



Request for Applications
NIIMBL eXperience for Educators
Program
(WF RFA 2026.02)

RFA Release: September 8, 2026

Applications Due: October 15, 2026 (5 PM EDT)



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1. Executive Summary

The National Institute for Innovation in Manufacturing Biopharmaceuticals (NIIMBL) is committed to accelerating innovation in biopharmaceutical manufacturing. Our mission includes supporting the development of industry standards, enabling faster and more efficient manufacturing capabilities, and cultivating a world-class workforce to strengthen the domestic industrial base.

As part of this mission, the NIIMBL eXperience for Educators is two-day immersive event designed to introduce K–12 educators and counselors to the biopharmaceutical manufacturing industry. All NIIMBL eXperience for Educator events must follow a 2-day format. Through hands-on activities, industry engagement, and networking, participants will gain valuable insights into career opportunities and educational pathways for their students.

Please send questions to projectcalls@niimbl.org

Funding opportunity: This Request for Applications (RFA) is a rapid response proposal call. This Request for Applications (RFA) invites proposals for the **NIIMBL eXperience for Educators** program. The goal is to equip K–12 educators with foundational knowledge of the biopharmaceutical industry so they can better inform and inspire their students.

NIIMBL will fund up to **eight proposals** from academic or non-profit member organizations to serve as lead institutions. These organizations will:

- Plan and host two-day immersive eXperience for Educator event(s), (with the option to host multiple sessions)
- Recruit and select participating educators
- Provide hands-on training, industry overviews, and tours (virtual or in-person)
- Facilitate networking and career pathway exploration
- Engage with industry, academic, and professional partners

Teams may propose more than one two-day session; additional sessions qualify for increased funding. NIIMBL encourages applicants to consider hosting multiple events to broaden educator reach.

While NIIMBL provides core requirements, applicants are encouraged to design creative and flexible program structures in collaboration with NIIMBL.

Additional required documents are listed below. All proposals must be submitted via the new proposal submission hub, [NIIMBL Gateway](#), by **Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 5 PM EDT**. Late or non-compliant submissions will not be considered.

Important: NIIMBL has launched a new proposal and reporting submission platform, NIIMBL Gateway. All applicants must create a new account and obtain new login credentials to access the system. To request a NIIMBL Gateway account, visit gateway.niimbl.org and click the Register card to submit an account request. Please request an account at least 48 hours before the application deadline.

RFA Release date	September 8, 2026
Proposals Due	October 15, 2026 (5 PM EDT)
Anticipated Award Decision and Notification to Teams	Early November, 2026
Project Start Date	February 1, 2027

Total Amount to be Awarded: As part of this program, NIIMBL anticipates:

- Up to 8 awards will be made
- Maximum budget:
 - \$50,000 for a single 2-day program
 - \$75,000 for two 2-day programs

Additional sessions beyond two may be proposed for an additional \$25,000 each and will be considered for incremental funding, aligned with total scope, cohort size, and cost justification

See Sections 3 and 5 for details on allowable costs and required cost-share.

2. Program Expectations

Each selected lead organization will design and implement a two-day eXperience program for educators during Summer 2027 (with the option to host multiple sessions). The program must align with the **Program Design Requirements** (Section 2a) and the **Implementation Timeline** (Section 2b) outlined below.

The proposal budget and justification must include all expenses incurred by the lead organization in meeting program requirements. Second-tier subcontracts are not permitted; however, contributions from partner organizations may be included as cost share.

a. Program Design Requirements

Proposed programs should meet the following requirements:

- **Program Elements:** All program elements must have a clear educational / professional development purpose. If multiple sessions are proposed, each session must include the following core elements:
 - **Industry Overview:** Introduce the biopharmaceutical field.
 - **Industry Engagement:** Include on-site participation from industry representatives to facilitate meaningful dialogue and networking.
 - **Hands-on Activity:** Conduct at least one hands-on educational session focused on biopharmaceutical manufacturing. Consider providing take-home resources for educators.
 - **Careers in Biopharma Overview:** Present a comprehensive overview of career paths in biopharma.
 - **Educational Pathways Overview:** Outline educational pathways to biopharma careers, from entry-level certifications to advanced degrees. Include guidance on accessing these pathways through local colleges, training programs, apprenticeships, and industry-recognized credentials.

- **Educator Recruitment & Selection:** Specify educator roles (e.g., teacher, counselor), grade levels, subjects taught, number of students per class or advisees, and total students reached annually. Describe the recruitment, application, and selection process. Recruitment and selection may be conducted for a single cohort or multiple cohorts, depending on the number of sessions proposed.
- **Cohort Size.** The size of the educator cohort should be determined based on the available program budget, with consideration given to maintaining a high-quality eXperience for all participants.
- **Educator Costs.** The program will be free for participating educators. All logistics expenses (housing, travel, food, transportation, materials) will be arranged for and paid by the lead organization. Lead organizations will arrange and coordinate transportation for all participating educators.
- **Transportation:** Must be arranged and coordinated by the lead organization.
- **Stipend:** Educators will receive a stipend for their participation.
- **Program Timing.** The program must be scheduled during the summer months (June–August) to ensure educator availability outside the academic year.

b. Program Implementation Timeline

Lead organizations must adhere to the following planning and implementation timeline. Each milestone should be incorporated into a formal workplan, including milestones and go/no-go decision points, to be finalized during the project kick-off meeting. If multiple sessions are proposed, the workplan should include distinct milestones for each session's development, outreach, logistics, and evaluation.

- **Orientation, Workplan Development, & Best Practice Sharing (February 2027).** If selected for funding, lead organizations will meet with NIIMBL to kick off the project. During this meeting, the lead organization will present an overview of the proposed program, and NIIMBL will share program requirements, best practices, and outreach materials. Together, they will establish key milestones, timelines, meeting cadence, and finalize a formal workplan. Failure to complete the workplan by the target date may result in unilateral project termination by NIIMBL.
- **Educator Outreach and Recruitment (February - March 2027).** The lead organization will conduct extensive outreach and form relationships and partnerships with local schools to solicit educator applications in its region. NIIMBL will provide some guidelines and assets for marketing. The lead organization will create and manage the application process.
- **Educator Application Review and Selection (April - May 2027).** The lead organization will coordinate the application review process, evaluate submissions using standardized rubric, and select the final cohort. Applicants will be notified of their status, and NIIMBL will be informed of the selected cohort along with relevant metrics.
- **Program Development February– June 2027).** The lead organization will develop its eXperience for Educators program in collaboration with industry hosts, professional associations, and other partners. NIIMBL will offer guidance, share best practices, and help connect with large industry member hosts when possible.
- **Program Preparation & Logistics (February - May 2027).** Following cohort selection, the lead organization will manage all program logistics, including communication, session coordination, travel, meals, housing (if needed), staffing, and stipend distribution. NIIMBL will offer guidance and best practices as needed.
- **Program Evaluation (June - August 2027).** Upon completion of the NIIMBL eXperience for Educators program, the lead organization will evaluate program success by administering a survey to all participants. Lead organizations will also be required to complete an evaluation survey.



3. Eligibility Information

Eligibility. Applications will be accepted only from NIIMBL member academic or non-profit organizations in good standing. Applicants should identify any anticipated partners (e.g., professional association, host company), though not all partners need to be confirmed at submission. While partner organizations are not required to be NIIMBL members, membership will be viewed favorably if they are hosting or delivering a key program element.

Cost Share. Cost share is encouraged at a 1:1 match. Higher cost share ratios will be reviewed favorably. The documentation of cash or in-kind cost share commitment should be included in the budget that is submitted as part of the application. Cost sharing must be consistent with applicants' NIIMBL Membership Agreements.

4. Application Instructions

All proposals must be submitted via the new submission hub, [NIIMBL Gateway](#), by **Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 5 PM EDT**. Late or non-compliant submissions will not be considered. Please see the complete list of required application elements listed below in this announcement (**Section 5**).

The Proposal Phase concludes with a decision to fund or not fund the proposal by NIIMBL. Applicants will be notified of the funding decision. Organizations will not receive feedback on their application from NIIMBL.

Proposers must mark their application submission as "NIIMBL Confidential," in accordance with the NIIMBL Bylaws.

5. Application Elements

The full proposal must address and include the following:

- **Program Description Narrative** (max 3 pages) describing program goals and desired outcomes, proposed partnerships, recruitment plan and cohort selection process, tentative program design, available support and infrastructure for logistics, and description of how the proposed program aligns with organizational goals. (See descriptions below)
- **Required Proposal Documents** (not counted towards the page count)
 - Project Budget and Total Project Cost Justification
 - Biosketch for regional lead organization program principal investigator/lead
 - Project Partner Organization Information Form
 - Letters of support from identified partners

NOTE: All documents should be uploaded in file format requested in submission hub.

a. Program Description Narrative

The Application narrative *must not exceed three pages*. Your program narrative must describe your proposed program in alignment with the program expectations outlined in Section 2. Specifically, include the following:

- **Program Goals & Outcomes:** Define the intended impact and measurable outcomes that demonstrate program success. Examples include: increasing awareness of career pathways for middle and high school students; exposing educators to at least three new careers in biopharma and enabling them to describe what those roles entail; or demonstrating awareness of the degrees, certifications, or training needed for specific roles.

- **Program Audience:** Specify educator roles (e.g., teacher, counselor), grade levels, subjects taught, number of students per class or advisees, and total students reached annually.
- **Recruitment & Selection:** Outline the outreach strategy, application process, and criteria for cohort selection. NIIMBL encourages partnerships with local K–12 schools to engage community educators.
- **Program Design:** Describe the proposed structure (aligned with section 2), including a biopharma industry overview, engagement with industry professionals, a hands-on activity, and career/education pathway sessions. Include whether you plan to host one or multiple sessions. If multiple sessions are proposed, explain how each session will be staffed, resourced, coordinated, and differentiated (if applicable). All components should support educational or professional development goals.
- **Logistics Infrastructure:** Summarize available resources and support for managing logistics such as travel (including mileage reimbursement, train/bus fare), meals, housing, local transportation, and stipend distribution.
- **Industry Partnerships:** Identify confirmed or potential partners and describe planned engagement activities (e.g., networking, hands-on sessions, career overviews). Partner identification is encouraged but not required at submission.

b. Required Proposal Documents

Budget / Budget Justification. Provide a [Project Budget Template](#) (.xlsx) and a [Total Project Cost Justification](#) (.docx) for the lead organization, and any partner organization committing cost share, cash or in-kind to the proposed project.

- Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to, staff time for program development and implementation, participant support costs, (per 2 CFR 200.75) (including but not limited to transportation costs, meals, housing, and stipends), and other allowable program expenses. All activities should have a clear educational / professional development purpose. Lead organizations are encouraged to include travel for one representative, to attend the NIIMBL U.S. Biopharma Workforce Partnership Conference.,.
- All costs and cost share must be in line with federal cost accounting standards, 2 CFR 200.
- The Project Cost Justification (Budget Narrative) is a companion to the budget (spreadsheet) and should include a description of each line item (expense and cost share) documented in the budget and show the calculations used to derive the costs. Each item must correspond to specific activities described in the proposal's body. ***Make sure the cumulative totals for each category correlate with the budget tables.***

Budgets must clearly indicate cost associated with each proposed 2-day session. Applicants proposing multiple sessions must provide separate cost calculations or clearly labeled subtotals within the budget narrative.

The use of NIIMBL templates is required. They are available for download here - [Project Budget template](#) and [Total Project Cost Justification template](#). Please also see the [NIIMBL Guide to Cost Share](#)

Biosketches. Provide a 2-page biosketch for the lead organization's project lead, including training, background, employment history, and relevant experience. No specific format is required.

Project Partner Organization Information Form. Must be completed and signed by the lead organization's authorized official, confirming awareness of the application. Templates are available for [download online](#).



Letters of Support. Letters from identified partners should confirm willingness to participate and include a primary contact (name, email, phone). No specific format is required.

6. Application Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Program Goals & Outcomes
- Educator Audience
- Recruitment and Selection Criteria
- Program Design
- Logistics Infrastructure
- Budget - requested funding and cost share (a high cost-share ratio will be viewed favorably)

7. Award / Post-Award Process

If project is selected for award:

- **Award Meetings.** NIIMBL will convene a meeting with the lead organization to review the contracting process, required documentation, and key deadlines. To support timely program development, contract processing will begin immediately following award notification, with the goal of full execution by February 2027.
- **30-Days Post-Program Reporting.** Funded teams will be required to submit a final report within 30 days from completion of the program.
- **6-month Post-Program Reporting (December 2027).** Lead organizations will submit a brief report with quantitative and qualitative feedback from educators on classroom impact.
- **1-year Post-Program Reporting (July 2028).** Lead organizations will provide an updated report with additional feedback and impact data from participating educators.