

Announcing: The Georgia Smart Communities Challenge

The first statewide program to support local governments across Georgia with seed funding, technical assistance, and more as they plan and activate smart development.

February 19, 2018

ATLANTA—The Georgia Institute of Technology and its partners are excited to announce the launch of the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge (“Georgia Smart”), open to all communities in Georgia. Local Georgia governments of any size—cities, counties, or consolidated city-county governments—will lead selected teams. Georgia Smart will provide seed funding and access to technical assistance, expert advice, and a network of peers. A Georgia Tech researcher will assist and advise each team and conduct research in support of the community’s needs and goals.

Georgia Smart is the first program of its kind in the United States, bringing together an unprecedented coalition of university, industry, and public sector partners to support local governments in adopting cutting-edge technologies in their communities. The program is also unique in that it extends beyond large cities to smaller communities whose voices have not been as prominent in smart community development and who may not have access to technology resources.

“We’ve spent the past year in workshops and dialogue with local governments across Georgia to better understand their challenges and priorities. From these communications, we developed a program that is sensitive to the local context while fast-tracking smart communities. We aim to create more models for smart development that can be shared and applied across the state and beyond,” said Debra Lam, managing director, Smart Cities and Inclusive Innovation at Georgia Tech.

Georgia Smart is seeking proposals in the areas of smart mobility and smart resilience. Each of the four winning teams will receive direct grant funding of up to \$50,000, as well as additional funds for research and technical assistance with a required local match. Georgia Tech and its partners will then work with the winning teams throughout the year on implementing their proposals, creating four testbeds of smart community development.

The program is organized by the Georgia Institute of Technology in partnership with Georgia Power (lead sponsor), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC, funding sponsor), Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG), Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Centers for Innovation, Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Metro Atlanta Chamber, and Technology Association of Georgia (TAG).

“Smart community opportunities can help local governments and the whole region address issues such as social justice, mobility, economic development, and many other important areas,” said

Doug Hooker, executive director, Atlanta Regional Commission. “Community initiatives can be more successful through collaborative, people-focused approaches, and those qualities are what make the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge an important effort for the region.”

“The Georgia Smart Communities Challenge is a great team effort that utilizes state expertise, technology and leadership to help communities compete in economic development,” said **Pat Wilson, commissioner, Georgia Department of Economic Development.** “Through our Centers of Innovation, we are able to work alongside many of our local and statewide economic development partners to make Georgia even more competitive and we believe that this challenge will certainly do just that.”

“Creating a better connected Georgia requires research and collaboration from many stakeholders across every layer of the public and private sector,” said **Christine Primmer, strategic manager, Georgia Power Smart Cities initiative.** “We are proud to be a leading partner in the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge as one component of our larger commitment to improving every community we serve while also building the future of energy with a more reliable and adaptive power grid.”

"TAG is proud to be supporting this great effort," said **Larry K. Williams, president and CEO, Technology Association of Georgia.** "This vital initiative significantly expands our state's ability to bring smart connectivity and leading-edge technologies to all of our communities—from urban hubs to neighborhoods to rural communities, creating next-generation links that can transform the way companies do business from any location and revolutionize the quality of life for all residents."

"The Smart Communities Challenge is a great way for communities of all sizes to start thinking about how they leverage their public, private, and non-profit assets towards preparing for the future," said **Chris Clark, CEO, Georgia Chamber.** “Businesses are moving at a rapid pace and our public institutions can now use these same technologies to improve quality of life for citizens in every part of Georgia. We're excited to see the types of innovative ideas and initiatives that will come out of this challenge."

"The Georgia Municipal Association is excited about this opportunity for Georgia's cities to participate in the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge," said **Larry Hanson, executive director, Georgia Municipal Association.** “It is imperative cities integrate data and technology solutions to tackle the challenges they face. The seed funding, technical assistance, and access to expert advice will lay the groundwork for the creation of smart communities across the state."

“ACCG is a proud supporter of the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge and encourages county governments to participate in the initiative,” said **Dave Wills, interim executive director, Association County Commissioners of Georgia.** “This is an excellent opportunity for

local governments to leverage funding and technical assistance to ignite smart community technology across the state.”

“The Metro Atlanta Chamber is proud to support Georgia Tech and the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge and thrilled to be one of the partners supporting this initiative,” said **David Hartnett, Chief Economic Development Officer, Metro Atlanta Chamber**. “We are honored to help bring smart city technologies to the rural areas of Georgia, helping to bridge the gap between cities and government and helping link local governments with cutting-edge university research.”

For more information about the Georgia Smart Communities Challenge, including how to become a partner or submit a proposal, visit <http://smartcities.gatech.edu/georgia-smart>.

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