate in a mandatory site visit at their selecting SF before orientation.

Scholars complete the following four program phases during their lifecycle with the SMART Program.

- **Award:** Phase 0 begins at the time an awardee accepts a SMART award by signing the Scholar Service Agreement and ends 31 July of the award year. Phase 0 awardees do not receive award funding, nor does any time spent attending a site visit, completing orientation, or completing an onboarding session count towards completion of the service commitment.
- **Academic Pursuit:** Phase 1 begins 1 August of the award year and ends upon verified completion of all Phase 1 requirements. During Phase 1, scholars complete requirements to obtain the approved degree and any required internships, and must remain in compliance with all program policies.
- **Service Commitment:** Phase 2 begins the service commitment as defined by the work start date. The work start date is defined as the first day of full-time employment with the SF after degree completion. Once Phase 1 is verified completed, the SMART Program provides written confirmation of official entry into Phase 2, including service commitment start and end dates. During Phase 2, scholars complete the service commitment by working full-time for their SF.
- **Post-Service Commitment:** Phase 3 is a post-service commitment monitoring period that begins upon completion of the service commitment. During Phase 3, the SMART Program tracks scholar employment status to obtain information on scholar retention rates within the DoW.

While the four phases above describe the successful lifecycle of a SMART scholar, a critical program function is the management of scholar default. Throughout Phase 1 and 2, scholar performance and compliance are actively monitored. A default can occur at any point in Phase 1 or 2 if a scholar fails to meet the obligations defined in their signed service agreement. The process involves comprehensive case file development for formal default determination by the Government, and the establishment of a debt to be repaid to the Government.

The SMART program is committed to fostering continuous professional development and recognizing the outstanding contributions of its stakeholders. To spur technical innovation and growth, the program offers initiatives such as Innovation Awards and International Internships. Through an annual competitive SEED award, SMART offers transitioning Ph.D. scholars an opportunity to establish a foundational research and engineering effort in their area of expertise aligned with a DoW mission or critical technology area and supporting their development into subject matter experts. Additionally, as per FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Sec. 250, SMART also offers a competitive funding opportunity through the Creative Research & Engineering Advancing Technical Excellence in STEM (CREATES) award to expand and enhance connections and opportunities between the SMART program, SMART scholars, SMART sponsoring facilities, and students and faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs).

OUSW(R&E) manages the SMART Scholarship Program and to carry out its mission in support of these programs, OUSW(R&E) requires an entity under a CA that will partner and collaborate effectively with the SMART Scholarship Program in achieving the five (5) fundamental elements listed below.

There are five (5) fundamental elements to the successful administration of the SMART Program. These elements are as follows:

1. **Program Management and Administration:** Cooperatively, with the SMART Program Office, assist in the administration of the program to include, but not limited to, the application and award cycle, monitoring and interaction with students during academic pursuit, monitoring and interaction with scholars upon graduation, hiring tracking, development of materials for default cases and debt establishments, web site development and maintenance, SMART Innovation Awards, and assist in the execution of SMART at the participating DoW SFs across each DoW Component and other DoW agencies.
2. **Data Management, Analysis, and Reporting:** In close collaboration with the SMART Program, maintain the program's SMART Information Management System (SIMS) that will track, update, and maintain all SMART Program data. Maintain a public facing website and manage web portals for the following: SMART applicants, application reviewers, SF selectors, scholars, program administrators, Innovation award applicants and recipients, SF point of contact (POCs), DoW Component Executives and representatives, and other users and stakeholders as the program evolves.
3. **Strategic Communications and Marketing:** Develop and implement an annual communication and marketing strategic plan, in conjunction with the SMART Program, that supports outreach to internal and external stakeholders on behalf of the SMART Program. Forge new or enhance existing strategic partnerships to promulgate the SMART scholarship opportunities through like-minded organizations and institutions.
4. **Scholar Payments and Expenses:** Assist the SMART Program with payment of scholar's tuition, stipends, and other expenses on behalf of the Government.
5. **Independent Program Evaluation:** Perform independent program evaluations to assess progress and identify gaps and growth opportunities through collaboration with an external entity.

The (5) five fundamental elements above are provided for Applicants to consider as a "starting point" for understanding the context of the role the Recipient and their collaborators will perform in the SMART Program. Since the resulting award will be a CA with substantial Government involvement, it is expected the Recipient will be in regular communication with the Government working collaboratively to administer and execute the program, as well as to identify new and emerging areas of interest and targeted areas of special emphasis during performance under the CA. In addition, this collaboration will result in bringing new talent, ideas, and techniques to the

Government and will also introduce Scholars to the roles and needs of the Warfighter. This collaboration will also provide access to DoW's world class research facilities to the selected Scholar, while pursuing collaborative fundamental research of mutual interest to the DoW and the Scholars.

Substantial Government involvement with the Recipient is expected through the collaborative planning and management of the SMART scholarship and through the research to be performed by the Scholars.

It is the intent of this NOFO to solicit the most creative, innovative, and effective approaches to assist in the success of the SMART Program. In response to the NOFO an Applicant must submit a proposal that provides evidence of their ability to perform the following:

1. Element 1: Program Management and Administration

Overview: The primary objective of Element 1 is to cooperatively assist the SMART Program Office in the administration of all phases of the program to successfully recruit and retain highly qualified talent for the DoW. Since the SMART Program has a broad reach across each DoW Component and other DoW agencies, the effectiveness of the program relies heavily on the cooperation of SFs and coordination with applicants.

The Recipient must demonstrate the capability to manage the program's core lifecycle- including the application and award cycle, student monitoring and interaction during academic pursuit and upon graduation, hiring tracking, and the maintenance of long-term retention metrics. The Recipient is responsible for tracking compliance, flagging non-compliance, and drafting the initial default/debt establishment materials for Government review. Additional responsibilities include but are not limited to the development of materials for default cases and debt establishments, website development and maintenance, the management of innovation and recognition awards, and assistance in the execution of SMART at the participating DoW SFs across each DoW Component and other DoW agencies. Furthermore, the Recipient is expected to work closely with the Government to make program information and resources readily available to the general public.

The following requirements must be addressed to demonstrate capability in administering this fundamental element:

- **Program Management and Administration:** The Recipient, in collaboration with the Government, will assist in supporting and administering the SMART Program for OUSW(R&E) and the DoW Components and other DoW agencies. Tasks to consider will include, but are not limited to:
 - Program Operations: Managing day-to-day operations, including data calls, analytics, program information distribution, and financial tracking. Additionally, facilitating key initiatives to include: new awardee orientation, recognition awards, Innovation Awards, International Internships, and professional development opportunities.
 - Performance Metrics: Providing performance metrics to measure the CA's accomplishments against its overall priorities and objectives, and the program impact.

- Application and Award Cycle: Executing a competitive application, evaluation, and selection process expected to result in the recruitment and selection of candidates of the highest caliber.
- Scholar Monitoring and Compliance: Actively monitoring scholar progression through all program phases, tracking compliance with academic and programmatic requirements, initiating non-compliance procedures as needed, and executing scholar issue resolutions.
- Default and Debt Case Management: Preparing all necessary documentation and materials for default cases and debt establishment proceedings for final determination by the Government.
- Hiring and Transition Support: Facilitating a smooth transition from academia to the DoW workforce by providing necessary documentation and coordinating between scholars and Sponsoring Facilities.

These tasks will be accomplished by working directly with the SMART Program Office, the DoW Components, participating SMART facilities, and SMART scholars. Overall technical management and fiscal responsibility will reside with the Cooperative Agreement Manager (CAM). The CAM is the Government lead for this effort and therefore, all executables must be approved by the CAM, to include programmatic and budgetary changes.

As noted in the “Deliverables” section, the Recipient is responsible for submitting monthly, quarterly, and annual reporting requirements.

- **Program Policies**: The Recipient will work closely with the Government to establish policies, procedures, and tools that allow for the efficient tracking, updating, and monitoring of scholars throughout the entire SMART program from application through post service commitment and debt collection, if required. The Recipient will develop and maintain all official program forms, including a participating scholar handbook and resources for the participating DoW SFs.
- **Stakeholder Communication and Relationship Management**: The Recipient will establish and manage communication channels to ensure timely and effective information flow to and from active program participants, SFs, and DoW Components. This includes disseminating official program announcements, policy updates, reporting reminders, and compliance notifications. The Recipient will facilitate a strong partnership between the SMART Program Office and each SF, with necessary program updates, scholar-related data, reporting guidance, and tools to support their role in mentoring and employing scholars.
- **Website and Portal Management**: The Recipient will collaborate with the Government to host, maintain and update the existing SMART Scholarship Program website as required at various times within the scholarship lifecycle, to include the following:
 - A public-facing website containing SMART Scholarship Program information
 - A public web portal to facilitate applications to the program.
 - A restricted web portal to facilitate the evaluation of applications.
 - A restricted web portal to facilitate the review of eligible applicants and the

- selection of potential awardees made by the participating DoW SFs.
- A restricted web portal for scholarship awardees to facilitate the program onboarding, service agreement signing, and virtual orientation presentations/webinars.
- A restricted web portal for program Administrators to manage applicant and participant data and program files for statistical and management purposes readily accessible and easily manipulated into reports and charts.
- A restricted web portal for scholar participants, housing all relevant program documents.
- A restricted web portal for Innovation Award participants, housing all relevant program documents.
- A restricted web portal for participating DoW SF POCs to aid in the execution of the SMART program and its requirements at the facility level.
- A restricted web portal for DoW Component Executives to complete tasking required on behalf of the individual DoW Components and other DoW agencies.
- Other web portals as the program evolves.

The website and associated portals should have seamless integration with the SMART Information Management System (SIMS) detailed in Element 2.

The Recipient should have a transition in plan, to transfer the ownership of the existing website, within 15 calendar days of award. It is anticipated that the full transition for a fully operational website, to include all portals, will be completed within 60 calendar days.

- **Public Information Services:** The Recipient will serve as the primary point of contact for the SMART Program, managing all inbound inquiries from the general public, prospective and current applicants, and program participants. These communications can come in the form of email, telephone, or other traditional forms of communication. Responses to these communications should occur within a mutually agreed-upon timeframe, with a goal of acknowledging receipt within one (1) business day. Any information needed to develop a response should be worked jointly between the Recipient and the Government.
- **Data Security and Management:** Due to the amount of personally identifiable information (PII), protected health information (PHI), financial, and other sensitive information that the program requires from applicants and participants, security of the website and associated databases in Element 2 is of utmost importance. The Recipient will be responsible for the protection and management of PII data, which will need to be properly safeguarded per the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. §552a) and DoD Regulation 5400.11-R; data management and security; and relevant Institutional Review Board (IRB) compliance with regards to all fundamental elements.
- **Annual Program Reporting:** The DoW strives to make programmatic decisions driven by data and analysis through its evaluation efforts. The Recipient is responsible for executing a cohesive evaluation strategy across the Fundamental Elements through documenting activities and outputs, as well as near-, mid-, and long-term outcomes

through annual reports. Additionally, the Recipient is responsible for executing a public-facing annual report detailing program impacts and highlights.

2. Element 2: Data Management, Analysis, and Reporting

Overview: In close collaboration with the SMART Program Office, the Recipient must transition, maintain, scale, and enhance the SMART Information Management System (SIMS). A comprehensive database and web-based user interface are imperative to the successful administration and management of the SMART Program. The SIMS database is used to house SMART scholar information that is collected, compiled, reported, and maintained by the SMART Program, including but not limited to: names, addresses, schools/grades/and other participant academic information, demographic data, financial data, internship data, site visit data, service commitment data, post-service commitment data and debt collection data, as required. Much of this information falls under PII guidelines.

This database is the backbone of the program and provides capability to track participants' degree pursuit, internships, satisfaction with the program, changes to the individual service agreements, financial projections, and other details that enable the program to run efficiently and effectively. The Government shall retain full ownership of the database, its architecture, and all associated data at all times, balancing operational efficiency with system flexibility. The Recipient is expected to leverage a robust, agile software development lifecycle to ensure the database can seamlessly track participant degree pursuits, manage service agreements, and provide actionable analytics that enable the program to run efficiently and effectively.

The following requirements must be addressed to demonstrate capability in administering this fundamental element:

- **SIMS Transition, Maintenance and Enhancement:** The Recipient will receive the transition of the existing SIMS database and legacy data. Using a robust software development lifecycle, the Recipient will propose a plan to maintain and enhance the SIMS database to support all the fundamental elements. The Government will work closely with the Recipient to determine if the plan is feasible and the course of action to implement the approved plan. The Recipient will then continue to work in close coordination with the Government to discuss and implement new functionality, improvements, user views, and other tasks.
- **Data Analytics & Reporting:** The Recipient will maintain data for all participants since program inception alongside policy and process repositories. All SIMS data will be readily available to the Government for statistical and management purposes and should be easily manipulated into reports and charts when required. Training for SMART program administrators and key stakeholders should occur at a mutually agreed-upon frequency.
- **Data Ownership and Access Control:** The database should be restricted to SMART Program administrators but provide seamless integration with all other program portals and web tools. At all times, the Government shall own the database and all data rights associated with the information contained within the database and website. Data to be

considered to be in the database should include: data associated with all participants of the program since its inception, a repository for program, policy, and process documents, and other data and documents required to administer the program.

At the conclusion of this agreement or when terminated, all such data and systems shall be transitioned to the ownership of the Government or Government designee using PII-regulatory procedures. Any copies shall be destroyed when PII-protected records/documents are successfully transferred to Government. PII information shall be properly marked as PII and protected, stored, transmitted and destroyed as the Recipient would its trade secrets, business sensitive information, and PII. Recipient should execute a non-disclosure agreement with all who have access to this data; and shall not disclose this data for any purpose than that set forth in this agreement. Therefore, it is not available for third-party access without the express consent of the CAM, or an auditor/investigator/inspector general of the U.S., DoW.

- **Personnel Readiness:** The Recipient should also consider the personnel needed, that are sufficiently trained in database management, such that they can maintain and update the system, generate required reports, and respond to queries for information to complete this task. The Recipient will ensure that personnel requiring access receive required training in proper handling of PII information. The Government will at all times have access to the database and associated reporting and data analytics tools needed to derive program and participant information.
- **Hosting and Infrastructure Standards:** All SIMS infrastructure should be authorized at FedRAMP High/Impact Level 4 (www.fedramp.gov). To ensure the long-term viability and ease of transition of SIMS, the system shall be developed and hosted on a commercially available, widely-supported, and platform-independent solution, such as ServiceNow or an equivalent platform.
- **Periodic Assessment Plan:** The Recipient will detail a Periodic Assessment Plan that details the frequency and methodology for evaluating SIMS technical performance, reliability, vulnerability, utility and user experience.

3. Element 3: Strategic Communications and Marketing

Overview: A comprehensive and coordinated overarching communications and marketing strategy are essential to the successful management, administration, and measurement of the SMART Program. The primary objective is to promote SMART as a cohesive part of the DoW's broader STEM talent development pipeline, spanning from Pre-K through career execution.

To recruit and retain highly qualified, talented students—including rising freshmen—the Recipient must implement marketing strategies designed to influence and educate students, educators, and key stakeholders about STEM educational opportunities across the SMART continuum. This includes providing the public with clear information about unique internship placements and guaranteed post-graduation employment. The strategy must maintain enough flexibility to adapt to evolving administrative priorities while actively aligning to and supporting individual SF recruitment and retention requirements, including outreach events.

The Recipient will enable the SMART Program to reach wide-ranging, national audiences comparable to other renowned undergraduate and graduate-level STEM programs. The Government and Recipient will further collaborate to solicit and award strategic outreach and recruiting grants to affinity groups and academic institutions annually (or semi-annually).

The following requirements must be addressed to demonstrate capability in administering this fundamental element:

- **Strategic Marketing and Outreach Plan:** The Recipient will detail a comprehensive Strategic Marketing and Outreach Plan designed to elevate the SMART Program's national profile and seamlessly integrate it within the broader DoW STEM continuum. The proposed plan should align the program's unique value propositions to target audiences using tailored content strategies, key messaging, and promotional tactics.

The target audiences for the promotion of the SMART Scholarship Program includes, but is not limited to: U.S. citizens pursuing a STEM degree, U.S. colleges and universities, appropriate professional, academic, and/or student associations, award recipients from affiliated DoW STEM programs (e.g. National Defense Science and Engineering Graduate (NDSEG) fellows and National Science Foundation (NSF) award recipients), deans and department chairs in STEM disciplines at U.S. colleges and universities, and others. Consideration should also include the SMART participating facilities from the DoW Components and other DoW agencies, ensuring SMART has wide visibility within the DoW science and technology directorates (i.e. commands and organizations within the DoW responsible for science and/or technology research, and/or engineering, programs and/or activities) (herein referred to as directorates and/or commands).

- **Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach:** The Recipient will work closely with the Government to actively market and provide outreach support to the general public, internal and external stakeholders (including but not limited to colleges and universities, affinity groups, SMART sponsoring facilities, and other scholarship programs) on behalf of the SMART Program.
- **Promotional Material Development:** The Recipient, in collaboration with the SMART Program Office, will prepare marketing and promotional materials periodically in accordance with program application and award cycle. In collaboration with the SMART Program Office, the Recipient will promote the SMART Program to ensure a broad applicant pool. Marketing and promotional material should contain or identify web links that contain SMART Program information, program contact information, and other promotional information.
- **Broad National Outreach:** The Recipient will collaborate with the Government to publicize and promote the SMART Scholarship Program to a wide ranging, national audience, comparable to other nationally renowned undergraduate and graduate level science and technology programs, to attract the highest qualified prospective applicants. This includes the design and distribution of advertising and application materials and an appropriate method to reach audiences from which qualified applicants will be drawn.

This includes but is not limited to: in-person events, university visits, print, electronic, virtual webinars, and other media outlets.

- **Cross-Program Promotion and Partnerships:** The Recipient will develop a plan for cross program promotion to strategically reach audiences to increase students' and SFs' participation through the DoW STEM continuum of opportunities³, and affiliated partnerships. The Recipient, in collaboration with the Government, will provide innovative ideas and facilitate partnerships or strategic initiatives to promote DoW STEM initiatives.
- **Social Media and Digital Engagement:** The Recipient will work closely with the SMART Program Office to:
 - Manage official SMART Program social media accounts including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and others as social media landscapes evolve.
 - Use industry standard social media analytics tools to measure and evaluate effectiveness of engagement.
 - Regularly produce media highlights and features on scholars, mentors, and participating SFs (online, in print, on social media) in order to promote the successes of existing and past participants, and to attract future applicants.
- **Academic Engagement:** The SMART program is committed to fostering opportunities in higher education for students across the nation. As part of this effort, the Recipient will support coordinated outreach to academic organizations, sponsoring facilities and affiliated DoW partners. The Recipient will demonstrate a commitment to fostering nationwide opportunities in higher education that align with the long-term technical needs of the DoW workforce. The SMART program has outlined the following goals to support this initiative:
 - **Targeted University Engagement:** Build and maintain strategic relationships with administration, faculty, and staff at academic institutions.
 - **SF Outreach Coordination:** Develop and provide educational tools and resources to SFs that empower them to strategically broaden their academic reach. This includes data and guidance to help SFs identify and recruit from institutions that specialize in mission-relevant STEM disciplines.
- **Reporting and Assessment:** The Recipient will work closely with the Government to define actionable success metrics that will be utilized not only to measure the return on investment for these outreach efforts but also to drive continuous, agile, and data-informed enhancements to the marketing strategy.

The Recipient will provide reports and analysis regarding outreach effectiveness in the following areas:

- An annual report detailing metrics on applicants, branding, media, marketing, and the scholar experience at the end of each application season (typically quarter 2 of the fiscal year, after the application period closes).

³ <https://dowstem.us>

- An annual outreach plan for the upcoming award cycle (to be delivered by quarter 3 of the fiscal year, ahead of the next year's application period).
- Quarterly reports on social media effectiveness and insights from the analytic/listening tools.
- Quarterly reports regarding outreach to academic organizations, sponsoring facilities and affiliated DoW partners. Assist in the development of any and all statutory reporting requirements.

4. Element 4: Scholar Payments and Expenses

Overview: The Recipient will assist the SMART Program with payment of scholar's tuition, stipends, and other expenses on behalf of the Government. The need for the SMART Program to pay tuition to universities and colleges on behalf of students, as well as pay the scholar's their stipends is imperative to the effective administration of the program. The timely payment of stipends and tuition solidifies the reputation of the SMART Program among public opinion allowing it to retain its prestige and ability to recruit. The need for an intermediary to take federal funds and disburse them to universities, colleges, and individuals is an essential element to the SMART Program that needs to be fulfilled.

The Applicant should consider that upon selection of the scholarship awardees, administrative files for each new scholarship recipient and information will be entered into the SIMS database. Presently, the scholarship provides stipends, textbook/miscellaneous allowances, internship support payments (if required), and full tuition and required fees to the institution attended by the scholarship awardee. The annual stipend for scholarship recipients will be determined for each year for each class. Stipends are determined by the OUSW. Stipends and other expenses are paid monthly directly to the scholars while tuition and fee payments are paid directly to the academic institution based on institutional billing practices.

The following requirements must be addressed to demonstrate capability in administering this fundamental element:

- **Financial Disbursements:** The Recipient should consider proposing an efficient and effective plan to distribute stipend and academic fees on time, provide stipend payments monthly directly to the awardees, and pay tuition and fees based on institutional billing practices, using common financial business practices and tools. Additionally, the Recipient should expect to halt payments if a scholar status is non-compliant or recoup any overpaid funds. The anticipated number of scholars in academic pursuit over the course of the CA is projected to be approximately 1,500 per year, with approximately 90% of those participants requiring stipends paid through this agreement.

The Recipient will need to consider other payments such as: funding for new awardees eligible for a site visit allotment, travel and lodging support at alternative internship sites, or other payments that may be made throughout the year. Anticipated funding level for tuition and stipends and other academic expenses is \$60 - \$100 million per year, based on budget.

- **Tax Reporting and Tracking:** The Recipient should to take into consideration that a

report of the amount of all stipend payments and allowance on each scholarship program participant is needed to be sent to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on the appropriate Federal forms and within the IRS required timeframe.

- **Retention Scholar Support:** Each year approximately 10% of SMART Scholarship Program participants in academic pursuit are current DoW employees (retention participants). The DoW will fund retention participant stipend and benefits outside of the CA. However, the Recipient should expect to assist the DoW in preparing some associated paperwork needed for the DoW to efficiently deliver this funding to the DoW Components and facilities (statements of work, descriptions of funding amounts, etc.). The Recipient will pay tuition and fees for retention participants in a similar fashion to their ‘recruitment’ peers.
- **Financial Reporting & Tracking:** Recipient will provide monthly reports to SMART Program Office detailing current execution and projected costs for both administrative/operational efforts and scholar costs and expenses. Additionally, the Recipient will provide quarterly forecasting reports to include year-to-date budget execution and projected financial variances. These reports must separate administrative/operational efforts from direct scholar costs and expenses.

5. Element 5: Independent Program Evaluation

Perform independent program evaluations to assess progress and identify gaps and growth opportunities.

Overview: The SMART program is committed to establishing best practices and understanding the impact of current and new processes. Conducting program assessments will provide SMART with data that will identify gaps and growth opportunities. These assessments will provide suggestions for immediate action (within the next program year), as well as to assist in long-term strategic planning.

To preserve integrity of a third-party evaluation, the Recipient should consider partnering with an external entity within the CA to perform independent evaluations of the SMART Program that is longitudinal in nature. The SMART program has identified the following key areas for consideration:

- Application, evaluation and selection processes
- Talent pipeline demographics for the applicant and scholar pool
- Outcome evaluation of SMART program (cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis)
- Scholar experience and retention (including Alumni)
- Scholar hiring process (timeliness)

The Recipient, in close coordination with the Government, will develop annual reports, widely available to the public, that detail both the immediate and long-term impact that SMART has on the DoW mission, as well as longer longitudinal evaluations for the SMART Program Office detailing program and process effectiveness.

When scoping the evaluation effort, the Recipient and evaluation partner should bear in mind the existing data-rich resource in SIMS, though others may be useful.

B. Federal Award Information

The NOFO is expected to result in the award of a CA with a performance period of up to ten (10) years. The anticipated award amount of the CA over the ten-year performance period is up to \$1,300,000,000 (subject to availability of funding). See breakout in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Estimated Cooperative Agreement (CA) Budget

	Base Period	Option Year 1	Option Year 2	Option Year 3	Option Year 4	Option Year 5	Option Year 6	Option Year 7	Option Year 8	Option Year 9
Total Budget (NTE):	Up to \$120 M	Up to \$120 M	Up to \$125 M	Up to \$125 M	Up to \$130 M	Up to \$130 M	Up to \$135 M	Up to \$135 M	Up to \$140 M	Up to \$140 M
Total Administrative:	TBD by Applicant									
Element 1	<i>TBD by Applicant</i>									
Element 2	<i>TBD by Applicant</i>									
Element 3	<i>TBD by Applicant</i>									
Element 4	<i>TBD by Applicant</i>									
Element 5	<i>NTE: \$1M/yr.</i>									
Total Scholarships:	No less than 82-87% of the total annual award.									

The total not to exceed (NTE) budget for each year of the funding opportunity is summarized in Table 1. Applicants should formulate their own budgets based on their understanding of the requirements, but should keep in mind the following: (1) The total amount budgeted for the entire evaluation effort under Element 5 should not exceed \$1M/year; and (2) Administrative costs should be optimized in order to maximize the funding available for scholarships each year, with no less 82-87% of the total annual award devoted to scholarships (new and existing) in order to meet the Department's projected award targets over the next ten years.

Cooperative Agreement (CA)

A legal instrument which, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6305, is used to enter into the same kind of relationship as a grant (see definition "grant"), except that substantial involvement is expected between the Federal Government and the Recipient when carrying out the activity contemplated by the CA. The term does not include "cooperative research and development agreements" as defined in 15 U.S.C. 3710a. No fee or profit is allowed.

CAs for institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, foreign organizations, and foreign public entities are primarily governed by the following:

- a. Federal statutes

- b. Federal regulations
- c. 2 CFR Part 200
- d. 2 CFR Part 1104
- e. 32 CFR Parts 21, 22, 26, and 28
- f. DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions
- g. Agency-specific Research Terms and Conditions

CAs for for-profit and nonprofit organizations exempted from Subpart E—Cost Principles of 2 CFR Part 200, are primarily governed by the following:

- a. Federal statutes
- b. Federal regulations
- c. 32 CFR Part 34 - Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with For-Profit Organizations
- d. 32 CFR Parts 21, 22, 26, and 28
- e. DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions
- f. Agency-specific Research Terms and Conditions

The authority for the SMART Program is U.S.C. Title 10, Section 4093: “The Secretary of War shall carry out a program to provide financial assistance for education in science, mathematics, engineering, and technology skills and disciplines that, as determined by the Secretary, are critical to the national security functions of the Department of War and are needed in the Department of War workforce.”

The following websites may be accessed to obtain an electronic copy of the governing regulations and terms and conditions:

- a. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): <http://www.ecfr.gov>
- b. DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions: <https://www.onr.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions>
- c. Agency-Specific Research Terms and Conditions: <https://arl.devcom.army.mil/resources/baa-forms>

Substantial Government involvement is expected under the CA and essential to the performance and successful execution of the SMART Program. The substantial Government involvement anticipated for the SMART Program is contained in Section A. Program Description of this announcement. The CA enables and encourages the Recipient to synchronize and coordinate the program planning and execution of the SMART Program with the Government’s primary representative, the CAM. It is the CAM’s responsibility to provide technical and fiscal oversight over the SMART CA.

The CAM must ensure that the SMART Program is planned and executed in alignment with priorities and core objectives, within the parameters of the CA, and in adherence to annually approved program plans and funding levels. In addition, it is the CAM’s responsibility to effectively and efficiently integrate STEM assets/resources across DoW’s Science and Technology (S&T) Enterprise to ensure program participants are exposed to and learn about

STEM opportunities and careers within DoW. Substantial Government involvement is required to provide students STEM opportunities at laboratories and to integrate DoW involvement and representation during SMART events.

Deliverables

Element#	Title	Description/Type of Format	Due Date	Reviewer/ Acceptor
All Elements (1-5)	Written monthly status reports describing work performed during the month, anticipated future work, problems and/or delays	Microsoft Office format	10th of each month	CAM
All Elements (1-5)	Quarterly Review Meetings Agenda and Presentation	Microsoft Office format	5 calendar days prior to quarterly meeting	CAM
All Elements (1-5)	Monthly Financial Reports describing funds execution to date, status of current balances across elements, and projections.	Microsoft Office format	15th of each month	CAM
Element 1	Final fully functional web portals including online application, selection, awards, orientation, SF POC, and administrative portals	Website should be available and fully functional. Access for SMART Participants and all individuals and organizations as directed by the CAM	The Recipient shall have a transition in plan, to transfer the management of the existing website, within 15 calendar days of award. It is anticipated that the full transition for a fully operational website, to include all portals, will be completed within 60 calendar days. Then continuous through performance period	CAM
Element 1	Web Maintenance and Hosting Services	The Recipient will host and provide web maintenance services on a routine continually basis throughout agreement performance	Continuous through performance period with no downtime longer than 8 hours per day with a monthly limit of 24 hours per month	CAM
Element 1	Applicant Cost Detail Worksheet	A Microsoft Excel worksheet listing the expected tuition costs for each applicant. The worksheet should also include other applicant specific data as required by the CAM	No later than 10 calendar days after close of application	CAM
Element 1	Final award lists and applicant materials	Electronic copies of service/command specific awardee files to be sent to each primary service POC and each command having selected participants	Due to service CAM, CAOs and command POCs no later than 5 calendar days after close of selection	CAM

Element 1	Attendance at meetings and presentation of program briefs	Personal appearance or video or teleconference, meeting minutes as necessary	Ongoing and as needed in coordination with service CAO and CAM	CAM
Element 1	IRS reporting of stipend and allowance for each participant and academic evaluation panelist.	Federal forms as required by IRS	As required by IRS	IRS
Element 1	SMART Program Annual Report	An annual report detailing performance metrics to measure the CA's accomplishments against its overall priorities and objectives, such as successful integration of goals into all programs, partnerships, and processes; effective integration and use of website and branding; collaboration of all organizations; effectiveness of evaluations, common metrics, and data collection; and management of the CA.	30 calendar days after the end of the program year	CAM
Element 1	SMART Program Public-Facing Annual Report	A public-facing annual report detailing program impact and program highlights	30 calendar days after the end of the program year	CAM
Element 1	Orientation	The Recipient will execute an in-person orientation for 600-800 awardees and 200 additional stakeholders.	This effort includes end-to-end event planning to include the entire event life cycle from concept execution and post event analysis.	CAM
Element 2	Fully functioning Database of participant records to support, track and report program progression, termination and debt collection and other issue, as needed	SIMS	Draft database within 15 calendar days of award. The Government will have 5 business days to review the draft and provide comments and changes. The final deliverable will be required 45 calendar days after receipt of the Government comments on the draft. All SMART data shall be migrated to the SIMS including validation of data accuracy within 60 calendar days of award of agreement.	CAM

Element 3	Outreach Annual Plan	An annual outreach plan for the upcoming award cycle	To be delivered by quarter 3 of the fiscal year, ahead of the next year's application period	
Element 3	Promotion Materials	Print materials, electronic correspondence, journal articles, advertisements, announcements, and social media posts in either print or digital form where appropriate	Government shall have 5 calendar days to approve material. Published/reprinted materials shall be available within 10 calendar days of each print or correspondence	CAM
Element 3	Media/Branding Update	Provide report/brief detailing outreach on social media platform monitoring tool	Quarterly	CAM
Element 3	Outreach Annual Report	An annual report detailing metrics on applicants, branding, media, marketing and the scholar experience	Read ahead provided week prior and report submitted at the beginning of quarter 3	CAM
Element 4	Administer Stipends	Administer reports and records of payment to scholarship Recipients	Continuous through performance period, no less frequent than monthly	CAM
Element 5	Independent Evaluation	Provide an annual report detailing results of the SMART evaluations, and describing the SMART Program longitudinal evaluation	Annually (Sep)	CAM

Program Transition

The existing SMART CA ends on 31 Jul 2027. The period of performance for the base year of this new CA is expected to start on 3 June 2027. The transition period is estimated to be two months. The periods of performance for each subsequent option year will run from 01 August through 31 July of the following year to align with the academic calendar. The CAM will facilitate the transition of all fundamental elements from the current Recipient to new Recipient.

Specific items to be transitioned to the new Recipient are listed below, but are not inclusive of everything to be transferred:

- The domain smartscholarship.org and all sub-domains under it. (The Government owns the domain. However, the Recipient will pay all fees associated with the upkeep of the domain.)
- Social media accounts and passwords (The Government owns all accounts, though the Recipient manages and maintains them.)
- All Scholar and Program data from in SIMS in COTS format
- A clone of the current SIMS environment, to include all documents, standard operating

procedures, automated workflows, data structures, reports, Program forms, and any other data relevant to the administration of the Program

- iPads and other equipment
- Financial projections and documents
- Outreach and marketing plans, tools, and supplies
- All other documentation

The Recipient will develop and implement a plan to identify the tasks and activities required to efficiently transfer all documentation, processes to recipient hardware and software systems to ensure seamless program operation upon agreement award. The plan should identify resources required with responsibilities, define schedules and resource estimates, and address plans to minimize operation risks. The Recipient will participate in person or via electronic participation in a Government-scheduled, Kick-Off Meeting after award. The Recipient and any sub-recipient(s) shall participate in the Kick-Off Meeting. The purpose of this Kick-Off Meeting is to (1) aid both the Government and recipient personnel in achieving a clear and mutual understanding of all requirements, and (2) identify and resolve potential problems.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Address to View Funding Opportunity Announcement

Through the SMART Program, DoW envisions the Government will work with the Recipient to collaboratively advance STEM education and outreach programs conducted across the U.S., Puerto Rico as well as DoW locations in Europe and the Pacific. All applicants are expected to have significant involvement and input into the program. To be qualified, potential applicants must have the following:

- Management capability and adequate financial and technical resources to administer the program of activities envisioned under the SMART Program.
- A satisfactory record of administering such programs or activities (if a prior recipient of an award).
- A satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics.
- Be otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a CA under applicable laws and regulation.

In deciding whether a Recipient is otherwise qualified, the Grants Officer shall ensure that the potential Applicant is registered and in good standing in the System for Award Management (SAM).

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to View Funding Opportunity Announcement

This NOFO may be accessed via the following websites:

- a. Grants.gov (www.grants.gov)

Amendments to this NOFO, if any, will be posted to these websites when they occur. Interested parties

are encouraged to periodically check these websites for updates and amendments.

The following information is for those wishing to respond to the NOFO:

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Application forms and instructions will be available at Grants.gov. To access these materials, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, select "Apply for Grants", and then select "Download an Application Package." Enter the funding opportunity number, W911NF-27-R-A001.

NOTE: For compatible versions of Adobe Reader, please see the following link:

<https://www.grants.gov/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

Applicants must complete the mandatory forms and any optional forms (e.g., SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities) in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below. The required fields should be completed in accordance with the "pop-up" instructions on the forms. To activate the instructions, turn on the "Help Mode" (icon with the pointer and question mark at the top of the form). Files that are attached to the forms must be in Adobe Portable Document Form (PDF) unless otherwise specified in this announcement.

The following formatting rules apply for the file attachments:

- Paper size when printed – 8.5 x 11-inch paper Margins – 1 inch on all sides of paper Spacing – single
- Font – No smaller than Times New Roman, 11 point
- Form: SF 424 (R&R) (Mandatory) – Complete this form first to populate data in other forms.
- Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) usernames and passwords serve as "electronic signatures" when your organization submits applications through Grants.gov. By using the SF 424 (R&R), applicants are providing the certification required by 32 CFR Part 28 regarding lobbying.

Form: Research & Related Other Project Information - Complete questions 1 through 6 and attach files.

- Project Summary/Abstract (Field 7 on the form) - The Project Summary should be a brief abstract that summarizes the content of the proposal. The project summary must not exceed 5 pages. Pages in excess of this page limit will not be evaluated.
- Project Narrative (Field 8 on the form) - Chapters and Numbers of pages – Field 8 is to contain the chapters set forth below and may not exceed the stipulated page counts for those chapters. Pages in excess of the noted page limits will not be evaluated.
- Chapter 1- **Technical Plan**. The pages included in Chapter 1 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 1 **must not exceed 15 pages**, utilizing one side of the

page.

- Chapter 2 - **Management**. The pages included in Chapter 2 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 2 of the proposal **must not exceed 8 pages**, utilizing one side of the page.
- Chapter 3 - **Past Performance Information** - The pages included in Chapter 3 shall be numbered. Applicants are advised that Chapter 3 of the proposal **must not exceed 6 pages**, utilizing one side of the page. This does not include past performance questionnaires.
- Chapter 4 - **Credentials** - Credentials are **limited to 8 pages** to include the resumes or biographical sketches of individuals.

Bibliography and References Cited (Field 9 on the form) - Attach a listing of applicable publications cited in above sections.

Facilities and Other Resources (Field 10 on the form) - The applicant is to include a listing of facilities and other resources available to support the proposal. Any Government resources necessary for performance are to be clearly identified. Attach this information at Field 10.

Equipment (Field 11 on the form) - The applicant is to include a listing of equipment available to support the proposal. Any Government equipment necessary for performance is to be clearly identified. Attach this information at Field 11.

Other Attachments (Field 12 on the form) are as follows:

Attachment 1. Attach the Cost Proposal. The cost portion of the proposal shall contain cost estimates sufficiently detailed for meaningful evaluation. For all proposals, the elements of the budget should include:

- Direct Labor - Individual labor category or person, with associated labor hours and unburdened direct labor rates.
- Indirect Costs - Fringe benefits, overhead, G&A, etc. (must show base amount and rate). Justify.
- Travel - Number of trips, destination, duration, etc. Justify and include basis for costs.
- Sub-award - A cost proposal, as detailed as the Applicant's cost proposal, will be required to be submitted by each proposed sub-recipient.
- Consultant - Provide consultant agreement or other document that verifies the proposed loaded daily/hourly rate. Include a description of the nature of and the need for any consultant's participation. Provide budget justification.
- Materials - Specifically itemized with costs or estimated costs. An explanation of any

estimating factors, including their derivation and application, shall be provided. Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market survey, etc.). Justify.

- Other Directs Costs - Particularly any proposed items of equipment or facilities.

Equipment and facilities generally must be furnished by the Recipient (justifications must be provided when Government funding for such items is sought). Include a brief description of the applicant's procurement method to be used (competition, engineering estimate, market research, etc.). Justify.

Attachment 2. SF-LLL - Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

If applicable, attach a complete SF- LLL. Applicability: If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the grant/collaborative agreement, you must complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying."

Attachment 3. Complete the following (see Section F below) Representations under DoW Assistance Agreements: Appropriations Provisions on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions

3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exemption approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d) is required to:

- a. Be registered in SAM prior to submitting its application;
- b. Provide a valid unique entity identifier (formerly DUNS) in its application; and
- c. 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 Federal awarding agency 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 the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times

- a. Proposals: Electronic submission of proposals through Grants.gov are due by 3:00 p.m. EST on 3 December 2026. Proposals submitted after the closing date will not be considered or evaluated by the Government.
- b. Proposal Receipt Notices: After a proposal is submitted to Grants.gov, the AOR will

receive a series of three emails from Grants.gov. The first two emails will be received within 24 to 48 hours after submission. The first email will confirm time of receipt of the proposal by the Grants.gov system and the second will indicate that the proposal has either been successfully validated by the system prior to transmission to the grantor agency or has been rejected due to errors. A third email will be received once the grantor agency has confirmed receipt of the proposal. Reference the Grants.gov User Guide at <https://www.grants.gov/help/get-started/> for more information.

For the purposes of this NOFO, an applicant's proposal is not considered received by ARO until the AOR receives email #3.

5. Intergovernmental Review

Not Applicable

6. Funding Restrictions

Per 2 CFR § 200.216, funds may not be used to procure telecommunications equipment or video surveillance services or equipment produced by

- Huawei Technologies Company,
- ZTE Corporation Hytera Communications Corporation,
- Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company,
- Dahua Technology Company
- any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities

Funds from an award may not be used to attain fee or profit.

7. Other Submission Requirements

Information to Be Requested from Successful Applicants: Applicants whose proposals are accepted for funding will be contacted before award to provide additional information required for award. The required information may include requests to clarifying budget explanations, representations, certifications, and some technical aspects.

E. Proposal Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria

It is the intent of the NOFO to solicit the most creative, innovative, and effective approach to the administration of the SMART Program. Crucially, the applications will be evaluated heavily on the clarity and feasibility of their implementation plans, not just on the conceptual merit of their ideas. The award decision will be based on an overall evaluation of each applicant's proposal in accordance with the factors set forth below.

- (1) Technical Plan to administer the SMART Program meeting requirements of each Fundamental Element;
- (2) Management (Methodology and Execution);

- (3) Past Performance;
- (4) Credentials; and
- (5) Cost (Not Weighted).

Factor (1) Technical Plan. This plan should include details on how the SMART program fundamental elements will be administered; focusing on how such plans will lead to achieving the five (5) SMART fundamental elements. Each of the fundamental elements needs to be addressed individually, and then an explanation of how the applicant will bring all five of the fundamental elements together for successful and satisfactory administration of the SMART program. Evaluators will specifically assess the Technical Plan for clear, actionable, and highly feasible steps to achieve the fundamental elements, as well as the theoretical merit of the proposed approach.

Applicants should provide evidence of the inclusion of the appropriate technical expertise required to execute described efforts. Documentation may include, but not be limited to: prior experience with the administration of application cycles, monitoring and interaction with students during academic pursuit, monitoring of scholars upon graduation, hiring tracking, prior experience evaluating students' qualifications, prior experience with debt collection, agreements with scientific organizations / individuals, etc.

The applicant must demonstrate the capability to execute a competitive application, evaluation, and selection process expected to result in the recruitment and selection of candidates of the highest caliber. The applicant shall clearly address its plan for increasing awareness of SMART through marketing and outreach. The applicant must also demonstrate the capability to develop and maintain a complex, multi-user database and web-based front end. The application shall include a discussion on how sub-recipients are selected, if applicable. The applicant's application shall also address the process the applicants will use to facilitate transitioning from the current program to the resulting program once awarded.

The Government will use all of the submitted documentation to evaluate the applicant's capability and technical competence in all areas of the SMART Program Lifecycle, to include but not limited to, application cycle, monitoring of scholars in academic pursuit, monitoring of students in service commitment, hiring tracking, database development and maintenance, marketing and outreach for STEM programs, and disbursing and tracking funds.

Capability can be showcased in the form of technical expertise, ongoing projects for other contracts/agreements/grants, or a combination of other demonstrable capabilities. Note that under Factor 1 applicants should clearly articulate a detailed technical approach for the proposed duration of the CA, with supporting evidence of capabilities and relevance as needed. Factor 3 is designed to capture Past Performance in greater detail and therefore Factor 1 should not rely heavily on elements better captured in Factor 3.

All of these areas listed as well as the scope of work listed in the fundamental elements will be evaluated against the submitted documentation and application to develop an overall technical score for this factor.

Factor (2) Management. This element will focus upon the plan for managing the

administration of recipient activities over the lifetime of the SMART Program. Evaluators will specifically assess the Management Plan for clear methodology and execution strategy, as well as the overall viability of the management approach.

Towards the management factor, Applicants will be evaluated on the strength of their proposed management strategy, to include but not limited to the following:

- A detailed description of its overall management concept to include, but not limited to, management of data, personnel, and application cycle;
- A detailed description of its methodology and mechanisms for development of a comprehensive program plan, to include, but not limited to, marketing and outreach, assistance with payments, and overall ability to manage all five (5) fundamental elements simultaneously;
- Management procedures to oversee and maximize progress;
- Management concepts to foster collaboration with the Government;
- Management of the vast amount of data that is to be collected and used in the SMART program;
- Management of student feedback and reporting to possibly improve the program;
- Specifics of the integration of SMART website into all components/efforts; and
- Controls to assure timely submission and tracking of Recipient invoices submitted to the Government.

The Government will also evaluate the methodology and mechanisms of the proposed comprehensive program plan to ensure that it provides for adequate oversight and management of the SMART program in the furtherance of the Government's objectives.

Note that under Factor 2 applicants should clearly articulate a detailed management plan for the proposed duration of the CA, with supporting evidence of capabilities and relevance as needed. Factor 3 is designed to capture Past Performance in greater detail and therefore Factor 2 should not rely heavily on elements better captured in Factor 3.

Factor (3) Past Performance. This element will focus on previous or current efforts performed by the applicant that demonstrates the ability to successfully performed requirements similar to those outlined in the NOFO.

The applicant shall include contact information (agency/company name, point of contact, telephone and facsimile numbers, e-mail address, etc.) as well as the project/contract/grant/agreement name and number of three (3) references that can verify and validate its ability to successfully perform the requirements in the NOFO.

The applicant shall provide a brief description of its ongoing and previous Government Agreements/contracts during the past three (3) years, which are relevant to the effort required in this NOFO. Identify in specific detail for each contract/grant/agreement listed why or how the effort is relevant or similar to the effort required in this NOFO. Applicants shall discuss in

detail corporate experience solving challenging problems similar to those that may arise with this program.

The applicant will be responsible for overall management and administration; its past performance shall clearly demonstrate that it has successfully done so in the past three (3) years. Additionally, the past performance for proposed applicants shall clearly demonstrate that it has successfully performed in the area(s) where they will have administrative management control. Applicants are encouraged to include information on performance problems encountered on identified contracts/grants/agreements and the corrective actions taken.

The Government will evaluate the applicant on this factor using all of the documentation submitted with the application. An applicant without any applicable past experience will receive a neutral rating, which will be factored neither favorably nor unfavorably.

Relevancy: The first aspect of the past performance evaluation is to assess the Applicant's past performance to determine how relevant a recent effort accomplished by the Applicant is to the effort to be acquired as described in the NOFO. Relevancy is not separately rated; however, the following criteria will be used to establish what is relevant which shall include similarity of service/support, complexity, dollar value, contract type, and degree of sub-contract/teaming. Past performance will be related as follows in addition to the above narrative.

Table 2. Past Performance Relevancy Ratings

RATING	DEFINITION
Very Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved essentially the same scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this solicitation requires.
Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved similar scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this NOFO requires.
Somewhat Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved some scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this NOFO requires.
Not Relevant	Present/Past performance effort involved little or none of the scope and magnitude of effort and complexities this NOFO requires.

Quality Assessment: Assess the quality of the Applicant's past performance on those recent efforts that were determined relevant by determining how well the contractor performed on the awards. Documented results from Past Performance Questionnaires, interviews, CPARS, and other sources form the support and basis for this assessment.

Performance Confidence Assessment: The final step is for the team to arrive at a single consensus performance confidence assessment for the Applicant, selecting most appropriate rating from the chart below. This rating considers that assessed quality of the relevant/recent efforts gathered.

Table 3. Past Performance Confidence Assessments Ratings

RATING	DEFINITION
Substantial Confidence	Based on the Applicant's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a high expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.
Satisfactory Confidence	Based on the Applicant's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a reasonable expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.
Neutral Confidence	No recent/relevant performance record is available of the Applicant's performance record is so sparse that no meaningful confidence assessment rating can be reasonably assigned. The Applicant may not be evaluated favorably or unfavorably on the factor of past performance.
Limited Confidence	Based on the Applicant's recent/relevant performance record, the Government has a low expectation that the Applicant will successfully perform the required effort.

Factor (4) Credentials. This factor will focus on the applicant's credentials, as an organization (reputation or recognition in the area of STEM outreach or education) as well as the credentials of the specific individuals proposed. Credentials include, but are not limited to, personnel on board, ability to recruit qualified personnel, and reputation within the STEM outreach and education community.

The application shall provide a sufficient description of the leadership roles and management

personnel to include the names, brief biographies and availability of key personnel substantially and meaningfully engaged in the CA. The applicant's application shall clearly identify the components and/or functions each of the named persons will be responsible for managing.

The Government's assessment of this factor will focus on how the demonstrated education and experience of proposed personnel is expected to contribute to the applicant's understanding of the DoW's goals for STEM education and outreach and the core objectives of the CA. The Government will assess the application to determine if proper biographical and work experience has been provided for all personnel whose performance will significantly impact the successful completion of the requirements outlined in the NOFO.

Factor (5) Cost. While this area will not be weighted, it will be used in the final determination of a Recipient. Evaluation of this area will consider cost realism, cost reasonableness, and affordability within funding constraints; as well as sufficient management, reporting, and risk-reduction strategies for the anticipated cost and budget challenges.

All areas listed will be evaluated against all submitted documentation and the full application to develop an overall score for this factor.

The Government may make adjustments to the cost of the total proposed effort as deemed necessary to reflect what the effort should cost. These adjustments shall consider the task undertaken and approach proposed. These adjustments may include upward or downward adjustments to proposed labor hours, labor rates, quantity of materials, price of materials, overhead rates and G&A, etc.

Evaluation Factors

All information necessary for the review and evaluation of a proposal must be contained in the proposal. No other material will be provided to the panel. Proposals should contain sufficient technical detail to allow for an in-depth technical assessment.

Table 4. Evaluation Merit Definitions

RATING	DEFINITION
Outstanding	Proposal meets and/or exceeds requirements and indicates an exceptional approach and understanding of the requirements. The proposal provides a highly clear, actionable, and feasible implementation plan. Strengths far outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is very low.
Good	Proposal meets requirements and indicates a thorough approach and understanding of the requirements, supported by a clear and feasible implementation. Proposal contains strengths which outweigh any weaknesses. Risk of unsuccessful performance is low.
Acceptable	Proposal meets requirements and indicates an adequate approach and understanding of the requirements. Strengths and weaknesses are offsetting or will have little or no impact on completing requirements in the NOFO. Risk of unsuccessful performance is no worse than moderate.
Unacceptable	Proposal does not meet requirements of the NOFO and contains one or more deficiencies. The proposal is un-awardable.

2. Review and Selection Process

All information necessary for the review and evaluation of a proposal must be contained within the proposal. No other material will be provided to those evaluating proposals. An initial review of the proposals will be conducted to ensure compliance with the requirements of this NOFO.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the NOFO may result in a proposal receiving no further consideration for award.

Proposals that are in compliance with the requirements of the NOFO will be evaluated in accordance with the evaluation factors and priorities described above. Award will be based on an integrated assessment of each Applicant's ability to satisfy the NOFO requirements.

The review panel will consist of representatives and subject matter experts from across the DoW and may also include other Federal agencies. The panel will not compare one application against another but rather assess each application individually in regard to how it addresses the requirements defined in the Fundamental Elements as well as how well it addresses the evaluation criteria and factors published within the NOFO.

The Government may elect to establish a range of applicants that have been evaluated to be among the most qualified with respect to their proposed Technical Plan. "Most qualified" is defined as being evaluated to have relatively few or no weaknesses, and/or a relatively high number of strengths that contribute to Good or Outstanding rating. The applicants not among the most qualified may result in the application receiving no further consideration for award.

The Government reserves the right to award without discussions. If discussions are held, those Applicants will be invited to submit Proposal Revisions which will be evaluated using the same evaluation procedures as were used in the initial proposals. The Government will make award to

the Applicant, conforming to the NOFO, which offers the best value to the Government, cost and other factors considered. Further, award may be made to other than the Applicant who offers the lowest cost proposal. The Government reserves the right not to make an award should no acceptable offer be submitted.

F. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Applicants whose proposals are recommended for award may be contacted by a Grants Officer or his/her representative. The notification email must not be regarded as an authorization to commit or expend funds. Award is not made until the CA is signed by both the successful applicant and the Grants Officer.

The award document signed by the Grants Officer is the official and authorizing award instrument. The authorizing award instrument, signed by the Grants Officer, will be emailed to the Principal Investigator (PI) and AOR.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

- a. Each award under this announcement will be governed by the general award terms and conditions in effect at the time of the award that conform to DoW's implementation of OMB guidance applicable to financial assistance in 2 CFR part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards." The DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions (latest version, March 2025) are located at <https://www.onr.navy.mil/work-with-us/manage-your-award/manage-grant-award/grants-terms-conditions>

These terms and conditions are incorporated by reference in this announcement.

- b. Awards must comply with all applicable national policy requirements. The key national policy requirements that may relate to an award under this NOFO are included in the terms and conditions specified in paragraph 2.a. above. The following list provides notable national policy requirements that may be applicable to an award. NOTE: The following is not an all-inclusive list of policy requirements.

- i. Protection of Human Subjects:
Assistance Instruments:

- (a) The Recipient must protect the rights and welfare of individuals who participate as human subjects in research under this award and comply fully with the requirements at 32 CFR part 219, DoDI 3216.02, 10 U.S.C. 980, the National Policy Requirements Concerning Live Organisms Terms and Conditions (Section A.1., Human Subjects, at 81 Federal Register 78380, Appendix C to Part 1122), and when applicable, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) policies and regulations.

- (b) The Recipient must not begin performance of research involving human subjects, also known as human subjects research (HSR), that is covered under 32 CFR part 219, or that meets exemption criteria under 32 CFR 219.101(b), or expends funding on such effort, until you receive a formal notification of approval from the cognizant DoW Human Research Protection Official (HRPO). Approval to perform HSR under this award is received after the HRPO has performed a review of the Recipient's documentation of planned HSR activities and has officially furnished a concurrence with the Recipient's determination as presented in the documentation.
- (c) In order for the HRPO to accomplish this concurrence review, the Recipient must provide sufficient documentation to enable his or her assessment as follows:
- (i) If the HSR meets an exemption criterion under 32 CFR 219.101(b), the documentation must include a citation of the exemption category under 32 CFR 219.101(b) and a rationale statement.
- (ii) If the Recipient's activity is determined as "non-exempt research involving human subjects", the documentation must include:
- Assurance of Compliance (a written assurance that an institution will comply with requirements of 32 CFR Part 219, as well as the terms of the assurance) appropriate for the scope of work or program plan; and
 - Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, as well as all documentation reviewed by the IRB to make their determination.
- (d) The HRPO retains final judgment on what activities constitute HSR, whether an exempt category applies, whether the risk determination is appropriate, and whether the planned HSR activities comply with the requirements in paragraph (a) of this section.
- (e) The Recipient must notify the Grants Officer/ immediately of any suspensions or terminations of the Assurance of Compliance.
- (f) DoW staff, consultants, and advisory groups may independently review and inspect the Recipient's research and research procedures involving human subjects and, based on such findings, DoW may prohibit research that presents unacceptable hazards or otherwise fails to comply with DoW requirements.
- (g) Definitions for terms used in this section are found in DoDI 3216.02.
- ii. Military Recruiting:
Assistance Instruments: This is to notify potential applicants that each grant or CA awarded under this announcement to an institution of higher education must include

the following term and condition:

- (a) As a condition for receiving funds available to the DoW under this award, you agree that you are not an institution of higher education (as defined in 32 CFR part 216) that has a policy or practice that either prohibits, or in effect prevents:
 - (i) The Secretary of a Military Department from maintaining, establishing, or operating a unit of the Senior Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC)—in accordance with 10 U.S.C. 654 and other applicable Federal laws—at that institution (or any sub-element of that institution);
 - (ii) Any student at that institution (or any sub-element of that institution) from enrolling in a unit of the Senior ROTC at another institution of higher education.
 - (iii) The Secretary of a Military Department or Secretary of Homeland Security from gaining access to campuses, or access to students (who are 17 years of age or older) on campuses, for purposes of military recruiting in a manner that is at least equal in quality and scope to the access to campuses and to students that is provided to any other employer; or
 - (iv) Access by military recruiters for purposes of military recruiting to the names of students (who are 17 years of age or older and enrolled at that institution or any sub-element of that institution); their addresses, telephone listings, dates and places of birth, levels of education, academic majors, and degrees received; and the most recent educational institutions in which they were enrolled.
- (b) If you are determined, using the procedures in 32 CFR part 216, to be such an institution of higher education during the period of performance of this award, we:
 - (i) Will cease all payments to you of DoW funds under this award and all other DoW grants and CAs; and
 - (ii) May suspend or terminate those awards unilaterally for material failure to comply with the terms and conditions.
- iii. Drug-Free Workplace:
Assistance Instruments: The Recipient must comply with drug-free workplace requirements in Subpart B of 2 CFR part 26, which is the DoW implementation of 41 U.S.C. chapter 81, “Drug-Free Workplace.”
- iv. Debarment and Suspension:
Assistance Instruments: The Recipient must comply with requirements regarding debarment and suspension in Subpart C of 2 CFR part 180, as adopted by DoW at 2

CFR part 1125. This includes requirements concerning the Recipient's principals under an award, as well as requirements concerning the Recipient's procurement transactions and sub-awards that are implemented in DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions PROC Articles I through III and SUB Article II.

v. Reporting Sub-awards and Executive Compensation:

Assistance Instruments: The Recipient must report information about sub-awards and executive compensation as specified in the award term in Appendix A to 2 CFR part 170, "Reporting sub-award and executive compensation information," modified as follows:

- (a) To accommodate any future designation of a different Government wide Web site for reporting sub-award information, the Web site "<http://www.fsr.gov>" cited in paragraphs a.2.i. and a.3 of the award provision is replaced by the phrase "<http://www.fsr.gov> or successor OMB-designated Web site for reporting sub-award information";
- (b) To accommodate any future designation of a different Government wide Web site for reporting executive compensation information, the Web site "<http://www.sam.gov>" cited in paragraph b.2.i. of the award provision is replaced by the phrase "<https://www.sam.gov> or successor OMB-designated Web site for reporting information on total compensation"; and
- (c) The reference to "Sec. __.210 of the attachment to OMB Circular A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations" in paragraph e.3.ii of the award term is replaced by "2 CFR 200.330, as implemented in DoW Research and Development General Terms and Conditions SUB Article I of this award."

c. By electronically signing SF-424, the applicant affirms its agreement with the following certification.

- i. Agreement awards greater than \$100,000 require a certification of compliance with a national policy mandate concerning lobbying. Statutes and Government-wide regulations require the certification to be submitted prior to award. The certification is set forth at Appendix A to 32 CFR 28 regarding lobbying. When submitting your grant through Grants.gov, by completing blocks 18 and 19 of the Standard Form 424 Research and Related (R&R) Form, the grant applicant is providing the certification on lobbying required by 32 CFR Part 28, otherwise a signed copy by the authorized representative must be provided. Below is the required certification:

Certification at Appendix A to 32 CFR Part 28 Regarding Lobbying: Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and CAs the undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- (a) No federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of

the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any CA, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or CA.

- (b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employ of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or CA, the undersigned shall complete and submit SF-LLL, “Disclosure of Lobbying Activities” in accordance with its instructions.
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all sub-awards at all tiers (including sub-contracts, sub-grants, and contracts under grants, and loans, or CAs) and that all sub-recipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, Title 31, U.S.C. Any person who fails the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty or not less than \$10,000.00 and not more than \$100,000.00 for each failure.

ii. Prohibition on Contracting with Entities that Required Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements – Representation:

Agreement with the representation below will be affirmed by checking the “I agree” box in block 17 of the SF424 (R&R) as part of the electronic proposal submitted via Grants.gov. The representation reads as follows:

By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that it does not require any of its employees, contractors, or sub-recipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentiality agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, sub-recipients from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information.

Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in section 743 of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2015, Pub. L. 113-235) on provision of funds through grants and CAs to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and 2) section 743 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, Form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

- iii. Prohibition on Contracting with Entities Using Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment Section 889 of the NDAA for FY 2019 (Public Law 115-232) prohibits the head of an executive agency from obligating or expending loan or grant funds to procure or obtain, extend, or renew a contract to procure or obtain, or enter into a contract (or extend or 105 renew a contract) to procure or obtain the equipment, services, or systems prohibited systems as identified in section 889 of the NDAA for FY 2019. For more information on how this applies to all grant recipients and sub-recipients after August 13, 2020, please see DoW Research General Terms and Conditions (SEP 2021) NP Article IV. Other national policy requirements, paragraph 18.
- iv. Representations Required for Appropriations Provisions on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions

Check either “is” or “is not” for each of these two representations, as appropriate for the proposing institution, include the AOR signature and point of contact information, and attach the representation page to Field 12 of the SF-424 Research & Related Other Project Information form. The page for these representations is provided with the application materials that are available for download at Grants.gov.

The applicant is () is not () a “Corporation” meaning any entity, including any institution of higher education, other nonprofit organization, or for-profit entity that has filed articles of incorporation. If the applicant is a “Corporation” please complete the following representations:

- (1) The applicant represents that it is () or is not () a corporation that has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability.
- (2) The applicant represents that it is () is not () a corporation that was convicted of a criminal violation under any Federal law within the preceding 24 months.

The “Representation Under DoW Assistance Agreement: Appropriation Provision on Tax Delinquency and Felony Convictions”, the form may be accessed at: <https://arl.devcom.army.mil/resources/baa-forms/>.

3. Additional Reporting

Additional reports including number and types will be specified in the award document, but will include as a minimum monthly financial status reports. The reports shall be prepared and submitted in accordance with the procedures contained in the award document and mutually agreed upon before award. Reports and briefing material will also be required as appropriate to document progress in accomplishing program metrics. A final report that summarizes the project and tasks will be required at the conclusion of the performance period for the award.

a. Monthly Performance and Cost Report

The report will account for all finances, accrued and disbursed, during the reporting period under the CA. This report will include a summary of receipts and disbursements, travel, and other benefits for the students. The report will also include costs by the categories of:

- Travel
- Advertising
- Office Costs
- Salaries
- Other
- Total

The "other" category will include all administrative expenses that do not apply to the other administrative cost categories. All administrative expenses will be summed under the "Total" category.

The report will contain a list of students added to the program, departing from the program, and continuing in the program as of the report date. Furthermore, the Recipient will include in this listing or in a separate listing the sum of all costs associated with each of these students in order that the expenses associated with each may be known (e.g. stipends, travel expenses, medical benefits, additional anticipated cost for students to finish tenure, and all other costs that can be attributable to each student).

The Recipient will include a summary of the candidate review committee meeting, if a meeting was conducted during the month.

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Monthly Performance and Cost Report as follows:

- CAM - 1 original plus 1 copy;
- Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy; and
- Grants Officer - 1 copy of the letter of transmittal only.

b. Joint Papers and Presentations

Periodic joint papers and presentations may be given. Copies of such shall be provided to the CAM.

c. Journal Articles

Journal articles in general and joint Recipient/Student journal articles are strongly encouraged as a reporting mechanism for the research effort.

d. Fellow Progress Reports and Final Report

The Recipient will submit periodic progress reports and a final report under the CA for

each Fellow. The periodic progress reports will be submitted every 6 months. Each progress report and the Final report will include the date written, name of student, date of tenure, title of research project, research advisor's name, professional travel during tenure, programmatic travel during tenure, seminars or lectures delivered during tenure, work in progress, summary of research, publications and papers resulting from research, and patents applied for as a result of research. The final report will also include a forwarding address and appraisal of the program. The progress reports and final report for each student will be submitted to the CAM.

e. Annual and Final Reports

The Recipient shall submit Annual Reports and a Final Report of all activity under the program. This report will summarize the monthly reports and highlight all activities under the CA. The report will also provide an accounting of all Federal funds expended during the term of the Agreement. With the approval of the CAM, reprints of published articles may be attached to the Final Report. The Recipient shall also submit Annual Reports and a Final Report summarizing activities and an accounting of all Federal Funds expended during the term of the CA.

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Annual Reports and Final Report as follows:

- CAM - 1 original plus 1 copy;
- Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy;
- and the Grants Officer - 1 copy of the letter of transmittal only.

One (1) copy of the Final Report shall be provided to:

- Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC)
8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 0944
Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6218

f. Financial Reporting: Federal Financial Report (SF 425): Annual and Final Reports

Reporting period end dates fall on the end of the calendar year for annual reports (12/31) and the end date of the grant project or period for the final report. Annual reports are due 30 calendar days after the reporting period end date, and the final report is due 90 calendar days after the end date of the grant.

All financial reports shall be submitted to the Grant Administration Office. Copies of the forms and instructions may be found on the Internet at:

<https://arl.devcom.army.mil/resources/baa-forms/>.

The Recipient shall make distribution of the Annual and Final (SF425) Reports as follows:

- CAM - 1 original plus 1 copy;

- Agreement Administration Office - 1 copy;
- and the Grants Officer - 1 copy of the letter of transmittal only.

Note: The SF 425 is a single form that consolidates and replaces the Federal Cash Transaction Report (FACTOR or SF 272/SF 272A) and the Financial Status Report (FSR or SF 269/SF 269A).

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions regarding program execution and administration must be submitted by 3 December 2026 no later than 3:00 PM EST and should be directed to both:

Charlotte George
SMART Program Manager
charlotte.a.george.4.civ@mail.mil

Dr. Marcus Smith
SMART Deputy Program Manager
marcus.j.smith40.civ@mail.mil

The DoW Grants Specialist is:

Jeffrey D. Shepard
US Army Contracting Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground
RTP Division
jeffrey.d.shepard.civ@army.mil

The DoW Grants Officer is:

Megan A. Deluca
US Army Contracting Command, Aberdeen Proving Ground
RTP Division
megan.a.deluca.civ@army.mil

H. Other Information

Applicants are advised that any data or supporting materials submitted to the Government in response to this announcement may be released to non-Government personnel for review and analysis. The participation of these non-Government personnel will be limited to offering an opinion, which may be used as a guide by the Government evaluators. The exclusive responsibility for merit assessment and application selection will reside solely with the Government. Proprietary information submitted in response to this announcement will be protected from unauthorized disclosure as required by 41 U.S.C §423. These individuals will be authorized access only to those portions of the application data and discussions that are necessary to enable them to perform their respective duties. Such firms are expressly prohibited from competing on the subject acquisition.

If the applicant objects to disclosure of information, applicants shall provide the objection in writing to the Grants Officer. The objection shall include a detailed statement of the basis for the objection and identify specific portions of the application of which the applicant objects to disclosure to non-Government personnel.

1. Incumbent Performer

The SMART Program is currently being performed under CA Number W911NF-26-2-A043 (continuation of award W911NF-22-2-0156). The current Recipient is LMI Consulting LLC, at 7940 Jones Branch Drive, Tysons Corner, VA 22102.

2. Cooperative Agreement (CA) Proposals

Before award it must be established that an approved accounting system and financial management system exist.

- a. Direct Labor: Show the current and projected salary amounts in terms of man-hours, man-months, or annual salary to be charged by the PI(s), faculty, research associates, postdoctoral associates, graduate and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical, and other technical personnel either by personnel or position. State the number of man-hours used to calculate a man-month or man-year. For proposals from universities, research during the academic term is deemed part of regular academic duties, not an extra function for which additional compensation or compensation at a higher rate is warranted. Consequently, academic term salaries shall not be augmented either in rate or in total amount for research performed during the academic term. Rates of compensation for research conducted during non-academic (summer) terms shall not exceed the rate for the academic terms. When part or all of a person's services are to be charged as project costs, it is expected that the person will be relieved of an equal part or all of his or her regular teaching or other obligations. For each person or position, provide the following information:
 - i. The basis for the direct labor hours or percentage of effort (e.g., historical hours or estimates);
 - ii. The basis for the direct labor rates or salaries. Labor costs should be predicted upon current labor rates or salaries. These rates may be adjusted upward for forecast salary or wage cost-of-living increases that will occur during the agreement period. The cost proposal should separately identify the rationale applied to base salary/wage for cost-of-living adjustments and merit increases. Each must be fully explained;
 - iii. The portion of time to be devoted to the proposed research, divided between academic and non-academic (summer) terms, when applicable;
 - iv. The total annual salary charged to the research project; and
 - v. Any details that may affect the salary during the project, such as plans for leave and/or remuneration while on leave.

Note: There is no page limitation for budget proposals or budget justifications.

- b. Fringe Benefits and Indirect Costs (Overhead, G&A, and Other): The most recent rates,

dates of negotiation, the base(s) and periods to which the rates apply must be disclosed and a statement included identifying whether the proposed rates are provisional or fixed. If the rates have been negotiated by a government agency, state when and by which agency. A copy of the negotiation memorandum should be provided. If negotiated forecast rates do not exist, applicants must provide sufficient detail to enable a determination to be made that the costs included in the forecast rate are allocable according to applicable cost provisions. Applicants' disclosure should be sufficient to permit a full understanding of the content of the rate(s) and how it was established. As a minimum, the submission should identify:

- i. All individual cost elements included in the forecast rate(s);
 - ii. Basis used to prorate indirect expenses to cost pools, if any;
 - iii. How the rate(s) was calculated;
 - iv. Distribution basis of the developed rate(s);
 - v. Basis on which the overhead rate is calculated, such as "salaries and wages" or "total costs;" and
 - vi. The period of the applicant's FY.
- c. Permanent Equipment: If facilities or equipment are required, a justification why this property should be furnished by the Government must be submitted. State the organization's inability or unwillingness to furnish the facilities or equipment. Applicants must provide an itemized list of permanent equipment showing the cost for each item. Permanent equipment is any article or tangible nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit. The basis for the cost of each item of permanent equipment included in the budget must be disclosed, such as:
- i. Vendor Quote: Show name of vendor, number of quotes received and justification, if intended award is to other than lowest bidder.
 - ii. Historical Cost: Identify vendor, date of purchase, and whether or not cost represents lowest bid. Include reason(s) for not soliciting current quotes.
 - iii. Engineering Estimate: Include rationale for quote and reason for not soliciting current quotes.

If applicable, the following additional information shall be disclosed in the applicant's cost proposal:

- i. Special test equipment to be fabricated by the awardee for specific research purposes and its cost.
- ii. Standard equipment to be acquired and modified to meet specific requirements, including acquisition and modification costs, listed separately.
- iii. Existing equipment to be modified to meet specific research requirements, including modification costs. Do not include equipment the organization will purchase with its funds if the equipment will be capitalized for Federal income tax purposes. Proposed permanent equipment purchases during the final year of an award shall be limited and fully justified.
- iv. Grants and CAs may convey title to an institution for equipment purchased with

project funds. At the discretion of the Contracting/Grants Officer, the agreement may provide for retention of the title by the Government or may impose conditions governing the equipment conveyed to the organization per the governing laws and regulations.

- d. Travel: Forecasts of travel expenditures (domestic and foreign) that identify the destination and the various cost elements (airfare, mileage, per diem rates, etc.) must be submitted. The costs should be in sufficient detail to determine the reasonableness of such costs. Allowance for air travel normally will not exceed the cost of round-trip, economy air accommodations. Specify the type of travel and its relationship to the research project. Individuals other than the PI(s) are considered postdoctoral associates, research associates, graduate and undergraduate students, secretarial, clerical, and other technical personnel. Additional travel may be requested for travel to Army laboratories and facilities to enhance agreement objectives and to achieve technology transfer.
- e. Participant Support Costs: This budget category refers to costs of transportation, per diem, stipends, and other related costs for participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with ARO-sponsored conferences, meetings, symposia, training activities, and workshops (see the "Other Programs" section as described earlier in this NOFO). Generally, indirect costs are not allowed on participant support costs. The number of participants to be supported should be entered in the parentheses on the budget form. These costs should also be justified in the budget justification page(s) attached to the cost proposal.
- f. Materials, Supplies, and Consumables: A general description and total estimated cost of expendable equipment and supplies are required. The basis for developing the cost estimate (vendor quotes, invoice prices, engineering estimate, purchase order history, etc.) must be included. If possible, provide a material list.
- g. Publication, Documentation, and Dissemination: The budget may request funds for the costs of preparing, publishing, or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under an agreement, including costs of reports, reprints, page charges, or other journal costs (except costs for prior or early publication); necessary illustrations, cleanup, documentation, storage, and indexing of data and databases; and development, documentation, and debugging of software.
- h. Consultant Costs: Applicants normally are expected to utilize the services of their own staff to the maximum extent possible in managing and performing the project's effort. If the need for consultant services is anticipated, the nature of proposed consultant services should be justified and included in the technical proposal narrative. The cost proposal should include the names of consultant(s), primary organizational affiliation, each individual's expertise, daily compensation rate, number of days of expected service, and estimated travel and per diem costs.
- i. Computer Services: The cost of computer services, including computer-based retrieval of scientific, technical, and educational information, may be requested. A justification/explanation based on the established computer service rates at the proposing organization should be included. The budget also may request costs, which must be shown to be reasonable, for leasing automatic

data processing equipment. The purchase of computers or associated hardware and software should be requested as items of equipment.

- j. Sub-awards (Sub-contracts or Sub-grants): A precise description of services or materials that are to be awarded by a sub-award must be provided. For sub-awards totaling \$10,000 or more, provide the following specific information:
 - i. A clear description of the work to be performed;
 - ii. If known, the identification of the proposed sub-awardee and an explanation of why and how the sub-awardee was selected or will be selected;
 - iii. The identification of the type of award to be used (cost reimbursement, fixed price, etc.);
 - iv. Whether or not the award will be competitive and, if noncompetitive, rationale to justify the absence of competition; and
 - v. A detailed cost summary.
- k. Other Direct Cost (ODCs): Itemize and provide the basis for proposed costs for other anticipated direct costs such as communications, transportation, insurance, and rental of equipment other than computer related items. Unusual or expensive items must be fully explained and justified.
- l. Profit/ Fee: Profit/fee is not allowed for the Recipient of or sub-award to an assistance instrument, where the principal purpose of the activity to be carried out is to stimulate or support a public purpose (i.e., to provide assistance), rather than acquisition (i.e., to acquire goods and services for the direct benefit of the Government). A sub-award is an award of financial assistance in the form of money, or property in lieu of money, made under a DoW grant or CA by a recipient to an eligible sub-recipient. The term includes financial assistance for substantive program performance by the sub-recipient of a portion of the program for which the DoW grant or CA was made. It does not include the Recipient's procurement of goods and services needed to carry out the program.