

FAQs DSEW January 9, 2024, Office Hours

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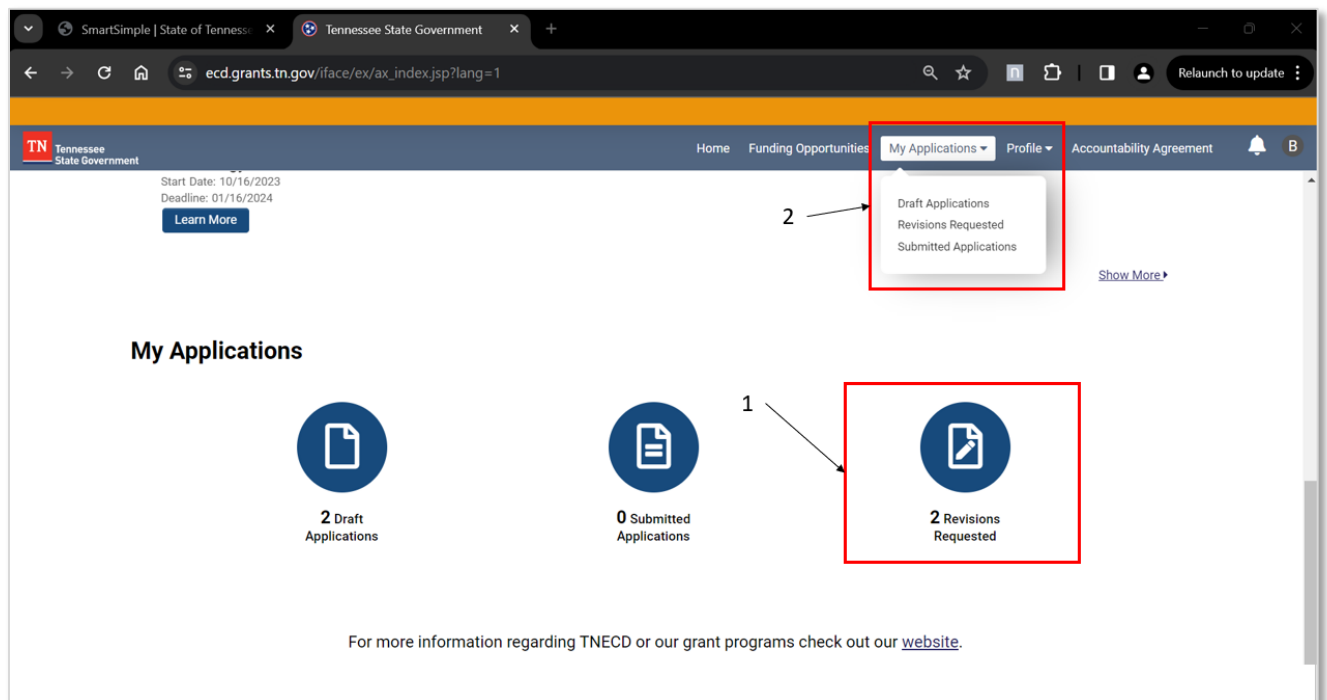
1. Navigating SmartSimple

Q: I didn't receive a notification to revise my application from Smart Simple. What should I do?

- Please log into your Smart Simple account. If any revisions are needed on an application, you started or are a collaborator on, you can check using either of these options:

Option 1: On the homepage, look under the 'My Applications' section. This will display how many applications you may need to revise. Click this icon to access those applications.

Option 2: You can also access the Revisions Requested page under the 'My Applications' dropdown at the top of the page. This dropdown will not display the number of applications you have to revise. You will need to click "Revisions Requested" to see which applications are awaiting revisions.



2. Additional Application Questions

Q: What are the application questions we must complete along with the requested revisions?

- Please see below for the application questions. They can be found in the SmartSimple portal under the tabs and sections specified below and should be answered in SmartSimple.

Digital Skills Training Applicants	Workforce Development Applicants
Demonstrated Capacity (4) Digital Skills Training (+4) Community Impact (+1)	Demonstrated Capacity (4) Workforce Development (+1) Community Impact (+1)
Total: 9 questions	Total: 6 questions

- **(All Applicants)** Project Information Tab: Demonstrated Capacity, 4 questions:
 - o *In 250 words or less, describe the background, business model, clientele, and activities of your organization.*
 - o *In 250 words or less, describe what your organization's need for funding is (not the need of the populations to be served). Please discuss your organization's resources / assets and the additional support it would need to implement or expand the proposed programming.*
 - o *In 500 words or less, describe your organization's capacity or track record in delivering digital skills education and/or workforce development programming or services. Include information about what prevented your organization from undertaking proposed project, available staff, resources, pending funding from other organizations, any previous or relevant experience with delivering similar programs, and/or other relevant information.*
 - o *If your organization will partner with other organizations to deliver the proposed programming or services, please indicate the partner, and describe the partner's relevant experience, the need for their collaboration, and how they participated in the development of the proposed project.*

The screenshot shows a web application interface for the Tennessee State Government grants system. The main content area is titled '2024-1774' and is under the 'PROJECT INFORMATION' tab. The 'Additional Information - Demonstrated Capacity' section is highlighted with a red box. It contains two text input fields, each with a 250-word limit. The first field is for describing the organization's background, business model, clientele, and activities. The second field is for describing the organization's need for funding, including resources and assets. A 'JUMP TO' sidebar on the right lists navigation options, with 'Additional Information - Demonstrated Capacity' selected.

- **(Digital Skills Training applicants only)** Project Information Tab: Additional Information (Digital Skills Training), 4 questions:
 - o *In 250 words or less, describe your organization's plans to conduct outreach to generate public knowledge and interest in your programming and services, including the # of anticipated contacts, channels of advertising, messaging points, tailoring of outreach methods for specific populations, partner organizations, milestones and timelines, and other relevant information.*
 - o *In 250 words or less, describe your organization's process for smoothly enrolling participants into your program, including the channels for enrollment (e.g., in person with a case worker, self-registration, etc.), whether an application will be required of the program participant and the types of accompanying information/documentation required, and other relevant information.*
 - o *If your digital skills program will be focusing on basic/introductory skills, please indicate what your program will focus on. (You may copy and paste the items from the list of examples provided.)*
 - o *If your digital skills program will be focusing on advanced/specialized skills, please indicate what your program will focus on. (You may copy and paste the items from the list of examples provided.)*

The screenshot displays the 'Additional Information - Digital Skill Training' section of a grant application. The page title is '2023-1541'. The navigation menu on the left includes: Main, Notes, Assigned Contacts, Invitations, Authorizing Agency, Initial Review, Review Scoring, Final Review, Emails, Budget Year, Reports, Other Activities, Purchase Order, SpeedChart, and Solicitation. The top navigation bar contains: Case Manager, Home, My Reviews, Submission Manager, Program Manager, Fund Manager, Agreement Manager, CRM, and a search icon. The main content area has tabs for: BUDGET, APPLICATION GUIDELINES, PROJECT INFORMATION (selected), COMMUNITY IMPACT, BUDGET, DOCUMENT UPLOAD AND SUBMISSION, and INTERNAL. The 'Additional Information - Digital Skill Training' section contains three text input fields with the following instructions:

- If your proposed project is Digital Skills, please fill out these questions.
- Note: If your proposed project IS NOT Digital Skills, please put "N/A" for these questions.
- * In 250 words or less, describe your organization's plans to conduct outreach to generate public knowledge and interest in your programming and services, including the # of anticipated contacts, channels of advertising, messaging points, tailoring of outreach methods for specific populations, partner organizations, milestones and timelines, and other relevant information.
- Note: If your proposed project IS NOT Digital Skills, please put "N/A" for this question.
- 250 characters left
- * In 250 words or less, describe your organization's process for smoothly enrolling participants into your program, including the channels for enrollment (e.g. in person with a case worker, self-registration, etc.), whether an application will be required of the program participant and the types of accompanying information/documentation required, and other relevant information.
- Note: If your proposed project IS NOT Digital Skills, please put "N/A" for this question.
- 250 characters left

At the bottom of the form, there is a text input field with the text: "Ital skills program will be focusing on basic/introductory skills, please indicate what your program will focus on." Navigation buttons include: BACK, NEXT, Save Draft, Submit Revisions, and Delete. A 'JUMP TO' sidebar on the right lists: Project Implementation, Additional Information - Demonstrated Capacity, Additional Information - Digital Skill Training (selected), and Additional Information - Workforce Development Program.

- **(Workforce Development applicants only)** Project Information Tab: Additional Information (Workforce Development), 1 question:
 - o *Which of the following priority industries is your organization's workforce development programming or services tailored towards? Please select all that apply.*

The screenshot shows the application portal for project 2023-1541. The 'PROJECT INFORMATION' tab is active, displaying a list of bullet points: Real estate (e.g., rental and lease, property ownership and management, taxes); Management (e.g., human resources management systems); Industrial sector (e.g., robotics, augmented reality, hand-held devices supporting applications); and Any other training that is identified to meet advanced digital workforce development needs. Below this, a text box contains the statement: 'Our program is only focused on basic/introductory skills.' A 'JUMP TO' sidebar on the right lists options like 'Project Implementation' and 'Additional Information - Workforce Development Program'. The main content area is titled 'Additional Information - Workforce Development Program' and asks the user to fill out questions if their project is Workforce Development. A question asks which priority industries the organization's programming is tailored towards, with a list of options including Telecommunications, Information, Real Estate, Healthcare, Protective Services, None of the above, Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, Finance and Insurance, Manufacturing, Retail, and Accommodation, Food Service, and Hospitality. The 'N/A' option is selected. Navigation buttons for 'Save Draft', 'Submit Revisions', and 'Delete' are at the bottom.

- **(All Applicants)** Community Impact Tab, 1 question:

- *If any groups were selected in the question above, in 300 words or less, describe any previous history working with the selected groups. If your organization does not have any previous history with the selected groups, please describe how your organization has prepared to understand and meet the needs of the selected groups as it relates to the grant's purpose.*

The screenshot shows the application portal for project 2024-1774. The 'COMMUNITY IMPACT' tab is active, displaying a question: 'If any groups were selected in the question above, in 300 words or less, describe any previous history working with the selected groups. If your organization does not have any previous history with the selected groups, please describe how your organization has prepared to understand and meet the needs of the selected groups as it relates to the grant's purpose.' Below the question is a text box with the instruction: 'If "None of the above" was selected, please input "N/A".' A 'JUMP TO' sidebar on the right is visible. The main content area is titled 'COMMUNITY IMPACT' and asks the user to provide programming or services at no financial cost to the prospective participant, with radio button options for 'Yes' and 'No'. Navigation buttons for 'Save Draft', 'Submit Revisions', and 'Delete' are at the bottom.

Q: Were these application questions included in the original October 16, 2023, launch, and then later removed?

- While they were included in the design, they were not included when the application launched due to a system error. We apologize for the inconvenience and have extended the **revisions deadline to January 26, 2024**. Having this additional information is crucial for ECD to accurately score the applications against the established criteria.

Q: Some of these questions say, "In 250 words or less", but the answer box only gives us 250 characters. What should we do?

- This is a system error that is the process of being fixed and you should be able to see the changes update in Smart Simple by Monday, January 15th.

Q: If we didn't get a request for revisions, are we still required to answer the missing application questions?

- Yes, you will still need to answer these questions in SmartSimple by Friday, January 26, 2024, at 11:59pm CST.
- Please see [Section 1: Navigating SmartSimple](#) for instructions on how to access your application to make changes.

Q: Some questions that I remember answering are no longer in my application, which I have a record of in the Application Summary I downloaded; is it possible that it may have been deleted?

- Please email us at ecd.broadband@tn.gov with your **application ID** (found at the top left of the application, "2023-####") so that we can investigate/review the issue.

Q: Can multiple people within our organization edit our application in SmartSimple?

- Yes, please ensure each individual has registered for an account in Smart Simple. Then, email ecd.broadband@tn.gov with a request to add the individuals as collaborators to the application. Please include your application ID in your email (2023-####).

Q: Is it permissible to incorporate additional changes, such as adjustments to milestones, scope, and budget items during the application's revision period?

- No, please focus your edits solely on the requested areas and provide answers to the recently updated application questions.

Q: Can we answer a question from our requested revision list within the Notes section in SmartSimple?

- Please make revisions directly in the question box or replace an upload with an amended document. However, you may also provide an explanation in the notes section.

3. Unique Entity Numbers (UEI) / SAM ID

Q: I entered and saved the UEI, but the system didn't allow me to enter the SAM expiration date. Are we required to enter the expiration date?

- No, you are not required to enter the expiration date, as we are able to check ourselves whether the UEI provided for your organization is active or expired. We check for the expiration status so that you can start the process to renew or extend it as needed.

Q: I was told my UEI was not on [the USFCR website](#). Do I need to go through the USFCR website to register?

- The [USFCR website](#) is what we use to check your UEI. If you have a valid UEI, it should appear on this website, and there is no additional registration to complete.
- If you have a UEI but it does not appear on the USFCR Website, you may call USFCR at (877) 252-2700 or submit an inquiry using this link:
[https://usfcr.com/#:~:text=Call%20\(877\)%20252%2D2700%20For%20Immediate%20Assistance](https://usfcr.com/#:~:text=Call%20(877)%20252%2D2700%20For%20Immediate%20Assistance)

Q: Once we update our UEI, is there any other update we have to make within the application?

- No. Aside from updating your UEI in your organizational profile, you don't need to add the number anywhere else.

Q: I am trying to request a UEI but see that I have to complete the full SAM registration. If we don't have a UEI, do we need to complete the SAM registration so that we can get the UEI number?

- For step-by-step instructions on how to obtain a UEI number, please download the "Quick Start Guide for Getting a Unique Entity ID" guide available at this link:
https://www.fsd.gov/gsafsd_sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0038428

It will take 7-10 business days.

Q: If we have a UEI number, this means that we do not need to add a SAM ID to SmartSimple. Is this correct?

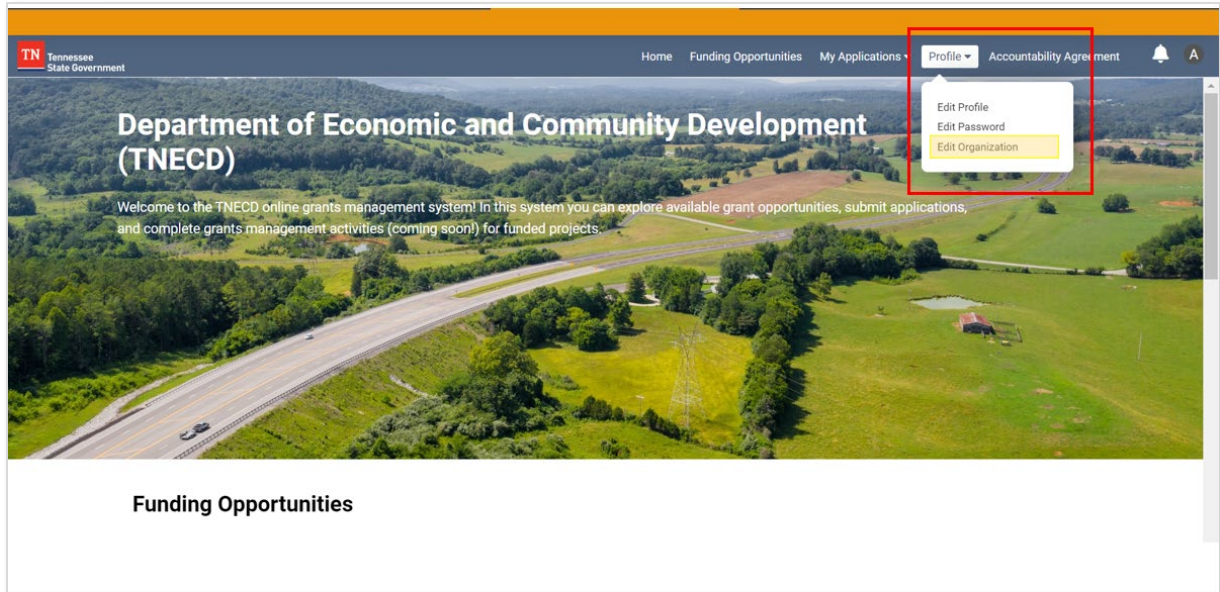
- Correct.

Q: I didn't get flagged for UEI number, but when checking on it in my organizational profile information area, I'm encountering a pop-up that asks me to provide an organizational chart. Is this necessary to provide for the application process?

- You can provide a short blurb or brief organizational chart; it does not have to be official nor formal.

Q: How do we update our UEI number in Smart Simple?

- Click the Profile dropdown at the top of the page.
- Select 'Edit Organization'
- Input the UEI and click 'Save'.
- Please see the screenshot below



View of Organization Page where you will update the UEI.

ACME Grants

Status: Active

* Organization Name:

* EIN Number:

UEI: 3 characters left

* State Grand Division:

* Zip Code:

* Physical Address/P.O. Box:

Physical Address 2:

* City:

* State:

* Country:

AUTHORIZING AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ATTACHMENTS

* Please search for your authorizing agency below.

You can type in the authorizing agency's name or use the binoculars to perform a search.

Once you selected your authorizing agency, you will need to submit the request by clicking on the **Submit Request** button below.

Q: Under the 'Organization' area, what does "State Grand Division" mean?

- State Grand Division refers to where the project will be located; the Division refers to East, West or Middle, Tennessee.

4. Budget Worksheet

Q: There is a first tab called Budget with references to “Years”, but I’m unable to fill anything out. Are we supposed to fill this out?

- Please ignore this tab as you complete your revisions. This is an error in SmartSimple and will be resolved by our team next week.

Q: How should we enter the numbers for the Budget Worksheet in SmartSimple?

- Manually enter numbers under the **Unit Cost** and **Number of Unit** columns. SmartSimple will automatically calculate the **Total Unit Cost** numbers.
- Next, separately calculate 90% of the amount listed under **Total Unit Cost**, and manually enter that number under the **Grant Funds Requested** column. SmartSimple will automatically calculate and list the 10% cash match number under **Cash Match Amount**.
- We have provided an excel template for you to calculate your budget outside of SmartSimple. The [template is linked here](#).

Q: The figures in my Budget Overview table at the top of the budget page are not auto-populating correctly. They do not match the figures I entered in the individual budget category tables.

- Please ensure that you are entering your numbers following the instructions in the previous question. If you continue to have issues with the Budget Worksheet, please contact us at ECD.Broadband@TN.gov.

Q: I was advised to move 60 units of laptops, which came out to be a total of more than \$5,000, from the “Capital Purchases” category to the “Supplies” category. Why?

- We use the **Unit Cost**, rather than **Total Unit Cost**, to decide whether an item must go under the “Supplies” or “Capital Purchases” category. In this case, because the laptops cost less than \$5,000 each, the line item must go under “Supplies”.

Q: Can we update our budget to reflect the mileage rate increase effective Jan. 1, 2024?

- No, please continue to use the FY23 rate of \$0.665 / mile. During the reimbursement process, you can submit a claim for the current mileage rate increase in effect at the time of travel.

Q: How should we include the matching funds in the Budget Narrative?

- Make sure that the tables you include in your Budget Narrative reflect the **Cash Match Amount** (and **Additional Match**) columns.

Q: Can you provide some background on why the match rate is applied at a uniform rate across all budget categories? In reality, local resources committed to a project (either by the applicant or a partner) may be concentrated in one or two budget categories. Is it not possible to apply the match rate to the overall budget instead? Will there be flexibility to negotiate this during the award process?

- We completely understand that during implementation, you will likely expend funds at different rates across the different budget categories. To simplify calculations in Smart Simple the 90/10 federal funds/match rate was added across each budget line item.

- You will be able to submit an invoice against your budget categories at a rate that reflects how the project funding is being expended. Since this is a reimbursement only grant program, you will be reimbursed 90% of the costs you submit.
- **For Example:**

Budget Category	Total Cost	Invoice	Reimbursed by ECD at 90% Rate
Supplies	\$100	\$100	\$90

Q: Under the “Budget” tab, how do we answer the question, “Discuss the financial reasons that your organization needs funding and your organization’s financial ability to fund the total project cost prior to reimbursement (e.g., financing by loans)”.? Could you explain what you’re looking for?

- Please explain how your organization needs funding to complete the proposed project. For example, you can write that your organization can now fund laptops for digital skills programs as a result of the funding you may receive if you’re awarded the grant.
- Please also discuss how you will fund the project until you are reimbursed. For example, you can describe how you are obtaining a line of credit, or using existing funds, or receiving funds from a foundation.
- Additionally, if you’re not able to finance 100% of your total project cost upfront (which includes the match), you can demonstrate financial capacity for only the first phase or milestone. You should define how you plan to break out your program into different phases or milestones in the budget narrative.

Q: Is there a template that we can refer to for the Budget Narrative?

- Yes, it is referenced in the grant application. Additionally, please refer to the following links:
 - o Budget Narrative components (cover sheet + item justifications):
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/ecd/documents/broadband/infrastructure/last-mile-middle-mile/cpf/ARP%20Budget%20Narrative%20Justificaiton.pdf>
 - o Budget Narrative sample descriptions (page 36 of the DSEW Application Guidebook):
https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/ecd/documents/broadband/adoption--arpa/dsew/FINAL_10.04.23_DSEW_Application%20Guidebook.pdf
 - o DSEW Budget Help Text (calculating the Grant Funds Requested and Cash Mash Amount figures):
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/ecd/documents/broadband/adoption--arpa/dsew/DSEW%20Budget%20HelpText%20Tool.pdf>
 - o Editable version of the budget narrative document [can be here](#).
- To the best of your ability, the budget narrative should match the figures you provided in the budget worksheet. Please provide as much information (context and detail) in your budget narrative so we can understand the costs being proposed. Please note in your budget narrative if the figures in the budget table differ due to the unique nature of a specific costs, including internal budget rules that apply to your organization.

- If you have any specific questions, please e-mail K.Taylor Collins or Emily Hale (K.Taylor.Collins@tn.gov; Emily.hale@tn.gov) and copy ECD.Broadband@tn.gov

Q: How do we format the budget narrative correctly?

- Please see the resources linked above. The description breakdown should go in the budget narrative. Copy and paste isn't necessarily required, but we are seeking any additional information you can provide regarding the table (Budget Worksheet) you've provided us in SmartSimple. This should include a restatement of the table as well as a brief description and any explanations about how you came to list the numbers that you did for Unit Cost, Number of Units, etc.

Q: Could you provide us an Excel spreadsheet where we can input our numbers so that we can get our figures to align with what should be in SmartSimple?

- We have developed an Excel Spreadsheet you can use to review your budget figures. The worksheet [can be found here](#).

5. Proof of Financing Document Requirements

Q: In what format would you like the 2 proof of financing documents? Where do you prefer them to be signed, and who should sign them?

We have updated our policy to only require 1 proof of financing document (the document does NOT have to be signed):

- Audited financial statements from FY22 or FY23 OR;
- Letter of credit, no earlier than 6 months of the application opening date of 10/16/2023. OR;
- Bank statements no earlier than 6 months of the application opening date of 10/16/2023.

Q: Our organization does not have an audit, nor do we have a letter of credit. What are some other options?

- You can provide a copy of your bank statement (dated no earlier than 10/16/23) showing you have sufficient funds on hand to fund the project until you are reimbursed, or you can show proof of financing from an external source.
- If an applicant is unable to show financing for 100% of the grant funds, they have the option of providing proof of financial capacity for the first phase or key milestone of the project that they define. Applicants must include a breakdown of the project by milestone or deliverable and define how they plan on funding the milestones or deliverables in the budget narrative.

Q: Could we provide an audit for FY22? In our original proposal, we noted that as a state agency, we are audited biennially. We are not allowed to seek an audit outside of that schedule. Since we already addressed it in our proposal, I wasn't sure how/where to address it to ensure someone sees it and that we are not penalized for failing to provide a more recent audit.

- Please include a note in the "application notes" section indicating to us that this is your internal policy.

Q: Is including a signed bank statement a new requirement?

- Please disregard the requirement to have the bank statement signed.

Q: Does the bank statement we provide have to be signed by the bank?

- No, it does not have to be signed by the bank. Please ensure that it is dated no earlier than 6 months of the application opening date of 10/16/23.

Q: I'm personally giving my organization the cash to cover the funding, where I have the signed bank statement as of today that says we have the cash, but I don't have a letter of credit nor audited financials, so I don't have the ability to provide 2 documents required; I can

get the lines of credit if needed, but I don't need that since I'm self-financing. In this case, does submitting 1 proof of financing suffice?

- Please note, we have changed the proof of financing requirement to only 1 document.

6. Post Completeness Review Revisions

Q: After we re-submit the information requested, will we get a notification to re-submit revisions again if there's still something missing?

- Unfortunately, no. After this re-submission, no other notifications will be sent for other missing information.

Q: Will the applications be re-evaluated as a whole upon resubmission?

- The application will be reviewed and scored after the revisions have been made.

Q: Based on the key dates for the grant, is there a required start date for the awarded program?

- No, no there is no required start date; you may start any time after your contract with ECD is finalized.
- However, the required end date is Dec. 31, 2026, meaning that all program activity funded by the grant will have to end before December 31, 2026.

Q: Can we assume reimbursement within 30 days of invoice?

- Generally, yes. Invoices are typically paid out between 3-4 weeks after submission.

7. Other

Q: In my past experiences, we receive the money upfront to be able to make a program happen. However, is DSEW a reimbursement grant?

- Yes, DSEW is a reimbursement grant. The applicant will expend funds and submit invoices to ECD to start the invoice process. If you have any questions regarding this process, please reach out to ECD.Broadband@TN.gov.

Q: In the Document Upload and Submission tab, there is an asterisk next to "Program Manager", but I see no prompt. What do I do about this?

- Please ignore this prompt as you complete your revisions. This is an error in SmartSimple and will be resolved by our team.