

*A national program to coordinate readiness  
and accelerate deployment*

Email: [ai-ready@nsf.gov](mailto:ai-ready@nsf.gov)

**QR Code for  
Program  
Initiative Page**



## **Important Deadlines:**

- **Proposal Submission Deadline: July 21, 2026 (Due by 4 p.m. EDT)**
- **All questions must be submitted by June 15 to [ai-ready@nsf.gov](mailto:ai-ready@nsf.gov)**

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# **AI-READY AMERICA**

**Webinar for AI-Ready America**  
**National Coordination Lead:**  
**NSF-OTASO-FY26-AI-ReadyAmerica**

**June 11, 2026**



# Agenda

<b>Welcome and Introduction to NSF</b>	Greg Peterson, Program Director CISE/NSF
<b>Program Summary</b>	Greg Peterson, Program Director CISE/NSF
<b>Other Transaction Funding Mechanism</b>	Patrick Breen, NSF Senior Procurement Executive
<b>National Lead Overview</b>	Michal Ziv-El, Program Director, TIP/NSF
<b>Proposal Preparation</b>	Nasser Alaraje, Program Director, EDU/NSF
<b>Proposal Review</b>	Nasser Alaraje, Program Director EDU/NSF
<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Program Directors and Senior Procurement Executive

- Questions can be submitted in the webinar Q&A or emailed to [ai-ready@nsf.gov](mailto:ai-ready@nsf.gov) through June 15<sup>th</sup> at 4pm ET.
- Webinar recording will be available on the program’s initiative page: <https://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/ai-ready>
- Direct link to the Other Transaction Agreement Solutions Offering (OTASO): <https://sam.gov/workspace/contract/opp/8b2eac2b92544b89a6f9ec5205313119/view>

# Welcome and Introduction to NSF



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# The Opportunity:

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly reshaping the U.S. economy and workforce, creating significant opportunities for innovation, productivity, and growth. Yet many states and communities lack the infrastructure, coordination, and workforce capacity needed to fully benefit from these advances. Addressing these gaps requires a coordinated national approach to AI readiness.



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# MISSION

PROMOTE the progress of science

ADVANCE the national health, prosperity, and welfare

SECURE the national defense



# NSF Supports All Areas of Science and Engineering

## A New “Horizontal”: Strengthen, Scale Use-Inspired and Translational Research



Integrative Activities

International Science & Engineering

# Program Overview



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## Coordination across the federal government



**Directorate for Technology, Innovation and Partnerships (TIP)**

**Directorate for STEM Education (EDU)**

**Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering (CISE)**





## **Mission:**

Expand access to AI knowledge, tools, training, and capacity building so all Americans can participate in — and benefit from — the AI economy.

## **Impact:**

A future where every individual, community, and business in America thrives in an AI-driven economy.

## **Primary Beneficiaries:**

Individuals • Small Businesses • Civic Organizations  
• Workforce

## **Program Definitions:**

**AI-Ready** = continuum of literacy, proficiency, and fluency (understand, apply, create).

**AI-literacy** starts with “Why AI?” and “When AI?”



## Program Goals:

- 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 government 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.



## Program Approach:

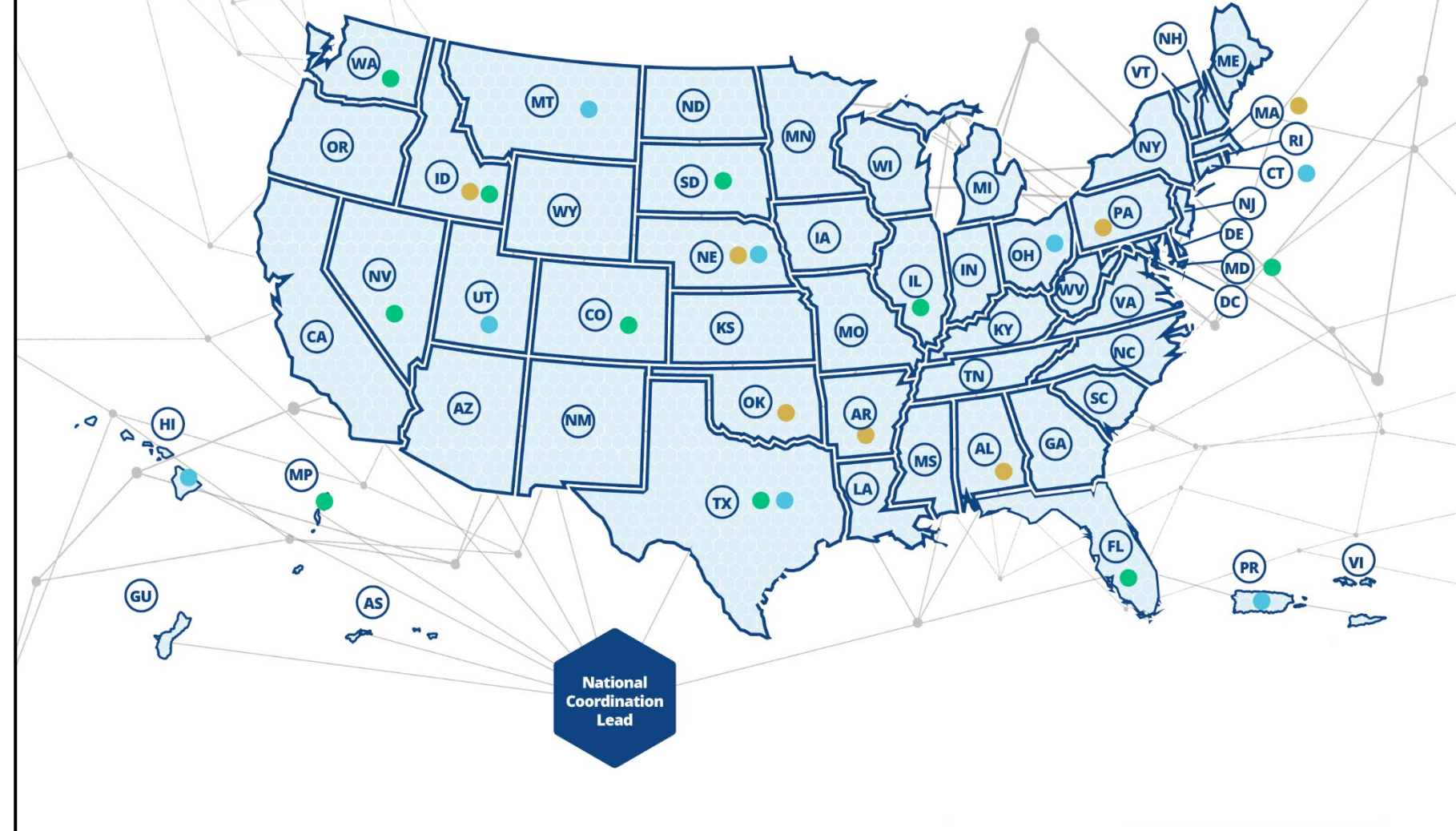
- **Coordination at its core!** Local, state, and national.
- **Act quickly to kickstart and scale!** Pilot rapidly where gaps exist and scale what works.
- **Don't reinvent!** Leverage the best ideas and networks across the country.
  - *State-focused coordination efforts: E.g. USDA's state and local Cooperative Extension System, SBA's Small Business Development Centers, DOL's America Job Centers, NSF's State EPSCoR offices*
  - *NSF funded programs/projects: E.g. National Artificial Intelligence Research Institutes, National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource Pilot, National Applied AI Consortium Award (Advanced Tech Education Program), AI PD Weeks: CS Foundations for Creating with AI Award*


# Program Components and Investment Strategy





## Tech Access: AI Ready America


National Coordination | State and Territory Hubs | Local Catalyst Support




 **State/Territory Coordination Hubs:**  
(one in every state/territory)

 **National Coordination Lead:**  
(single award)

 **AI-Ready Catalyst Award Competitions**  
(illustrative examples of three competitions)

 **Award Competitions**  
(illustrative examples of three competitions)

 **Award Competitions**  
(illustrative examples of three competitions)





## Program Investments Summary

### 1. State/Territory Coordination Hubs:

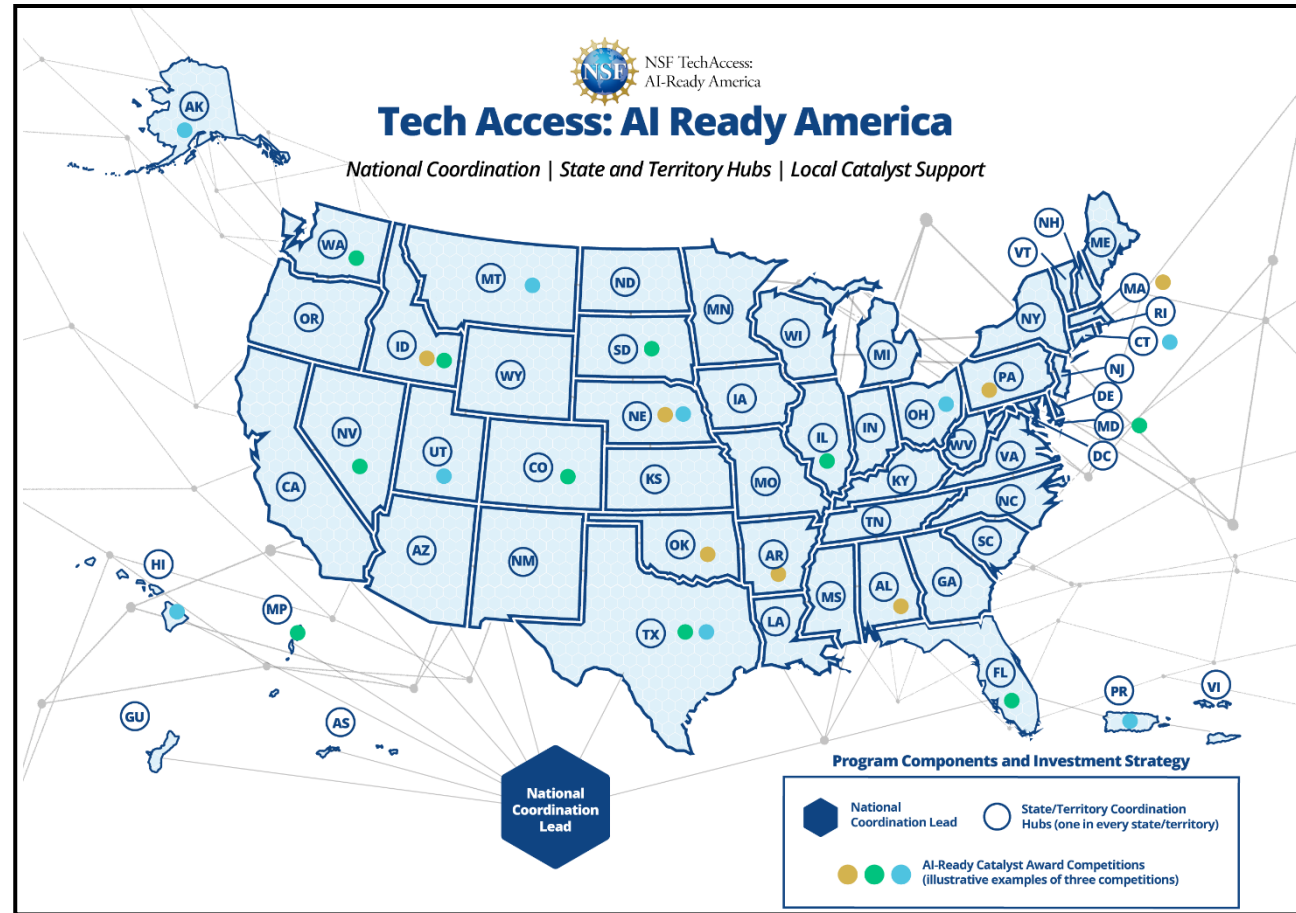
- \$1M/year for 3 years + 1; Standard Grant or Continuing Grant.
- Solicitation NSF 26-508; round 1 proposals due July 16, 2026.

### 2. National Coordination Lead:

- \$5M/year for 5 years; Other Transaction.
- Solicitation (NSF-OTASO-FY26-AI-ReadyAmerica); Proposals due July 21, 2026.

### 3. AI-Ready Catalyst Award Competitions:

- Topics and funding details will be released in DCLs or by the National Lead.
- Will be released on the initiative page.



Additional funding calls will be posted on the initiative page as they are released:  
<https://www.nsf.gov/funding/initiatives/ai-ready>

# Program Team



**Michal Ziv-Ei**

Program Director, NSF/TIP



**Greg Peterson**

Program Director, NSF/CISE



**Nasser Alaraje**

Program Director, NSF/EDU



**Chaitan Baru**

Section Head for  
Emerging Technologies,  
NSF/TIP



**Mary Crowe**

Section Head for  
Workforce Capacity  
Building, NSF/TIP



**Sarah Dunton**

Program Director,  
NSF/Strategic Partnerships  
Hub



**Nathan Putnam**

Senior Policy Advisor,  
US Small Business  
Administration



**Rubella Goswami**

Deputy Director Institute of  
Youth, Family and  
Community, USDA-NIFA



**Taylor Stockton**

Chief Innovation Officer,  
US Department of  
Labor



**Megan Catterton**

SETA technical contractor  
Emerging Technologies



**Ilana Herold**

SETA technical contractor  
Workforce Capacity Building

# Other Transaction (OT) Funding Mechanism



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# Other Transaction (OT) Awards

## NSF TIP's OT Authority

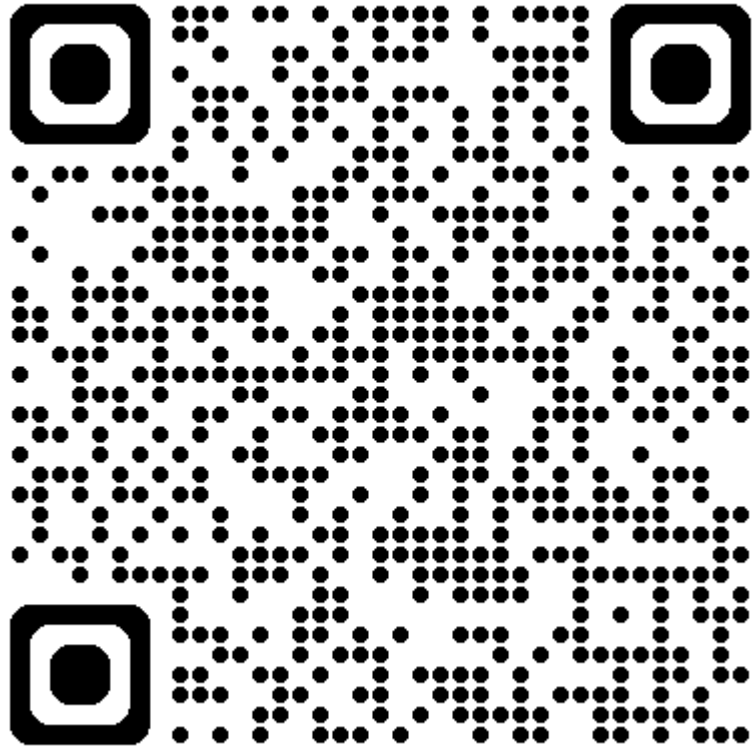
- Other Transaction Authority (OTA) is NSF TIP's newest obligation authority.
- Provided to NSF in the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022.
- Other Transactions (OTs) are:
  - **Not** Grants, Cooperative Agreements, or FAR-Based Contracts.
  - **Not** subject to restrictions on or regulations implementing these other instrument types.

Learn more about NSF's contracting authority here: [Contracting With NSF - About NSF | NSF - U.S. National Science Foundation](#)

## What is an OT Contract?

- A flexible funding mechanism available to TIP and NSF that allows for tailored terms and payment schedules
- OT Contracts can have a variety of payment types. AI-Ready America will use a combination of fixed-price and milestone-based contracts
- Often well-suited for “relational contracting”, allowing for joint exploration and a common understanding of complex long-term goals at the outset

# NSF Other Arrangements/Transactions Guide



OTs **DO NOT** follow the PAPPG. The NSF Other Arrangements/Transactions Guide governs OTs. Elements from the PAPPG may still be included in an OT agreement as determined by the program.

[https://nsf.gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/Other\\_Arrangements\\_Transactions\\_Guide.pdf](https://nsf.gov-resources.nsf.gov/files/Other_Arrangements_Transactions_Guide.pdf)

# Comparison of Instrument Types

Grants (Financial Assistance)	Cooperative Agreements (Financial Assistance)	Contracts	Other Transactions (OT)
<p>Legal instrument of <u>financial assistance</u> between federal agency and a non-federal entity.</p> <p>Transfer of anything of value to <u>carry out a public purpose</u>. Not to acquire property or services for the awarding agency's direct benefit or use</p> <p><u>Does not</u> provide for substantial involvement of awarding agency</p>	<p>Legal instrument of <u>financial assistance</u> between federal agency and a non-federal entity.</p> <p>Transfer of anything of value to <u>carry out a public purpose</u>. Not to acquire property or services for the awarding agency's direct benefit or use</p> <p>Provides for substantial involvement of awarding agency</p>	<p><i>Procurement Contract:</i> An instrument to <u>acquire property or services</u> for the direct benefit of the US Government.</p> <p><i>R&amp;D Program Contract:</i> <u>advances scientific and technical knowledge</u> to achieve goals. Typically directed towards objectives for which the work or method are difficult to know in advance</p>	<p><i>Other Transactions</i> are a unique type of instrument that may be used for a <u>variety of scientific and engineering activities</u>. For NSF, use of OTs <u>requires a nexus to the activities of the TIP directorate</u>.</p> <p><b><u>Intended to allow creation of win-win partnerships for all parties</u></b></p>



# Fixed-Price & Milestone-Based Payments

**Fixed Price** is a set amount agreed to upfront for a defined piece of work.

**Milestones** are discrete, predefined performance checkpoints specified in an OT contract that an awardee must satisfy and document to NSF before payment is released

- Payment after demonstration of progress
- Allows the national lead work to be **outcomes driven**, not just activity driven

## **Collaborative Development**

- Developed collaboratively between teams and NSF during proposal and negotiations
- Can be renegotiated to support rapid innovation

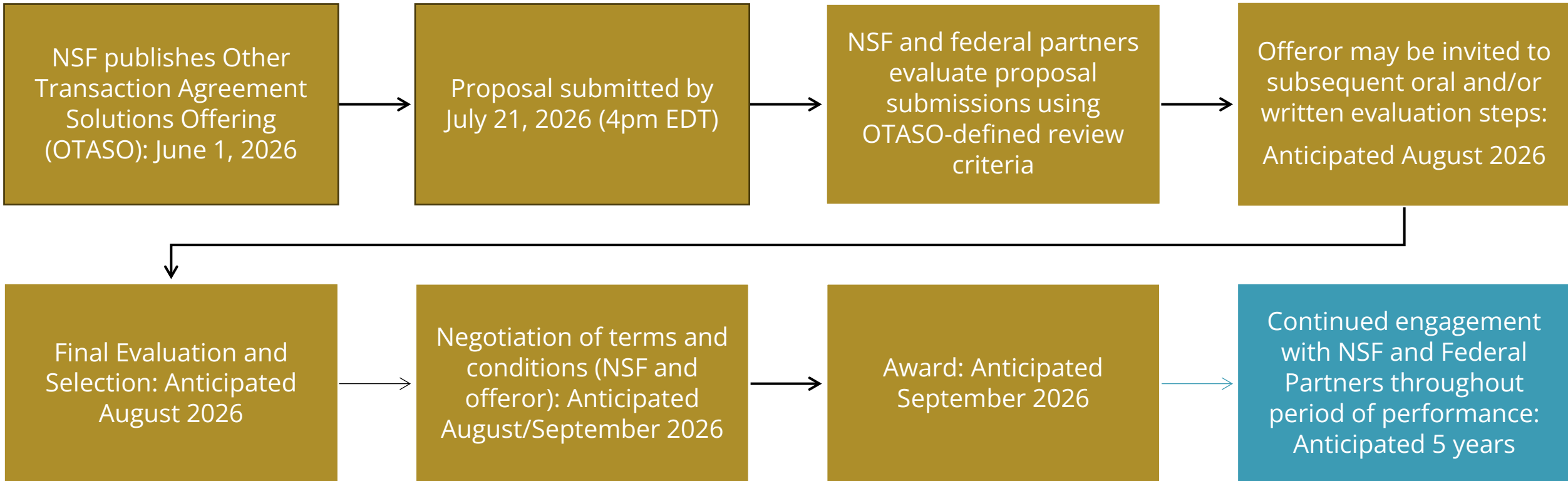
# Relationship with NSF

## Examples:

- Negotiations prior to OT award tend to be more involved because OT terms are specific to each award and often tied directly to payments.
- During execution, NSF may be much more involved in day-to-day operations than is typical for financial assistance awards.
- Engagement with NSF will occur via a team of Program Officer(s), an Agreements Officer, and an Agreements Officer Representative.
- NSF will expect to interact with a team on the awardee side, typically: Team Lead (PI), Project Manager, Executive Team (Senior Key Personnel), Financial Lead



## Solicitation (OTASO) to National Lead Award



# National Lead Overview



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## **National Lead: Funding Information**

**Number of Awards:** One

**Funding amount:** Subject to the availability of funds, NSF anticipates making a five-year commitment to an organization selected for the National Lead award under this solutions offering with an expected award amount of \$5,000,000 per year.

**Funding Mechanism:** Other Transaction



# National Lead Workstreams

- 1** State/Territory-level Coordination Hub Support and Technical Assistance
- 2** National-Level Knowledge Sharing, Visibility, and Identification of Gaps
- 3** National AI Deployment Support
- 4** Industry and Philanthropy Engagement
- 5** National Coordination Within Priority Sectors
- 6** Develop and Execute AI-Ready Catalyst Award Competitions
- 7** Documentation and Reporting of Progress Towards Technical Milestones, Performance Metrics, and Key Learnings



## Workstream

1

### State/Territory-level Coordination Hub Support and Technical Assistance

**Summary:** Provide direct support to Coordination Hubs to strengthen their ability to carry out the five required responsibilities outlined in solicitation. Note that the role of the National Lead for this workstream is to **enable**, **assist**, and **amplify** state efforts, and not to implement programs itself.

#### **Activities to execute, at a minimum:**

- Conduct National Support Needs Assessments
- Develop a Technical Assistance Framework and Support
- Design and launch Communities of Practice
- Organize an Annual Coordination Hub Convening
- Create and maintain shared resources
- Support alignment of AI-readiness performance metrics
- Monitor and assess effectiveness of support
- Coordinate with external efforts

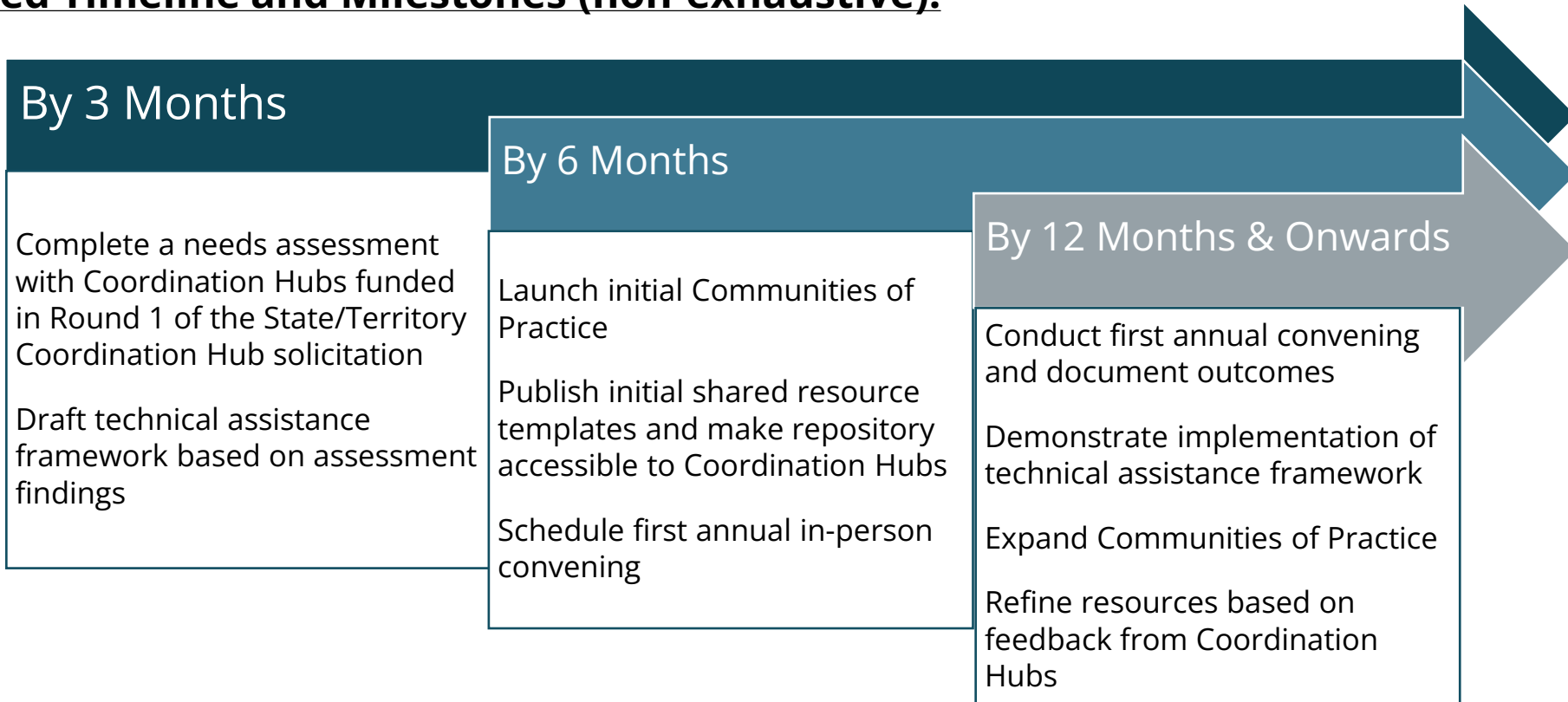


# Workstream

1

## State/Territory-level Coordination Hub Support and Technical Assistance

### Suggested Timeline and Milestones (non-exhaustive):





## Workstream

### 2

### National-Level Knowledge Sharing, Visibility, and Identification of Gaps

**Summary:** Maintain national visibility and knowledge sharing by creating and managing public-facing information and communication activities that provide a nationwide view of program progress, sector initiatives, and opportunities for engagement. This workstream also plays a critical role in identifying gaps across the AI-Ready America ecosystem—surfacing where additional resources, capacity, or coordination may be needed by Coordination Hubs, partners, or the broader federal, industry, and civic landscape.

#### **Activities to execute, at a minimum:**

- Develop publicly accessible tools and resources
- Spotlight efforts across all workstreams from the Coordination Hubs and National Lead
- Offer engagement opportunities
- Identify and surface gaps
- National visibility and network representation



# Workstream

2

## National-Level Knowledge Sharing, Visibility, and Identification of Gaps

### Suggested Timeline and Milestones (non-exhaustive):

#### By 3 Months

Deliver an initial set of publicly accessible tools and resources that provide early program insights and surface preliminary indications of potential gaps in resources, capacity, or coordination across states and sectors.

Make public-facing information from Coordination Hubs easily accessible

#### By 6 Months

Begin spotlighting efforts across State/Territory Coordination Hubs and the National Lead

Begin engagement opportunities

#### By 12 Months & Onwards

Expand the set of publicly accessible tools and resources

Increase the frequency and depth of highlighted stories and best practices

Broaden opportunities for stakeholders to engage with AI-Ready America

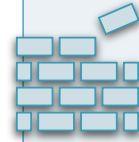
Routinely surface gaps that become apparent



# Characteristics of a Highly Qualified Organization



**Capability to Execute an OT Award**



**Operational Agility and the Ability to Stand Up a Semi-Autonomous Program Unit**



**Comprehensive Expertise in AI Readiness Across Technical, Policy, Educational, and Applied Contexts**



**National Convening Power and Trusted, Neutral Stewardship**



**Demonstrated Commitment of Key Personnel**



**Capacity to Execute the Full Set of Workstreams**

The National Lead is encouraged to assemble a team with a complementary set of partners to collectively deliver on program goals.

# Proposal Preparation



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## Written Proposal

- Page total: 20
- Proposals that do not meet the format specifications described in the OTASO may be removed from consideration
- Contents
  - 7.1 Title page
  - 7.2 Body of proposal (includes required supplemental material)
  - 7.3 Proposal Budget and Budget Justification
  - 7.4 Data Management and Privacy Plan
  - 7.5 Letters of Commitment
  - 7.6 Conflicts of Interest



## 7.2 Body of the Proposal

- **Component 1 - Vision and Approach to Workstreams (up to 3 pages)**
  - Describe the proposing team's vision for national coordination and how it aligns with program goals, purpose of the National Lead, and the specific workstreams
- **Component 2 - Work Plan, Milestones, and Performance Metrics (up to 8 pages)**
  - Present a clear work plan aligned with each of the workstreams described in component 1.
- **Component 3 - Organizational and Team Expertise, and Partnership Rationale (up to 7 pages)**
  - Describe specific information about the qualifications and capabilities of the proposing team to take on the role of the National Lead and should be organized into the parts described below.
    - Part 1 — Team Expertise and Partnership Rationale
    - Part 2 — Foundational Organizational Capabilities
- **Component 4 - Resource Mobilization and Leveraging Additional Support (Up to 2 pages)**
  - Explain strategies for attracting additional resources to complement NSF funding and enable full implementation of the National Coordination Lead's responsibilities across its set of workstreams throughout and beyond the award period.



## 7.2 Supplemental Material (Required)

- **Biosketches:** Provide a biosketch for each Senior Key Personnel (1 page per biosketch). For purposes of this solicitation, Senior Key Personnel (SKP) refers to individuals who are essential to the leadership, management, or technical execution of the proposed National Lead's scope of work.
- **Partnerships:** for the set of partners listed in Component 3 of the proposal narrative you must provide:
  - A partner commitment summary table.
  - Letters of collaboration/commitment from each partner (up to 0.5 pages for each).
- **Capability to Execute an Other Transaction (OT) Award:** Provide a letter from the Authorized Organizational Representative confirming the organization's ability to execute an OT.
- **Demonstrated Ability to Execute the Workstreams Described in Section 6:** Submit up to three example projects that demonstrate the organization's capabilities and will facilitate NSF's review, evaluation, and selection process described in this solutions offering. Limited to 1 single-sided page per example.



## 7.3 Budget and Budget Justification

- No page limit
- A budget and justification for the first 12 months of effort
- Budget categories to include:
  - Direct Labor
  - Direct labor overhead/fringe benefits
  - Materials, supplies, and equipment
  - Travel
  - Subcontracts
  - Consultant services
  - Other direct cost
  - Indirect costs
  - Fee
- Budgets are subject to availability of funds and will be negotiated prior to making the award.



## 7.5 Letters of Commitment

- Subcontractors:
  - Signed **one-page** Letters of Commitment from proposed subcontractors listed in the budget where the subcontractors outline what work they will perform as part of the effort and why they are uniquely qualified to lead that work. These letters should include a statement from an authorized subcontractor representative that they have read this solutions offering, understand the program's need to move quickly, and are prepared to provide the necessary resources and ramp up quickly in support of this need.
- Please note:
  - Each **partner** is to provide a Letter of Collaboration/Commitment (up to 0.5 pages for each).



## Eligibility to Submit

- Any responsible source organization (excluding foreign entities) may submit a proposal for consideration.
- All proposing organizations must have an active registration in the Federal Government's System for Award Management (SAM) prior to submitting a proposal ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov)).
- An eligible organization can submit a maximum of **one proposal as a lead**.



## **Lead organization for the National Coordination Lead will be ineligible for other AI Ready Competitions**

To avoid conflicts of interest, an organization serving as the **lead** for the National Coordination Lead will be **prohibited**, for the duration of the award from:

- Serving as a lead or partner on any State/Territory Coordination Hub awards or future Coordination Hub proposal submissions.
- Participating in an AI-Ready Catalyst Award Competition.



## **Submitting to both National Lead & State/Territory Coordination Hub**

- Teams may **submit** a proposal for the National Coordination Lead and a State/Territory Coordination Hub.
- Note, however, that the selected lead organization for the National Coordination Lead will be a **distinct organization** from any of the State/Territory Hub leads and will not be able to participate in a Coordination Hub.
- An organization participating as a partner for the awarded National Coordination Lead may be ineligible to participate in a State/Territory Coordination Hub or AI-Ready Catalyst Award Competition.



## Submission Details

- Submission deadline: **July 21, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. EDT**
- Proposals must be submitted in complete form by an authorized organizational representative who is empowered to make certifications and representations and can commit the proposing organization to the conduct of the project.
- **Proposals must be submitted as a PDF and emailed to Benjamin Patterson (bpatters@nsf.gov).**
- The subject line of the email must include: "AI-Ready America National Lead Proposal"

# Proposal Review



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# OTASO Evaluation Guidelines

## **Major Criteria One: Organizational Experience, Strengths, and Capabilities:**

The extent to which the proposing organization demonstrates the core capabilities required of the National Lead, including:

- Ability to execute an OT award effectively;
- Operational agility to stand up and manage a semi-autonomous program unit;
- Comprehensive AI-readiness expertise across technical, policy, education, workforce, and applied contexts;
- National convening power and the ability to serve as a trusted, neutral coordinator;
- Ability to execute each of the required workstreams; and
- Strength, clarity, and appropriateness of the proposed team and partnership structure, including expertise, qualifications, and time commitments.



# OTASO Evaluation Guidelines

## **Major Criteria Two: Workstream Execution Approach:**

The extent to which the proposal presents a coherent, feasible, and well-integrated plan for executing all workstreams, including:

- Clarity of vision and approach in alignment with purpose and goals of the TechAccess: AI-Ready America program;
- Clear strategies, milestones, and performance metrics;
- Realistic, phased implementation plans; and
- Evidence that the team understands the scope, complexity, and interdependencies of the workstreams.





# OTASO Evaluation Guidelines

## **Major Criteria 3: Budget Realism and Alignment:**

The extent to which the proposed budget, additional resources, and justification:

- Reflect a realistic allocation of resources to accomplish the proposed work;
- Align with the proposed milestones, staffing plan, and scope of activities;
- Demonstrate understanding of the demands of standing up and operating the National Lead organization; and
- Outline credible strategies for mobilizing additional resources to expand impact beyond NSF funding.

# Q&A

Questions will be accepted through **June 15, 2026**

Submit to [ai-ready@nsf.gov](mailto:ai-ready@nsf.gov) with the subject line: "AI-Ready America National Lead Questions".

Responses will be posted on the initiative page – anticipated June 23, 2026



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# **AI-READY AMERICA**

**Webinar for AI-Ready America**  
**National Coordination Lead:**  
**NSF-OTASO-FY26-AI-ReadyAmerica**

**June 11, 2026**