



Request for Proposals (RFP) for Mini-Grants in Emerging Technology **Deadline for Submission: November 1, 2024**

Introduction:

The National Information Technology Innovation Center (NITIC) is pleased to announce this Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking innovative emerging technology projects for funding through mini-grants. We invite proposals from eligible organizations interested in advancing education solutions that address current challenges or enhance capabilities in various sectors.

Objective:

The primary objective of this RFP is to identify and support projects that demonstrate creativity, feasibility, and potential impact in the field of emerging technology. Projects should propose novel solutions or advancements in technician-level education that can contribute positively to societal, economic, or environmental goals.

While traditional areas of technology are increasing in demand, it is also critical for the Center to continually look forward to supporting expanding technician-level curriculum in emerging job clusters. Some of these areas have seen incremental progress across community colleges, but most have not been widely adopted. Others are newly emerging and require additional support as their demand grows.

Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants: Open to public community colleges in the United States who are members of NITIC's IT Innovation Network (ITIN). Membership is free. To join the network, please visit [NITIC Membership](#).

Project Focus: Proposals must focus on technician-level projects in emerging technology areas such as (but not limited to):

- Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning
- Internet of Things (IoT)
- IT Automation
- Quantum Computing
- Blockchain Technology
- Encryption Technologies
- Edge Computing
- 5G
- Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality
- Renewable Energy Technology
- Biotechnology and Healthcare Innovations
- FinTech
- Sustainable Agriculture Technologies
- DevOps
- Smart City Solutions
- IT-OT Cybersecurity Interface
- Other cutting-edge technology areas

Multiple Proposals: An institution may submit multiple proposals in response to this RFP as long as each proposal details a separate, unique project. Each project will require its own proposal.



Likewise, an applicant is allowed to submit a proposal every funding round as long as the projects are different from cycle to cycle.

Re-submission in future cycles of a proposal that was not funded is allowed and encouraged.

Grant Information:

Grant Size: Mini-grants of \$10,000 will be awarded to single institutions.

Number of Grants: Approximately 6-8 grants will be awarded under this RFP.

Grant Duration: Projects should typically be completed within 12 months. The target start date will be January 1, 2025 for this round of proposals.

Funding Guidelines: Funds may be used for project-related expenses, including but not limited to:

- Curriculum development and/or modification
- Professional development
- Modeling, piloting, and testing
- Emerging technologies career awareness and pathway exploration
- Student-led and faculty-led special projects
- Participation stipends
- Personnel salary and fringe (for personnel working on this specific project)
- Supplies with a lifespan less than a year and per-unit cost less than \$5,000

Funds may not be used for

- Scholarships
- Student wages for internships, experiential learning, or work-study
- Indirect costs
- Food or refreshments
- Facilities maintenance or capital improvement projects
- Equipment with a lifespan longer than 1 year and per-unit cost greater than \$5,000

Collaboration: In addition to single-institution proposals, the NITIC review team may consider collaborative proposals with two or more institutions deeply engaged in the work. These may be funded at an amount reflective of the scope. Please contact jnewma10@csc.edu if you would like to discuss a collaborative project.

Project Dissemination:

NITIC plans on promoting and disseminating the mini-grant projects in a variety of venues. These may include:

- The NITIC website and clearinghouse
- Working Connections conference



- Online or in-person professional development workshops
- Speaking engagements, panels, and presentations

Whenever possible, the mini-grant awardee will be engaged to directly present information on their project in these or other venues. If the activity is in-person, there may be separate travel funds available to awardees for designated dissemination activities. Further details will be provided to awardees regarding these and other dissemination opportunities.

Project deliverables will be considered open education resources. Any curriculum products will be posted in the NITIC clearinghouse. This grant is not intended to support proprietary projects or to develop products that will be sold for a fee. We welcome any questions or clarifications applicants may have regarding intellectual property and their planned deliverables.

Proposal Guidelines:

1. Executive Summary: Provide a brief overview of the project, its objectives, expected outcomes, and significance. Include a statement on how the project will align with the goals and priorities of the mini-grant program. The Executive Summary will be posted to the NITIC website; please do not share information that should not be publicly available.
2. Project Description:
 - Outline the approach and methods that will be used to implement the project.
 - Identify the major deliverables that will result from this project.
 - Provide a clear timeline for a 12-month project period including key milestones.
 - Include measurable impacts and how you will assess project success.
 - Clarify the roles and responsibilities of project team members and partners.
 - Discuss the potential for sustainability of the project using resources other than mini-grant funds.
3. Budget Justification: Outline how the mini-grant funds will be spent to support this project using the below budget categories. In the middle column, Project Purpose, connect the budget category to the deliverables you have presented. Appendix A provides an example of a budget justification.

Category	Project Purpose	Estimated Total Cost
Personnel		
Supplies		
Contractual		
Travel		
Other		
Total		\$10,000

Formatting

- The recommended type is Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- The recommended spacing is single-spaced for all content including charts and visuals.
- There are no page limits. We expect proposals will average about 4 pages but you are encouraged to use the space you need to detail your project.



- We recommend minimal use of color with a preference for grayscale.
- The above items are recommendations. No proposal will be returned unreviewed due to formatting.

Submission Instructions:

Deadline: Proposals must be submitted by **November 1, 2024** at 11:59 p.m. (EST).

Submission Method: Proposals should be submitted electronically as a single file to [Mini Grants Program](#). Allowable file types for the proposal narrative are Word or PDF.

Inquiries: For inquiries regarding this RFP, contact Josie Newman at jnewma10@csc.edu

Review and Selection:

Initial Review: Proposals will undergo an initial screening for eligibility and completeness. NITIC reserves the right to follow-up with applicants for clarification or additional information.

Evaluation: Eligible proposals will be evaluated by a review committee based on the criteria outlined in this RFP. Appendix B outlines the scoring criteria that will be used.

Selection: Successful applicants will be notified by email from NITIC with a target notification date of [notification date]. Applicants who are not awarded will also be notified. At any time after notification, an applicant can request a copy of their reviewer scoring sheet by contacting jnewma10@csc.edu. Re-submission in future cycles of a proposal that was not funded is allowed and encouraged.

Contracting and Fund Disbursement: Awards will be executed via contract between Columbus State Community College and the awardee institution. 50% of the awarded funds will be provided upon a fully executed contract. The remaining 50% of funds will be disbursed upon receipt and acceptance of the project performance report. This format is intended to support projects that need an initial injection of funding to start the project. If acceptable project progress does not occur after the first payment, the contract may be terminated and funds may be returned to NITIC.

Important Dates:

- RFP Release Date: September 10, 2024
- Proposal Submission Deadline: November 1, 2024
- Notification of Awards: Early December 2024
- Project Start Date: January 1, 2025
- Project Performance Report: Due within 30 days after project completion. Appendix C provides sample expectations for a project performance report.



The National Information Technology Innovation Center reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFP. Submission of a proposal indicates acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in this RFP.

We look forward to receiving your innovative proposals and collaborating on projects that will drive technological advancements and societal impact.



Appendix A: Example Budget

Category	Project Purpose	Estimated Total Cost
Personnel	Personnel costs to develop the online learning module on AI in Manufacturing	\$8,000
Supplies	-	\$0
Contractual	-	\$0
Travel	Travel to employer sites to research how they use AI	\$1,000
Other	Post module on Blackboard to make available to K-12 instructors	\$1,000
Total		\$10,000

Appendix B: Review Criteria and Scoring

Criterion 1: Alignment with Objectives (4 points)

4 points: Proposal clearly aligns with the goals and objectives of the grant program, addressing identified needs.

3 points: Alignment is mostly clear but could be more explicitly linked to program goals.

2 points: Some alignment with objectives, but lacks clarity in how proposed activities contribute.

1 point: Proposal does not align with grant objectives.

Criterion 2: Innovation and Feasibility (4 points)

4 points: Proposal demonstrates highly innovative and feasible approaches to addressing the issue.

3 points: Shows innovation and feasibility but lacks depth or clarity in implementation.

2 points: Some innovative aspects, but feasibility is questionable or not well-supported.

1 point: Proposal lacks innovation or feasible implementation plan.

Criterion 3: Impact and Sustainability (4 points)

4 points: Proposal outlines clear, measurable outcomes and sustainable benefits.

3 points: Potential impact and sustainability are described, but with some gaps in details.

2 points: Limited clarity on impact or sustainability; outcomes are unclear or unrealistic.

1 point: Proposal lacks clear impact or sustainable benefits.

Criterion 4: Dissemination of Results (4 points)

4 points: Clear and comprehensive plan for disseminating project results to relevant stakeholders and the broader community.

3 points: Plan for dissemination is described, but lacks detail or is not comprehensive.

2 points: Some mention of dissemination, but plan is vague or lacks specifics.

1 point: No plan or insufficient consideration of dissemination activities.

Criterion 5: Budget Justification (4 points)

4 points: Budget is well-structured, justified, and aligns with proposed activities.

3 points: Budget is mostly justified but lacks some details or has minor discrepancies.

2 points: Budget justification is unclear or does not align with proposed activities.

1 point: Budget justification is absent or inadequate.

Scoring Guidelines:

17-20 points: Strong proposal; recommended for funding.

14-16 points: Adequate proposal; may require revisions or clarifications.

Below 14 points: Weak proposal; unlikely to be funded.



Appendix C: Project Performance Report

The following questions can serve as a guideline for preparing a project performance report. NITIC reserves the right to change or adapt these questions depending on awardee capability or capacity, and/or project scope.

1. Describe how the project had an impact on students. How many students were impacted by this project?
2. Describe how the project had an impact on instructors or faculty. How many instructors or faculty were impacted by this project?
3. What were the major deliverables of this project? Describe how they were achieved in whole, or in part.
4. What were the measurable impacts you planned for this project? Describe whether or not you met those measures. Reflect on your project success based on these measures.
5. Did the project need to adapt to any unforeseen circumstances? If so, what was the situation and the solution?
6. Describe the sustainability plan for the project components your institution would like to continue.
7. What best practices can you share with other community colleges as a result of implementing this project?
8. Do you have any other success stories or information you would like to share?
9. Would you be willing to share your project results in a NITIC-sponsored event (panel, conference presentation, etc.)?