



MN STEM Ecosystem

FY26-27 Subgrant Initiatives: Timeline and Overview

STEM Subgrants (18-month duration January 12, 2026 through June 30, 2027)

Subgrant Categories (aligned with Legislation):

- STEM Career Introduction & Exploration: Support hands-on and experiential career awareness initiatives for youth.
- STEM Internship Program: Fund paid internships for high school and two-year college students in businesses within STEM-based in-demand and emerging technology career fields.
- Robotics, Drones, VR and Emerging Technology Skilled Learning Programs: Support the creation or expansion of robotics teams and participation in competitions; creation or expansion of drone programs (intra-curricular and out of school time); the development and expansion of VR learning programs and other emerging technology learning programs aligned with in-demand career skills.
- AI Focused Computer Science Educator Pedagogy/Professional Development: Provide high-quality professional development for educators related to AI use and classroom integration.
- Educator Industry Externships: Short-term, paid placements for educators in business within STEM-based in-demand and emerging technology career fields. Program must include component to align curriculum with industry standards; *a portion of this must be focused on and support Semiconductor (CHIPS) externships aligned with Semiconductor curriculum.*



Important Process and Review Dates at a Glance

- **August 11:** Subgrant LOI portal opens
- **August 27:** STEM Convening
- **September 12:** LOI submission deadline
- **September 12-October 15:** LOI Review
- **October 17:** Invitations Issued to Apply
- **October 20:** Grant Portal Open for Full Application
- **November 3 & 7:** Informational Webinars for Applicants
- **November 24:** Grant Portal Closes at 5pm
- **November 26-December 15:** Application review by highly qualified, cross-sector review committee comprised of industry, education and nonprofit professionals.
- **December 19-22:** Recommendation of Partnership Grant Recipients (subgrantees).
- **January 12:** STEM Partnership Grant Implementation begins (18-month term through June 30, 2027).

The Minnesota STEM Ecosystem is excited to announce the availability of funding to support innovative STEM education initiatives across the state. As part of the investment from the Minnesota Legislature, the STEM Ecosystem will be awarding grants to nonprofit organizations that support youth STEM career exploration and workforce development through STEM internships, AI Pedagogy, the creation/expansion of robotics teams, drone programs (intra-curricular and out of school time), development/expansion of VR learning programs and other emerging technology learning programs, the development of educator externships in emerging technology and in-demand career pathways.

Organizations interested in applying are invited to submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) through the form found on stemmn.org. LOI submissions will be reviewed by a cross-sector committee of the Minnesota STEM Advisory Council to ensure alignment with program goals and funding criteria. Selected organizations will be invited to submit a full application.

General Grantee Requirements

- Be a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and/or identify as a Local Education Agency (LEA) and be in good standing with the IRS and Minnesota Secretary of State.
- Demonstrate experience in delivering STEM-related programming aligned with workforce development, youth engagement, and/or educator support.
- Reside in Minnesota and serve communities within Minnesota, with priority given to proposals that support rural and under resourced populations in STEM.
- Attend quarterly MN STEM Community of Practice meetings.
- Submit interim, quarterly progress reports, including participation data;
- Submit monthly financial reporting for reimbursement [this may include providing financial proofs including capacity/staffing time reports if part of the grant].
- Include as part of the full grant application:
 - 501c3 Letter of Determination;
 - Organizational Bylaws and financial policies and procedures;
 - Liability insurance certificate and/or description of state or self-insured status (if hosting programming and/or events);
 - Code of Conduct for both students and adults (if hosting programming and/or events);
 - And Conflict of Interest Policy.

Timeline

- Submit a Letter of Interest (LOI) through the form at stemmn.org that clearly outlines alignment with one of the five funded categories. LOIs will be accepted August 11-September 12, 2025. Invitations to apply for funding will follow.
- If invited to apply, submit a complete grant application including goals, impact measures, budget, and timeline.
- It is anticipated grant award announcements will be December 2025; **with programs and projects beginning January 2026 and concluding no later than June 30, 2027; final reporting due prior to receipt of the final grant reimbursement or payment.**

Letter of Interest Information by Program/Project Area

1. STEM Career Introduction & Exploration —

Purpose: Support hands-on, experiential career awareness opportunities for youth, especially in underserved communities.

LOI Should Include:

- Organizational description and alignment with STEM learning and workforce development.
 - Description of the proposed activity(s).
 - Target student population: age, location(s) and other relevant information.
 - Funding request and the total dollar amount necessary for the program/project, and whether matching funds are anticipated and/or any partner organizations collaborating on the program or project.
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2. STEM Internship Program —

Purpose: Fund paid internships for high school and community/technical college students in STEM-based in-demand and emerging technology career fields.

LOI Should Include:

- Organizational description and alignment with STEM learning and workforce development.
 - Number of internships proposed and general financial structure (stipends, payroll, etc.).
 - Internship focus area and industry partners/employers already engaged and/or committed.
 - Target student population: age, location(s) and other relevant information.
 - Funding request and the total dollar amount necessary for the program/project, and whether matching funds are anticipated and/or any partner organizations collaborating on the program or project.
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3. Robotics, Drones, VR and Emerging Technology Skilled Learning Programs —

Purpose: Support the creation or expansion of robotics teams and participation in competitions; creation or expansion of drone programs; the development and expansion of VR learning programs and other emerging technology learning programs aligned with in-demand career skills.

LOI Should Include:

- Organizational description and alignment with STEM learning and workforce development.
 - Robotics Only- your relationship to robotics (i.e. Are you a primary provider recognized by a national organization?) and platform used (e.g., FLL, FTC, FRC, VEX). If primary provider, number of teams currently supported.
 - Description of the proposed activity(s).
 - Target student population: age, location(s) and other relevant information.
 - Brief explanation of use of funds: equipment, registration fees, mentor stipends.
 - Funding request and the total dollar amount necessary for the program/project, and whether matching funds are anticipated and/or any partner organizations collaborating on the program or project.
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4. AI Focused Computer Science Educator Pedagogy/Professional Development —

Purpose: Provide high-quality professional development for educators related to AI use and classroom integration.

LOI Should Include:

- Organizational description and alignment with STEM learning and workforce development.
 - Type and duration of professional development offered (workshops, certifications, etc.)
 - Target audience (grade bands, districts, underserved/rural schools)
 - Delivery model(s) (virtual, in-person, hybrid)
 - Anticipated number of educators served and expected classroom impact.
 - Credentials of trainers or PD providers.
 - Funding request and the total dollar amount necessary for the program/project, and whether matching funds are anticipated and/or any partner organizations collaborating on the program or project.
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5. Educator Industry Externships —

Purpose: Offer short-term, paid placements for educators in businesses within STEM-based in-demand and emerging technology career fields. Program must include component to align curriculum with industry standards.

LOI Should Include:

- Number of externships to be supported and timeline.
 - Partner industries and types of roles educators will be placed in.
 - Educator recruitment and support plan.
 - Estimated budget per externship (stipends, travel, materials)
 - Funding request and the total dollar amount necessary for the program/project, and whether matching funds are anticipated and/or any partner organizations collaborating on the program or project.
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Directions for completing the LOI Submission Form

If you are interested in multiple areas, please submit only once. If you are unsure what area your request should be categorized as, please select the area your program or project is most closely aligned and complete both of the corresponding sections of the LOI submission form:

- **All applicants must complete section 1.**
- If you are applying for funding to support STEM Career Introduction & Exploration as the category most aligned with your request- you may submit the form after completion of section 1.
- If you are applying for funding to support a **STEM Internship Program**, in addition to section 1 please **complete section 2 prior to submission.**
- If you are applying for funding to support **Robotics, Drones, VR and Emerging Technology Skilled Learning Programs**, in addition to section 1 please **complete section 3 prior to submission.**
- If you are applying for funding to support **AI Focused Computer Science Educator Pedagogy/Professional Development**, in addition to section 1 please **complete section 4 prior to submission.**
- If you are applying for funding to support **Educator Externships**, in addition to section 1 please **complete section 5 prior to submission.**

Partnership Grant Opportunity

As part of the investment from the Minnesota Legislature, the STEM Ecosystem will be awarding grants to nonprofit organizations supporting youth STEM career exploration and workforce development through STEM internships, AI Pedagogy, the creation/expansion of robotics teams, drone programs (intra-curricular and out of school time), development/expansion of VR learning programs and other emerging technology learning programs, the development of educator externships in emerging technology and in-demand career pathways.

The initial Letter of Interest (LOI) portal was open from August 11 to September 12, 2025, and received an overwhelming response—more than 120 submissions from across Minnesota. We are pleased to announce the organizations selected to complete the (full) partnership grant application. They are:

30,000 Feet (30K)	Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence
3D Robotics, Duluth	Minnesota State HealthForce Center of Excellence
ACES (Athletes Committed to Educating Students)	Minnesota State IT Center of Excellence
Arrowhead Robotics Coalition	Minnesota State University, Mankato
Byron Robotics STEAM Association	Minnesota STEM Partnership
Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC)	Northeast Range School ISD 2142
Century College	Owatonna Robotics Booster Club
Code Savvy	Project Sweetie Pie
Columbia Heights Public Schools	Raspberry Pi Foundation
Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)	Relentless Academy
EMERGE Community Development	Resource Training & Solutions Service Cooperative
FIRST in Upper Midwest, Inc.	Saint Paul Public Schools
GMCC (founded as Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches)	Science from Scientists
High Tech Kids	Science Museum of Minnesota
Hoover Elementary for Biomedical, Health Science and Engineering	SciMathMN
Ignite Afterschool	Smart North
Lakes Country Service Cooperative	Sourcewell Service Cooperative
Martin County KnowHow	South Central Service Cooperative
Minnesota Diversified Industries	Southeast Service Cooperative
Minnesota FFA	STARBASE Minnesota, Duluth
Minnesota State Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence	STEM Forward
Minnesota State Energy Center of Excellence	Stewartville Public Schools
	The Neighborhood Hub
	The Works Museum
	Twin Cities PBS (TPT)
	YWCA of Minneapolis

Final grant recipients will be publicly announced by January 2026.

Awarded grants will fund projects operating from January 2026 through June 2027.

MN STEM Ecosystem Partnership Grant Application Questions, Directions and Guidance.

The grant application includes seven required sections:

General Information (Section not part of scoring, but included as Pass/Fail)

Organizational Overview (10 points)

Program or Project Overview

Program or Project Design & Implementation

Evaluation & Reporting

Community & Collaboration

Budget, Workplan & Budget Narrative

Section 2: Organizational Overview

Mission and Vision. Briefly describe your organization's mission and vision, particularly as it relates to youth development, STEM learning, and workforce readiness.

Organizational Capacity & Experience. Describe your experience delivering STEM programming, workforce-aligned STEM education, educator pedagogy or related services. Highlight partnerships with schools, industries, or community organizations.

Section 3: Program or Project Overview

Summary of Proposed Program or Project. Provide a high-level summary of your proposed program/project, including the primary goals, key milestones, events, measurable objectives and partner organizations.

Explain how your project aligns with one or more of the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem's priority areas: STEM Career Exploration, STEM Internships, Robotics, Drones, VR and STEM Skilled Learning Programs, AI/CS Educator Pedagogy and Professional Development, and/or Educator Industry Externships.

Innovation. Describe the innovative aspects of your program, project, or approach. What makes your work unique, forward-thinking, or responsive to emerging needs in STEM education or workforce development? Explain how your approach differs from existing practices and how it has the potential to create meaningful change.

Population Served. Please specify who your project or program serves: youth, educators, etc. If youth, describe the youth population you intend to serve, including grade levels or ages, number of participants, and any focus on under resourced groups. Highlight how your project supports access to opportunities in STEM learning.

Section 4: Program or Project Design & Implementation

Staffing & Roles. Identify key personnel and their roles in program delivery. Include brief descriptions of qualifications.

Collaboration & Partnerships. Detail any partner organizations involved and their role(s) in implementation.

Sustainability & Long-Term Impact. Are there plans for long-term sustainability beyond the grant period? Please describe any long-term strategies or plans for continuity if applicable.

Execution. Are you (or anyone within your organization) aware of any extenuating circumstances, or any major pending organizational, functional, or financial changes that may affect your ability to implement the proposed initiative in the timing and manner in which it's described?

Risk Assessment. What financial and organizational assumptions are included in your budget and project plan? Please include 3-5 risks you have identified for project execution and success.

Section 5: Evaluation and Reporting

Program Evaluation Plan. Provide a plan for assessing the effectiveness of the program or project. Include a description of assessment tools and processes to be used. Identify metrics and data collection methods.

Reporting Commitment. Please confirm you understand the structure of the grant and your ability and willingness to comply with the conditions. **(Question not part of scoring, but included as Pass/Fail; applicants must indicate compliance).**

- Monthly-Reimbursement-Based Grant with financial proofs;
- Quarterly Progress Reports;
- Grants over \$40,000.00 will require grant audit and/or desk review.

Section 6: Community and Collaboration

Participation Commitment. Grantees are expected to contribute to the growth and cohesion of the Minnesota STEM Ecosystem by actively participating in the Community of Practice and shared learning opportunities. **(Question not part of scoring, but included as Pass/Fail; applicants must indicate compliance).**

- Attending the Annual Minnesota STEM Ecosystem Convening;
- Participating in the STEM Community of Practice (Quarterly);
- Sharing project outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices with fellow grantees;
- Contributing to the development of shared resources, toolkits, or frameworks.

Collective Contributions. How will your program or project advance the mission of the STEM Ecosystem? How will other organizations benefit from the contributions and/or shared resources created through your program or project? Provide specific examples.

Section 7: Budget and Attachments

Program-Project Budget should include (as applicable):

- Personnel/Capacity
- Equipment/Materials
- Participant Support (stipends, transportation, etc.)
- Other (specify)

Directions to grantee:

- The Workplan and Budget Narrative should reference the Program-Project Budget (items A-J).
- Key milestones and events should be identified in the Workplan and Budget Narrative.
- If matching funds or in-kind support were included in the Program-Project Budget; please use the Workplan and Budget Narrative to describe the additional resources and how and when they will be leveraged to support the program or project.

Required Attachments (unless otherwise noted):

- IRS 501(c)(3) Determination Letter, or LEA/Municipality Proof or Fiscal Sponsor Agreement (if applicable)
- Organizational Bylaws and Financial Policies/Procedures
- Liability Insurance Certificate
- Code of Conduct for Youth/Students (if applicable)
- Conflict of Interest Policy

Important Budget Guidance and Fund Restrictions:

- **Administrative Costs:** A maximum of 4% of the total grant award may be used for administrative expenses. *DEED policy states a maximum of 10% may be claimed, as the primary monitoring, accounting, and fiscal management entity requires 6% in administration fees; the remaining 4% is available to subgrantees.*
- **Capital Improvements/Construction:** Not eligible for funding under this program.
- **Food and Lodging:** Not eligible for funding under this program.
- **Out-of-State Travel:** Not eligible for funding under this program.
- **Prior Expenditures:** Expenditures incurred and/or paid prior to the contract being fully executed are not eligible for reimbursement.
- **Important Budget Guidelines**
- **Capacity/Wages:** Grant funds may not replace or supplant existing wages, salaries or other forms of employee compensation, currently paid for in-part or in-full by state, federal, or other grant funds.
- **Large Expenditure/Purchase Requirements:** Any single item expenditure over \$5,000 requires additional permissions and supportive documentation and cannot be purchased after June 30, 2026. This does not apply to services and/or items under \$5,000.00. *For*

example it is acceptable to include 20 drones for \$1,000.00 each for a total of \$20,000.00; it is NOT acceptable to purchase 1 drone for \$6,000.00

Looking Forward: Next Steps

- Application Deadline: The portal will close on November 24, 2025 at 4:00 PM CST. No late submissions will be accepted — please plan accordingly.
- Review: Applications will be considered and reviewed December 2025.
- Award Announcements January 2026; with a mandatory meeting for all subgrantees to review general contract language January 6. Note: funding will be encumbered with a project start date as early as January 12.

MN STEM Ecosystem Partnership Grant Q and A

How much will the grants be for?

The grants may range in value from \$5,000.00 - \$50,000.00. (Some grants may be for even larger amounts based on the program.) We anticipate the need to vary greatly based on program and impact. We encourage you to request the funding you need to successfully execute the program or project during the Letter of Interest Phase.

What is the length of time for the grants?

It is anticipated grant award announcements will be December 2025; with programs and projects beginning January 5, 2026 and concluding no later than June 30, 2027; final reporting due prior to receipt of the final grant reimbursement or payment.

If your program or project starts later or ends earlier that's okay, as long as it fits into that window.

How will the grant funds be administered?

These are reimbursement-based grants. You will submit an invoice monthly to the MN STEM Ecosystem (operating through the Southeast Cooperative- [SSC]) along with a detailed account of how the money was spent. As the primary grantee with oversight of the partnership grants, the MN STEM Ecosystem will review and compile the invoices and reporting and submit them to DEED; upon receipt of payment from DEED, partners will be paid.

Why have a Letter of Interest (LOI) prior to the application?

The LOI phase allows the review committee an opportunity to review program and project goals and potentially align requests with one-another to ensure we are focused on reach and scalability verses duplication of effort.

We know completing a full grant application can be cumbersome and very time consuming! If a program and project does not align with the legislation governing the funding and/or the goals and objectives of the STEM Ecosystem, we want to make sure we respect your capacity and resources.

What are the requirements of the grant if awarded?

While a more detailed description will be provided in the full application and agreement. Here are the basics:

- Attend quarterly MN STEM Community of Practice meetings, sharing information on your program with the other folks in attendance (at least two of these will be virtual).
- Submit interim, quarterly progress reports, including participation data.
- Submit monthly financial reporting for reimbursement [this may include providing financial proofs including capacity/staffing time reports if part of the grant].
- You will be provided a "branding" package; activities supported by the partnership grant should be identified as supported by or in partnership with the MN STEM Ecosystem
- Work with other grantees to ensure our collective success!