

STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition

Funded by Battelle

Request for Proposals and Guidelines for Submission

Proposals Due October 12, 2025

Introduction

Battelle

Innovation is about bringing new ideas, processes, and methods to life—resulting in real-world impact. Battelle was founded on this principle, inspired by Gordon Battelle's vision of a research institution that rapidly turns scientific discoveries into practical solutions. Since our founding in 1929, we have advanced science and technology to tackle society's toughest challenges.

Today, Battelle is a mission-driven nonprofit company with more than 90 years of experience in research and development. From our headquarters in Columbus, Ohio, and technology centers around the globe, we apply science and engineering to challenges in health, environment, infrastructure, and national security. Equally vital is our commitment to expanding access to high-quality STEM education. Through philanthropy, partnerships, and engagement with educators, we reach more than one million students annually.

Building on decades of experience in STEM programming, Battelle partners with states to design and scale effective workforce and education initiatives. We have launched schools, supported networks, and created platforms for educators to implement best-in-class STEM practices.

STEMx

As the founding organization of STEMx, Battelle extends this commitment nationwide. Established in 2012, STEMx is a national network of state STEM organizations, educators, nonprofits, and advocates dedicated to broadening access to high-quality STEM education.

STEMx operates as a collaborative platform where members share best practices, innovative models, and resources that elevate STEM teaching and learning. Through convenings, professional development, and policy advocacy, members work together to address local and national challenges, scale what works, and increase awareness of STEM best practices.

With Battelle's leadership and support, STEMx is a dynamic and responsive network driving systemic change. By connecting leaders across the country, the network strengthens the nation's STEM capacity and helps build a workforce ready for the future.

STEM Innovation Forum & STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition

Finalists will be selected to present their ideas at the annual [STEM Innovation Forum](#), a national convening hosted by STEMx and STEMconnector. This year's Forum will be held in Columbus, Ohio on November 17 and 18, 2025, bringing together roughly 200 leaders from across the STEM education and workforce ecosystem. Through keynote addresses, breakout Learning Sessions, an Innovation Showcase, and networking receptions, the STEM Innovation Forum provides a platform for exposure, feedback, collaboration, and scaling of effective STEM solutions.

The STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition is a direct extension of the goals shared by Battelle and STEMx. By challenging innovators to design and pitch scalable solutions to real-world STEM education problems, this competition promotes creative thinking and innovation. It reflects Battelle's belief that empowering educators to lead change is essential to nurturing the next generation of STEM leaders. The competition also aligns with the STEMx network's mission to elevate promising practices and support systemic transformation in STEM education.

Program Objectives

The STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition is a competitive grant program **awarding two \$25,000 grants** to proposals that demonstrate the potential to transform K-12 STEM education. Battelle seeks to fund programs designed to accelerate innovative practices that:

- Strengthen STEM workforce readiness through career exploration, mentorship, work-based learning, or career pathway development.
- Expand access to high-quality STEM experiences for K–12 students.
- Introduce or scale innovative learning models that foster STEM identity, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving.

We are seeking proposals that demonstrate both vision and practicality—ideas that can be implemented, adapted, and scaled to raise students’ interests, engagement, and achievement in STEM across diverse settings.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals must be submitted by a single eligible organization, and each organization may submit only one application for consideration. All applicants must be a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the United States. Each proposal must demonstrate a partnership with at least one of the following: a higher education institution, an industry partner, or community organization. A letter of support from that partner is required.

To support long-term sustainability, the applying organization must provide a 20% in-kind match for the proposed project, clearly documented in the budget. Proposals should not exceed \$25,000, and the in-kind match should equal 20% of the proposal amount. **In addition, at least one representative from the applying organization must be registered for the 2025 STEM Innovation Forum at the time of application submission.**

Battelle is investing \$50,000 through the STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition, awarding two one-time grants of \$25,000 to support bold, high-impact proposals that support K-12 career readiness, expanded STEM access and innovative learning models that build STEM identity and skills. Proposals will be reviewed through a process established and overseen by Battelle. During this process, Battelle may request additional information, suggest modifications, or recommend collaborations between proposals to maximize impact.

The grantee will be required to complete online student impact reports to Battelle and provide regular updates on program progress to ensure accountability and shared learning.

Preparation of Proposal

Proposal Details

Battelle requests clear, concise, complete, carefully written proposals that meet all guidelines. The proposal narrative should contain the following items:

- A. Program Summary.** Provide the title of the proposed program, start and end dates, and a summarized statement of the proposed program. It should not be an abstract of the proposal but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. (500-character limit)

- B. Program Description:** Provide a clear description of how the program will be implemented and its innovative approach to advancing K–12 career readiness, expanding STEM access, and fostering STEM identity and skills through new learning models. (4,000-character limit)
- C. Innovation and Access:** Describe how the program or project is innovative. Explain how it will expand access to STEM programs or resources for K-12 students and highlight why the program will be engaging and valuable for participants. (2,500-character limit)
- D. Timeline and Location:** Provide a detailed description of the program’s timeline from development to implementation. Descriptions must include the program’s schedule, frequency, and location. Project must be completed by 9/1/2026. (4,000-character limit)
- E. Measurable Outcomes:** Describe the programmatic outcomes that will determine whether the program is successful. Identify at least two quantitative goals and how each goal will be evaluated to measure success. (2,500-character limit)
- F. Strength and Clarity of Partnership:** Demonstrate a well-defined collaboration with at least one higher education, industry, or community partner. Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner and include a signed letter of commitment to document their support. (2,500-character limit)
- G. Student Impact:** Proposals must identify the student group(s) your program will serve and include an estimated number of students expected to participate. Describe your organization’s prior experience working with this group, highlighting relevant successes or lessons learned. Finally, provide a recruitment plan that outlines how you will engage students and maximize program participation and impact. (4,000-character limit)
- H. Total Funding Amount Requested.** Provide the total funding amount requested. Indirect costs may not exceed 10% of the total budget.
- I. Budget Narrative:** Provide a detailed budget narrative that explains how requested funds will be allocated to support your proposed initiative. Clearly describe the in-kind match provided by the submitting organization, describe the rationale behind each major expense category, how costs align with project goals, and any assumptions used in your calculations. If applicable, include any participation fees, specify the amount, and explain how it will be used. This narrative should help reviewers understand the financial structure and feasibility of your proposal. (2,500-character limit)

Attachments

- A. Budget Template:** Upload a complete budget template that clearly outlines all direct and indirect costs of the program. Template is available here: <http://tiny.cc/stemxbudget>
- B. IRS Determination Letter:** Applicants must provide a copy of their organization’s most recent IRS determination letter confirming tax-exempt status.
- C. Additional Attachments:** Applicants may include additional information to enhance their proposal. Information may include sample curriculum or educational materials, examples of previous programming and/or data. The information should not exceed three (3) pages in a single PDF and must be referenced within the proposal narrative. The budget template attachment is not to be included in this section.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will score the applications and base scoring decisions and funding recommendations on the evaluation criteria in the table below. Proposals must address all evaluation criteria.

- A. **Program Summary:** Provide the title of the proposed program, start and end dates, and a summarized statement of the proposed program. It should not be an abstract of the proposal but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded.
- B. **Program Description:** The proposal provides a clear, complete description of how the program will be implemented, including its innovative approach to advancing K–12 career readiness, expanding STEM access, and/or fostering STEM identity and skills through new learning models.
- C. **Innovation and Access:** The proposal demonstrates a unique and engaging approach that expands access to STEM opportunities for K–12 students and clearly articulates the program's value and appeal to participants.
- D. **Timeline and Location:** The proposal provides a detailed and feasible timeline from development to implementation, including program schedule, frequency, and location. The project must be completed by September 1, 2026.
- E. **Measurable Outcomes:** The proposal identifies at least two quantifiable goals and describes practical evaluation methods that align with program objectives.
- F. **Strength and Clarity of Partnership:** The proposal demonstrates strong collaboration with at least one higher education, industry, or community partner, clearly defining roles and responsibilities and including signed letters of commitment.
- G. **Student Impact:** The proposal clearly describes the intended program participants, details the organization's relevant experience with this group, and outlines a comprehensive recruitment strategy to maximize participation.
- H. **Funding Amount Requested:** The proposal includes a clear request for funding equal to \$25,000 or less, with indirect costs not to exceed 10%.
- I. **Budget Narrative:** The proposal provides a clear, well-organized funding budget narrative, detailing in-kind match, major expenses and alignment with the project goals.

Proposal Submission Requirements and Deadlines

Date	Activity
September 19, 2025	Open Request for Proposals Submit proposal and documents here: https://form.typeform.com/to/HtjQ9wjp
October 2, 2025 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. ET	Technical Assistance Webinar. Meeting link to join: STEMxcelerator Office Hours Microsoft Teams
October 12, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.	Proposals Due

Date	Activity
November 7, 2025	Finalists will be notified
November 17, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.	Finalist pitch rehearsal at COSI, the STEM Innovation Forum venue in Columbus, Ohio
November 18, 2025	Finalists will participate in a live pitch event at the STEM Innovation Forum in Columbus, Ohio
November 18, 2025	Winner Announced

Application Process

Final proposals must be submitted online. An Application Preview Document is available on pages 8-9 to assist with preparation. Late or incomplete proposals will not be accepted.

Submit your final proposal online here: <https://form.typeform.com/to/HtjQ9wjp>

Organization Eligibility

The following criteria outline which organizations are eligible — and ineligible — to receive Battelle funding under this program.

Eligible Organizations	Ineligible Organizations
501(c)(3) organizations, including public foundations (unless otherwise excluded)	Private foundations
170(c) government institutions eligible to receive tax-deductible donations (e.g., accredited public schools, certain public agencies)	501(c)(7) social clubs organized for pleasure, recreation, or other nonprofitable purposes
	Religious organizations as defined by IRC Section 170(b)(1)(A)(i) or those classified under NTEE Code group X
	Political organizations or lobbying activities
	Schools that are not accredited institutions

Notice of Award Updates

Battelle will communicate directly with the designated Grant Manager Contact listed in the application. All notifications, including updates, questions, and status changes, will be sent via email to this contact.

Reporting Requirements

The awarded grantee is expected to complete an annual Student Impact Report for the duration of the program. The reporting period and schedule are outlined in the table below.

Program	Report Opens	Report Due
October 1, 2025 – September 1, 2026	July 31, 2026	August 14, 2026

Contact Information

Please send all RFP-related questions to philanthropy@battelle.org

Application Preview Document

See the following page for application questions.

STEMxcelerator: Application Preview Document

Please complete the application in Typeform, located here: [STEMxcelerator Pitch Competition](#)

Use this as a guide to help prepare your responses. Once you begin the application in the Typeform application portal, you will not be able to save and return to finish later. It is recommended that you complete the questions in a Microsoft Word document and copy and paste your responses into the application portal.

1. Primary Contact Information

First Name, Last Name, Title, Organization, Email, Phone Number

2. Organization Information

Organization Name, EIN, Mailing Address, Website

3. Proposal Narrative

- A. **Program Summary** - Provide the title of the proposed program, start and end dates, and a summarized statement of the proposed program. It should not be an abstract of the proposal but rather a self-contained description of the activity that would result if the proposal were funded. (500-character limit)
- B. **Program Description** - Provide a clear description of how the program will be implemented and its innovative approach to advancing K–12 career readiness, expanding STEM access, and fostering STEM identity and skills through new learning models. (4,000-character limit)
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4. Required Attachments (upload)

- A. **Budget Template:** Upload a complete budget template that clearly outlines all direct and indirect costs of the program. The budget template can be found here:
<http://tiny.cc/stemxbudget>
- B. **IRS Determination Letter:** Applicants must provide a copy of their organization's most recent IRS determination letter confirming tax-exempt status.
- C. **Letter(s) of Commitment.** Clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of each partner and include a signed letter of commitment to document their support. (2,500-character limit)
- D. **Additional Attachments (optional):** Applicants may include additional information to enhance their proposal. Information may include sample curriculum or educational materials, examples of previous programming and/or data. The information should not exceed three (3) pages in a single PDF and must be referenced within the proposal narrative. The budget template attachment is not to be included in this section.

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It can be done