



Notice of Grant Opportunity

Higher Education AI Readiness Grant

Application Deadline: Friday, October 30, 2026, 5:00 p.m.

Term: January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming how students learn, how faculty teach, and how institutions operate. [Some research](#) suggests that a significant majority of college students are already utilizing AI tools for a range of tasks, including brainstorming, editing, and summarizing. In alignment with the priorities of Governor Mikie Sherrill, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) is committed to ensuring New Jersey higher education remains equitable and responsive to these technological advances.

In spring 2026, OSHE, in partnership with the [New Jersey AI Hub](#), administered an [AI Readiness Survey](#). Institutions responded, highlighting more than 200 in-progress AI initiatives, strongly expressing a desire for collaboration, and commonly ranking three AI priorities: (1) AI faculty development, (2) student AI literacy, and (3) AI planning & governance. View a [report](#) of the survey responses.

With support from the [New Jersey Department of Labor \(NJDOLE\)](#), OSHE announces availability of funds to advance knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and scaling of AI initiatives. The purposes of this grant opportunity are to promote cross-institutional collaboration, to support directed investment across commonly prioritized goals, and to develop shared assets that institutions may utilize immediately and into the future as they adopt AI policies substantively and operationally.

Eligibility Criteria & Funding

This grant opportunity is open to New Jersey county colleges, four-year public institutions of higher education, and four-year independent institutions of higher education that receive state operating aid.

Applicants are required to submit applications as partnerships of two to five institutions. Cross-sector representation within partnerships is encouraged.

Applicants must designate in the application on which of the three priority areas its proposed project will focus: AI faculty development, student AI literacy, or AI planning & governance.

Partnerships may submit no more than one application and may select only one priority area. Institutions may not apply under multiple partnerships.

Grantees will be required to expend their funds by December 31, 2027. Please consider this date in developing a project plan for submission.

A total of \$675,000 is available through this opportunity. OSHE anticipates allocating funding as follows:

Priority Area	Anticipated Number of Awards	Maximum Grant Amount
AI Faculty Development	3	\$100,000
Student AI Literacy	3	\$75,000
AI Planning & Governance	3	\$50,000

Application Instructions

The State seeks partnerships capable of developing deliverables aligned with one of the three articulated priority areas that may serve as shared assets (e.g., knowledge, guidance, or other open-source deliverable to add to a state-wide repository) for New Jersey institutions beyond the grant period.

A complete application must include two documents: 1) Grant Narrative and 2) Budget Template. The application must also designate a lead institution for fund disbursement purposes and include signed letters of commitment from the partnering institutions, signed by the institutions' presidents or designees.

Grant Narrative

Use the headings listed below to write the grant narrative. The total length of the grant narrative must not exceed ten (10) pages, single-spaced.

Contact Information

Provide the name(s), title(s), phone number(s), and email(s) of the primary contact(s) for any follow-up regarding the notice of funding application.

Commitment and Capacity

- Describe the partnership's commitment to the indicated AI priority area and capacity to develop shared assets to advance the selected priority area. Include the organizational support, expertise, and scaled resources that exist for implementing the proposed project.
- Explain how and why the institutions within the partnership are ideally positioned to implement the proposed project.
- Identify current programs and initiatives that align with the selected AI priority area and that support the proposed project.

Goals/Objectives and Evaluation

Describe the anticipated deliverable(s). Establish the following:

- Alignment with and advancement of the selected AI priority area.
- Plan for distribution and utilization of deliverables by other institutions following the grant period.
- Relevant data supporting the need and use case(s) for the proposed deliverable.
- Impacted population(s)/impact(s), e.g., all faculty, specific academic disciplines, all students, entering students, graduating students, operational AI governance, classroom AI policies.

Include how the partnership will evaluate the project's success. Which immediate and/or longer-term metrics would demonstrate the usefulness and impact of the project and of the shareable assets the project delivers? Establish anticipated milestones and timing; OSHE will request interim updates on progress toward grantees' goals/objectives.

Collaboration

Describe existing or proposed collaboration the partnership will pursue to ensure successful development of shared deliverables. This collaboration may include programs and departments within and across the partnership's institutions, local, state, or national organizations, the business/entrepreneurship community, and/or other entities. Indicate the partnership's lead institution for fund disbursement, outline the roles each institutional partner will play, how grant funding will be utilized across institutional partners, and describe how the institutional partners will communicate and collaborate for the duration of the project period.

Project Activity/Operational Plan

The Project Activity/Operational Plan should detail the steps the partnership will take to implement the project and develop deliverables within the activity period. This should be connected to the proposed budget expenditures. This section should also include:

- Detailed description of main activities for project implementation and deliverable development.

- Anticipated timeline for successful implementation of activities and deliverable completion.
- Clear ties to the proposed budget and responsible parties at each institution within the partnership.

Sustainability

This is expected to be a one-time funding opportunity. Therefore, each partnership must detail how it will continue to advance its project's AI priority at the end of the funding cycle.

Budget Justification Plan:

The budget portion of the application must be submitted as an Excel spreadsheet utilizing the template provided. In the budget template, applicants should complete these areas: contact information, original budget column, and narrative budget description column. A key component of the budget template and scoring is the field designated for the 'Narrative Budget Description.' For each category of budgeted expenses, applicants must provide a 'Narrative Budget Description' consisting of a detailed list and justification for each planned expense. The funding should be clearly tied to the Project Activity/Operational Plan. If the 'Narrative Budget Description' cannot be provided within the space allowed in template, applicants may submit a secondary spreadsheet tab with this detail using the same budget category headers, but all submissions must be in an Excel spreadsheet format.

Please note Facilities and Administrative Costs (F&A/Indirect costs) are not allowable expenses.

Budgets will be reviewed for reasonable and eligible expenses. Applicants may be asked to revise their budgets and projects based on the final amount awarded. Funding must abide by State guidelines.

Link to Budget Template: <https://www.nj.gov/highereducation/finance/grants.shtml>

Submission of Application: Due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2026.

Completed applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2026. Applications after this deadline will not be considered. The application must be submitted as two files (grant narrative as PDF format and proposed budget as Excel format) to **both** Vance.Stephens@oshe.nj.gov and Sara.Lipsett@oshe.nj.gov with the subject line "InstitutionName_FY27_AIRGP." The institution name in the subject line must be the lead institution's name. OSHE will send an email confirming receipt.

Only one application per partnership will be accepted. Additional submissions or submission modifications will not be accepted. Please carefully review all components of the application for compliance with this Notice prior to submission.

Application Review

The following point values apply to the evaluation of applications received in response to this Notice:

- Commitment and Capacity [20]
- Goals/Objectives and Evaluation [10]
- Collaboration [20]
- Project Activity/Operational Plan [30]
- Sustainability [5]
- Budget [15]

Maximum Potential Score 100

Additional Resources

The State is committed to ensuring institutions utilize available funding for greatest impact. When establishing partnerships and developing project plans and deliverables, be sure to leverage existing work across the three eligible AI priority areas. This includes in-progress institutional initiatives and other advances. Consider reviewing the [NJ AI Hub website](#) for information about how AI is currently being leveraged in higher education. This content is not developed by the State of New Jersey and is provided as a resource.

Questions

Questions about this notice may be submitted via email to Vance T. Stephens, Director of Policy, at Vance.Stephens@oshe.nj.gov with a copy to Sara Lipsett, Grants Manager, at Sara.Lipsett@oshe.nj.gov through Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. All responses to submitted questions will be posted to the [OSHE Finance website](#) by Friday, October 16, 2026.