

GEAR Center Challenge Q+A

This document includes answers to questions that were submitted to the GEARCenter@gsa.gov email address (received from May 7th to May 16th). It also includes answers to questions that were asked during the May 13, 2019 webinar.

Questions are grouped into the sections below:

- A. GEAR Center Challenge Intent and Scope
- B. Eligibility to Compete in the GEAR Center Challenge
- C. Funding
- D. Teaming and Evaluation Process

Section A: GEAR Center Challenge Intent and Scope

Question 1: Do you want a proposal that the submitter would implement with or without the help of the Federal Government? Or do you want a proposal that the Federal Government can implement based on the material submitted. Also, are you looking only for IT solutions?

Answer 1: Please refer to the GEAR Center Challenge information under the "Overview" and "Judging Criteria" tabs for information on the intent and scope of the challenge. Amongst other things, see the quote below from the "Overview" tab under "What is the Challenge?"

"This competition challenges "Solvers" (participating individuals, teams or legal entities) to demonstrate the usefulness of a GEAR Center model by describing how this model would tackle one or more of the major challenges facing government described in the current President's Management Agenda (PMA). "

Also please refer amongst other things to the "Overview" tab, "What is the GEAR Center?"

"As described in the *Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century* reform plan, [A Government Effectiveness Advanced Research \(GEAR\) Center](#) could bring together experts in disciplines ranging from economics, to computer science, to design thinking, in order to take a creative, data-driven, and interdisciplinary approach to new possibilities in how citizens and government interact. The GEAR Center can help government modernize to close the gap between government and private-sector services and capabilities. This may also lay the groundwork for where Federal operations and services need to be in five, 10, or 20 years."

The "Judging Criteria" tab under "Phase I" includes the criteria that evaluators will use to evaluate eligible project proposals.

Suggest reviewing this information, in addition to the information under the "rules" tab to help you make a project proposal submission decision.

Question 2: Is the GEAR Challenge prize an incentive to stimulate participation in the challenge or an award to finance implementation of the proposed idea?

Answer 2: As stated in the GEAR Center Challenge overview tab, under "What is the Challenge?"

"This competition challenges "Solvers" (participating individuals, teams or legal entities) to demonstrate the usefulness of a GEAR Center model by describing how this model would tackle one or more of the major challenges facing government described in the current President's Management Agenda (PMA)."

and

"Now, our goal is to recognize high-potential GEAR Center models by awarding prizes to those that can propose a workable GEAR Center model through a demonstration of how that model would creatively address one or more PMA-related challenges."

Accordingly, the GEAR Center Challenge prizes are an incentive to stimulate participation in the challenge and to accomplish the desired outcomes stated above, specifically obtaining ideas of projects that could feasibly be implemented in a one year time frame to prove the concept of a GEAR Center. The cash prizes are an award and not contingent upon implementation, though we hope that the prize helps to catalyze the development of the eventual GEAR Center.

Question 3: Does the government envision a future FAR-compliant competitive solicitation through which it would establish the GEAR Center relationship with the government?

Answer 3: The government intends to pursue the implementation of a GEAR Center. The results of the competition will help to inform appropriate next steps.

Question 4: How does the government envision creating & sustaining the demand for GEAR-Center-defined/developed methods for delivering government products and services? Are agencies seeking GEAR-Center assistance? Or must the GEAR Center "sell" agencies on implementation?

Answer 4: Please refer to the "Judging Criteria" tab on the GEAR Center Challenge site. As part of the judging criteria in all phases, we are looking for Solvers to address their proposed project's impact and describe how the outcomes that the projects deliver would generate

sustainable interest in their work. We hope that the outcomes defined and expected to be delivered, will be exciting and relevant to Federal agencies and to management challenges that exist government-wide. The non-cash aspect of this award recognizes winners publicly and may include communications that will highlight their proposals.

Question 5: In the GEAR Center (not the Challenge, but the Center itself) is the government merely looking for exposure to ideas, technologies, and imaginative uses of technology, which the government would then acquire and implement without GEAR Center involvement—or is the GEAR Center envisioned as an entity that would assist the government in idea/technology development and subsequent implementation in specific federal agencies?

Answer 5: As stated in the GEAR Center Challenge overview tab, under "What is the GEAR Center?"

"As described in the ["Digital Government in the 21st Century" reform plan](#), A Government Effectiveness Advanced Research (GEAR) Center could bring together experts in disciplines ranging from economics, to computer science, to design thinking, in order to take a creative, data-driven, and interdisciplinary approach to new possibilities in how citizens and government interact. The GEAR Center can help government modernize to close the gap between government and private-sector services and capabilities. This may also lay the groundwork for where Federal operations and services need to be in five, 10, or 20 years."

Also, refer to the GEAR Center description from the ["Digital Government in the 21st Century" reform plan](#).

Accordingly, the GEAR Center would operate as an entity that would assist the government in communicating priorities and needs, convene appropriate problem solvers across sectors and industries, and potentially help to frame solutions for adoption and implementation as appropriate.

Question 6: What things stand out to you as things you learned from the responses to the RFI and what did the RFI not answer for you as well as you hoped?

Answer 6: For a full discussion on the results of the GEAR Center RFI, please refer to: <https://www.performance.gov/GEARcenter/stakeholders/>. The challenge competition is meant to build off of these learnings to propose more tactical projects that could help to inform the eventual creation of a GEAR Center.

Question 7: Not completely clear... are the proposals focused on executing / moving forward the CAP goals, or toward establishing the GEAR center? Or both?

Answer 7: Please refer to the GEAR Center Challenge information in the "Overview" tab under "What is the Challenge?"

"Before the government invests in a future GEAR Center, it is important to first explore the feasibility of creating these types of partnerships and if they can produce the kinds of quality approaches to problem solving the government needs. This competition is designed to reward the top models and execution strategies that will demonstrate a use case of a potential GEAR Center project by building on existing similar efforts."

Accordingly, this competition seeks proposals to test the feasibility of a GEAR Center model by delivering solutions that tackle management challenges in the President's Management Agenda, including the Cross-Agency Priority Goals.

Question 8: How important is the easing of access to small businesses to the concept of the GEAR Center.

Answer 8: Consistent with the America COMPETES Act authority, 15 USC 3719, we welcome participation from all sectors, in accordance with the rules listed in the GEAR Center Challenge site. Any and all are free to participate in this competition, and there are no requirements regarding "being on schedule" or having previously done business with the government. We very much are looking for solutions that demonstrate concepts where a variety of entities (across size, sector, field of study, and industry) are able to participate.

Section B: Eligibility to Compete in the GEAR Center Challenge

Question 1: My question is eligibility to participate. The rules state that I cannot be a federal employee acting within the scope of my employment. I am a federal employee in human resources and would like to submit a team entry with my wife who is an attorney at a private law firm. Our topic would be related to human resources, specifically on recruitment. Are we eligible provided that I do not use my title, submit the idea during non-work time, and not use any federal resources (e.g., government furnished laptop)?

Answer 1: Please refer to the GEAR Center Challenge Rules tab, under "Eligibility to Participate". Specifically, see rule below:

"Participants may not be a Federal entity or Federal employee acting within the scope of their employment. Non-GSA, non-OMB Federal employees acting in their personal capacities should consult with their respective agency ethics officials to determine whether their participation in this Competition is permissible."

Accordingly, recommend consulting with one of your agency's ethics officials to determine if it is permissible for you to participate in this competition.

Question 2: I would like to know if we are able to enter more than one proposal.

Answer 2: Please refer to the complete rules for eligibility to participate and win a prize. In general, it is possible to submit two proposals.

Question 3: How would GSA/OMB describe the IP/ownership of deliverables created through one of the grants?

Answer 3: For additional information on challenge rules regarding intellectual property and challenge submissions, please refer to the rules tab on the GEAR Center challenge site.

“By participating in the Competition, each Solver (individual, team, or legal entity) warrants that he or she is the sole author or owner of, or has the right to use, any copyrightable works that the Submission comprises, that the works are wholly original with the Solver (or is an improved version of an existing work that the Solver has sufficient rights to use and improve), and that the Submission does not infringe any copyright or any other rights of any third party of which Solver is aware. To receive an award, Solvers will not be required to transfer their intellectual property rights to GSA, but Solvers must grant to the Federal government a nonexclusive license to practice their solutions and use the materials that describe them. This license must grant to the United States government a nonexclusive, non-transferable, irrevocable, paid-up, royalty-free license to practice or have practiced for or on behalf of the United States throughout the world any invention made by the Solvers that covers the Submission. In addition, the license must grant to the Federal government and others acting on its behalf, a fully paid, nonexclusive, irrevocable, worldwide license in any copyrightable works that the Submission comprises, including the right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies to the public, and perform publicly and display publicly said copyrightable works. To participate in the Challenge, each Solver must warrant that there are no legal obstacles to providing the above-referenced nonexclusive licenses of Solver’s rights to the Federal government.”

Question 4: The rules refer to 'copyright' of materials and granting the Federal Government a license to reproduce. Does this refer just to the proposals/submissions that are sent? Not the ultimate solution that is proposed?

Answer 4: Please refer to the answer to Question 3 in Section B: Eligibility to Compete in the GEAR Center Challenge.

Section C: Funding

Question 1: Can the GSA clarify whether the \$300,000 prizes are dependent upon implementing the proposed solution or are they independent of the proposed solution? In other words, do the \$300,000 prizes have to be utilized to implement exactly the solutions proposed?

Answer 1: A \$300,000 prize award is independent of implementing the proposed solution.

Question 2: If the \$300,000 is to be utilized deploying the proposed solution, is this anticipated to be a one-off sum to cover an initial 12 months with additional funding for subsequent years to be agreed subsequently?

Answer 2: A \$300,000 prize is a one time lump sum award.

Question 3: Does GSA/OMB anticipate additional grants after these three are awarded? If so, is there a timeline for these additional grants?

Answer 3: There are no plans for additional GEAR Center challenge competitions at this time. GSA is not a grant-making agency (e.g. has no statutory authority to make grants) and has no plans to hold any grant-related competition.

Question 4: What role does GSA/OMB plan to play in the implementation of the winning grants?

Answer 4: First, these awards are cash prizes, not grants. There is no role planned for GSA or OMB for implementation of the winning proposals. For additional information on challenge rules, please refer to the rules tab on the GEAR Center challenge site.

Question 5: If selected for Phase II, do you have to develop a funding proposal, and if so, how detailed does it need to be (e.g., cost of each individual, for travel, etc.) – or is the grant a fixed-price \$300K?

Answer 5: You do not need to submit a detailed funding proposal, as the \$300,000 is a cash prize award (See Challenge.gov generally, and the America COMPETES Act authority, 15 USC 3719). You may describe how the financials of your proposal are feasible and could be accomplished through existing authorities.

Section D: Teaming and Evaluation Process

Question 1: Who will serve on the review panel (i.e., agencies and roles)?

Answer 1: GEAR Center challenge evaluators will consist of multiple Federal agency subject matter experts who are knowledgeable of President's Management Agenda initiatives. The following individuals will participate in components of review and evaluation, but the exact panel makeup for each phase is subject to change, and a conflict of interest review will take place.

- Analisa Archer, Director of Human Capital Strategy, CFPB
- Boris Arratia, Senior Advisor, OSSPI, GSA
- Kelly Bidwell, Director, OES, GSA
- Amira Boland, Deputy Director OES / CX + GEAR Center Detailee, GSA / OMB
- Mark Bussow, Performance Team Lead, OMB
- Elizabeth Cain, Acting Executive Director, Technology Modernization Fund, GSA
- Robyn Rees, Senior IT Governance and Strategy Advisor, IT Budget Lead, NSF
- Anahita Reilly, Chief Customer Officer, GSA
- Dana Roberts, Associate Director CXO Solutions Team, OSSPI, GSA
- Jessica Salmoiraghi, Associate Administrator, OGP, GSA
- Elanchezhian Sivagnanam, Chief Architect, NSF
- Isadora Yoffie, Sharing Quality Services Program Manager, GSA

Question 2: To what extent does GSA/OMB need an organization's credentials/qualifications articulated in the initial 2-page submission, or can that be included in Phase 2?

Answer 2: Please refer to the "How to enter" tab in the GEAR Center challenge site for instructions on Phase I and Phase II submissions.

Question 3: What role does GSA/OMB expect federal agencies to play?

Answer 3: The judges for the competition will be Federal agency subject matter experts. For additional information on challenge rules and the GEAR Center concept, please refer to the rules tab on the GEAR Center challenge site and the linked report, [Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century: Reform Plan and Reorganization Recommendations](#).

Question 4: May an organization be cited as a "collaborator" on multiple submissions?

Answer 4: Yes

Question 5: Would you be open to having a small panel listen for a 30 minute meeting to a concept PRIOR to full submission just to see if it makes sense?

Answer 5: Please refer to the "How to enter" tab in the GEAR Center Challenge site for an explanation of the challenge procedures and evaluation process. All entrants will be given equitable consideration in the evaluation process.