



Office of the Vice President for Research

Request for Proposals

Capacity-Building for Integrating AI into Research and Development

BACKGROUND AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) is pleased to announce a request for proposals (RFP) to support activities that significantly strengthen the capacity of our research community to conduct research that integrates AI into scholarship, research, and development.

Many federal science agencies have focused funding on research approaches that integrate AI with the methodology to enhance workflows or otherwise enhance the pace and potential for new discovery. Examples of these initiatives include the U.S. Department of Energy's [Genesis Mission](#), several national AI for Science (AI4S) platforms, and research priorities of the USDA and NSF, to name a few. These opportunities are many and include AI-driven simulation, experimentation, insight, automation, etc. that will accelerate innovation in research and discovery.

The OVPR's *Capacity-Building for Integrating AI into Research and Development* is a one-time funding opportunity that is meant to support a rapid broadening of understanding, development, and deployment of AI + research/scholarship that leads to robust knowledge transfer and sustainability across the institution.

Ideas and examples of activities that may be considered include but are not limited to:

Training & Skill Development. Activities that significantly expand AI expertise among faculty, staff, or research teams. Builds long-term human capital and expands the number of investigators capable of using AI in their work.

- Intensive training workshops (e.g., short courses on deep learning, generative AI, or AI for domain sciences).
- Faculty reskilling programs to transition researchers from traditional statistical methods to modern machine learning techniques.
- An AI learning cohort that meets regularly with invited experts and structured curriculum.

Data Readiness & Infrastructure Development. Preparing datasets and technical environments so future AI work can occur that would enable many future projects and improve research efficiency.

- Data curation and annotation efforts to make an existing dataset AI-ready.
- Development of standardized data pipelines or metadata frameworks for AI use.
- Creation of shared computing environments or reproducible workflows for AI experimentation.
- Development of AI-ready benchmark datasets for a campus research community.



Interdisciplinary Team Formation. Building collaborations necessary for competitive AI funding. Positions teams to pursue significant external grants.

- AI research network development across departments and disciplines (e.g., AI + agriculture, AI + energy, AI + health).
- Hosting multi-day retreats to develop major AI center proposals.
- Funding external expert facilitators to help build interdisciplinary teams.
- Establishing industry advisory groups around AI applications.

External Partnership Development. Connecting university researchers with outside AI expertise or application partners. Builds durable partnerships and improves competitiveness for applied AI funding.

- Travel and convening to establish collaborations with industry, national labs, or federal agencies.
- Workshops with community, government, or industry partners on AI applications.
- Bringing leading AI researchers to campus for short residencies to partner with campus researchers
- Structured industry–academic partnership development.

Shared Tools or Community Resources. Creating resources that benefit many researchers. Multiplies the effect of the investment across many labs.

- Development of shared AI software toolkits or starter code repositories for campus researchers.
- Creation of AI training datasets or model libraries for internal use.
- Development of AI user groups or communities of practice with regular programming.
- Creation of online AI learning resources or internal knowledge hubs.

Strategic Proposal Development. Preparing competitive large-scale proposals. Increases the likelihood of securing major external funding.

- Hiring a technical writer or grant strategist for a large center proposal that uses AI techniques as an important methodology.
- Hosting proposal development workshops.
- Concept development meetings with program officers or collaborators.
- Development of visualization tools or proposal concept documents for major AI initiatives.

FUNDING INFORMATION

Funding

The OVPR will consider requests at a wide range of scales, from \$2,000 to \$50,000, with most funded proposals likely to be below \$25,000.



Funding requests are for one-time funds only, therefore, requests for recurring needs will not be considered. Funds will be approved and released at program start and must be expended by the end of a 1-year maximum timeframe from receipt. Unspent funds remaining at the end of this timeframe will be returned to the OVPR.

Cost Share/Matching Funds

Additional non-OVPR match or leveraged support is not required and will not be evaluated as a part of this program.

ELIGIBILITY, ALLOWABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS

Who can Apply

Applications may only be submitted by: Tenure-track (TT) or contract and continuing (CC) faculty; research scientists/scholars; center or institute directors; associate deans and deans; and department heads. Adjunct faculty, post docs, and students may not apply to this opportunity.

Allowable Costs

Funds are intended to be used for activities that build durable capacity in AI research, scholarship, creative artistry, workforce development, or infrastructure at the university. Proposals should demonstrate how the activity will create lasting impact for the PI, department, or broader campus community. Allowable expenses associated with supported activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Workshops, bootcamps, short courses, or certifications for training and skill development
- Development of AI training materials, learning cohorts, or communities of practice
- Data curation, annotation, documentation, or preparation
- Development of shared datasets, data standards, or data pipelines
- Acquisition of software
- Creation of shared computational workflows or AI tools for campus researchers
- Convening workshops, retreats, or design charrettes to build new AI collaborations
- Activities to develop interdisciplinary teams around AI-enabled research themes
- External partnership development, including engagement with industry, community organizations, national laboratories, or other universities to establish AI collaborations
- Hosting visiting experts or organizing stakeholder workshops
- Activities that position teams to pursue large-scale external opportunities (e.g., proposal development meetings, technical editing support, concept development workshops)
- Creation of shared campus resources, tools, or programming that benefit a broader AI research community on campus
- Salary support for personnel (faculty, staff, graduate students) to directly build capacity to use AI in research and development



Unallowable Costs

The following costs will not be approved under this program:

- Activities that **primarily or only** support an individual research project rather than broader capability building. This is defined as direct support of research projects or pilot studies, including student or staff support for research activities and preliminary data collection or generation. Small proof-of-concept activities are allowable but may not exceed 33% of the request by effort or budget.
- Purchase of capital equipment or computing infrastructure outside of existing CSU HPCs
- Standard conference attendance unrelated to AI capacity development
- Instructional curriculum development or other instructional needs
- Bridge funding
- Support for external partners
- Support for undergraduate or graduate student training
- Requests for mandatory cost share for extramural proposal submissions
- Reseeding programs, where funds would be used to support smaller grants to other projects/investigators

Accountability

It is expected that allocation of these funds will ultimately lead to substantive increased capacity and impact. Therefore, selected award recipients will be required to demonstrate a clear plan for follow-on efforts to increase sustainable success, including funding. A brief progress report of current outcomes and projected follow-on path will be requested at the end of the 1-year funding period.

TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
April 1, 2026	RFP announcement released
April 22, 2026	*Deadline for receipt of proposals
On or about May 20, 2026	Awardees notified
June 1, 2026	Program start date
May 31, 2027	Program end date
On or about July 1, 2027	Final report

PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals should include the following content. Submit your proposal as a combination of fillable fields and two PDF documents, using **CSU's InfoReady Review system**, described below.



1. Cover Page Information (captured electronically as fillable fields in the submission system):

- **Applicant/Co-applicant Information.** Include name, affiliation (college, department/unit), and contact information for all senior/key personnel on the request.
- **Proposal Title.**
- **Total Budget Requested.**

2. Proposal Description (3 pages)

Formatting, all sections: 8.5" x 11" page size; single-spaced; 1" margins; typeface no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman, 11-point Calibri, or 10-point Arial. Upload format: PDF

The project description should include the following elements, in this order:

- **Need, Goals, and Activities.** Description of why OVPR funds are needed and how they will be used, including list of clear goals and activities. Be explicit about the objectives and activities, and their linkages to integrated AI capacity-building. Describe the activities and how they will significantly strengthen the university's human capital, infrastructure, partnerships, or organizational capacity to conduct impactful AI research or scholarship.
- **Team/Personnel Included.** Brief description of who will be leading and/or supporting the activities, with a description of expertise and key partnerships, as applicable.
- **Timeline.** High-level plan with timeline for activities and key milestones, including anticipated follow-on external funding targets and scholarly outputs.
- **Outcomes and Impact.** The expected outcomes and impacts of the project or activity, including a clear description of broader institutional benefits and capacity that will be built.
- **Sustainability.** A follow-on plan for sustainability (e.g., proposal submission for additional funding; collaborations that will be developed; etc.).

3. Budget Request Form (1 page)

A line-item budget on the provided template. Include a brief description of how funds will be utilized. Upload format: PDF (please PDF the spreadsheet prior to upload)

REVIEW CRITERIA

In general, the review committee will evaluate proposals based on the perceived need and return on investment. Thus, the following elements will be considered:

- **Alignment with Program Goals.** Strength of alignment with the RFP goals of advancing AI-related expertise, infrastructure, partnerships, or institutional capabilities. Clear explanation of how the activity strengthens AI capacity, rather than supporting a specific research project. Likelihood that outcomes will benefit multiple researchers, units, or students, rather than a single project or lab.



- **Feasibility and Plan for Implementation.** Clarity and practicality of the proposed activities. Appropriateness of the timeline, team, and budget for achieving the stated goals. Evidence that the team has the expertise or partnerships needed to execute the plan. Extent to which the budget is reasonable, well justified, and aligned with capacity-building activities.
- **Pathway to Future Impact or External Funding.** Potential and likelihood that the activity will position the PI or team for future research, partnerships, or educational programs to enable external grants or major initiatives. Potential to contribute to large-scale AI programs, centers, or collaborations.
- **Broader Institutional Benefit.** The extent to which the proposed activity will build durable and lasting AI capacity at the university. Extent to which outcomes can be shared with the broader campus community (e.g., shared resources, workshops, datasets, networks). Potential to expand interdisciplinary engagement with AI across departments or colleges.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submit proposals via CSU's InfoReady Review system **by 5:00 pm MT on April 22, 2026**. The system will not accept applications after this time.

Accessing the CSU InfoReady Review system to submit:

1. From the opportunities list found at <https://colostate.infoready4.com/>, locate "**CSU – Capacity-Building for Integrating AI into Research and Development**" and click on the title to open the opportunity page.
2. From the opportunity page, click "Apply".
3. Use your CSU NetID and password to log into InfoReady Review.
4. Complete and upload all required components. You can save your application as a draft prior to submission.
5. Be sure to submit your application. Applications left as "draft" will not be reviewed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions or need additional information about this opportunity, please contact:

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