

Sponsor/Title: National Science Foundation (NSF) - NSF 26-508: TechAccess: AI-Ready America

External Link:

<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities/techaccess-ai-ready-america/nsf26-508/solicitation>

Funding Opportunity Number: NSF 26-508

Submission Limitation per Institution: For Program Area 1 (State/Territory Coordination Hubs), institutions may submit only one (1) proposal. The Limited Submissions (LS) process does not apply to Program Areas 2 and 3.

Notre Dame Limited Submissions Listing:

<https://research.nd.edu/our-services/funding-opportunities/faculty/limited-submissions-program/>

Internal Expression of Interest Deadline: 2026-04-16

Sponsor Letter of Intent (LOI) required Deadline: 2026-06-16

Sponsor Application Deadline: 2026-07-16

Program Description: The vision of the AI-Ready America program is to enable a future where every individual, community, and business thrives in an AI-driven economy. The program aims to expand access to AI knowledge, tools, training, and capacity building so all Americans can participate in and benefit from emerging AI opportunities.

Central to this vision is a strategic approach that focuses on three priorities: strengthening coordination around AI readiness at local, state, and national levels in collaboration with community colleges and universities; leveraging existing networks and resources to accelerate AI adoption; and identifying and addressing gaps that must be filled to advance AI readiness.

The program defines "AI-Ready" as the continuum of literacy, proficiency, and fluency — the ability to understand, apply, and create with AI. Further, it sees "AI-literacy" as starting with understanding "Why AI?" and "When AI?".

The program goals are to:

1. Enable all Americans to be AI-literate and AI-ready.
2. Empower businesses — especially small and emerging enterprises — to adopt AI to increase competitiveness, productivity, and growth.
3. Support local governments and organizations in harnessing the power of AI to improve public services and spur local innovation.
4. Strengthen workforce capacity to apply and innovate with AI across education, business and economic sectors, and public services.

The program is structured around three funding support mechanisms: (1) State/Territory Coordination Hubs, which accelerate statewide AI readiness; (2) a National Coordination Lead, which provides national strategy and alignment; and (3) AI-Ready Catalyst Awards competitions, which rapidly pilots innovative approaches for potential national scaling.

Program Area 1: State/Territory Coordination Hubs: Coordination Hubs will serve as the center of state/territory-wide coordination to accelerate AI readiness and deployment. Each

Coordination Hub will act as a neutral convening entity that connects local partners across education, workforce, industry, and government stakeholders; leverages established networks, assets, and organizations within the state/territory; facilitates knowledge exchange; and enables rapid scaling of successful AI adoption efforts. The Coordination Hubs are expected to work with the National Lead, once the National Lead is established, to ensure state priorities inform national strategies, approaches, and scaling, and that the state/territory benefits from shared resources and tools, best practices and knowledge sharing. Successful implementation will require a lead organization with statewide convening power and operational capacity, supported by a strong team of partners.

Primary responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. AI Learning and Resource Navigator
2. State/Territory AI Readiness Strategic Plan
3. AI Deployment Support
4. AI Readiness Training & Capacity Building
5. Coordination Within Priority Sectors

Internal Application Requirements: Upload the following information to the Google Form at <https://forms.gle/BEsykwxfLnqkhtSZ8> by the internal deadline:

- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI)
- Project Title
- All ND Collaborators:
 - For each ND Collaborator listed, include name, department or unit, and specific role for this project in three sentences (maximum).
- Project Summary: Three (3) pages (maximum) addressing the following Merit Review Principles and Criteria as outlined in the NOFO.
 - Intellectual Merit, which encompasses the potential to advance knowledge.
 - Broader Impacts, which encompass the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes.
 - Additional Solicitation Specific Review Criteria - To what extent is it evident that the proposed State/Territory Coordination Hub:
 - Presents a clear vision and approach for advancing statewide AI readiness in alignment with program goals, national AI-readiness priorities, and responsibilities of the Coordination Hub.
 - Has a lead organization and partners that demonstrate statewide/territory-wide convening and coordination capacity, along with the expertise needed to implement the responsibilities effectively.
 - Reflects an understanding of current state/territory efforts in AI and related areas and offers strategies to address gaps and accelerate progress.
 - Includes realistic milestones, measurable outcomes, and mechanisms for evidence-based implementation and scaling of efforts.

Questions: Contact Notre Dame Research Limited Submissions at limited@nd.edu.

Unless otherwise noted, all internal applications are due by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the internal expression of interest deadline.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.