

IBM Opens Global RFP for AI-Driven Solutions Shaping the Future of Work and Education



NEW YORK, Feb. 4, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE:IBM) today announced a global request for proposals (RFP) for the next cohort of the [IBM Impact Accelerator](#) focused on AI for transformative education and workforce development. The program invites nonprofits or government organizations, including academic institutions, to collaborate with IBM on developing solutions that help people learn more effectively, navigate career transitions, and access the jobs needed to build economic resilience.

The gap between what people learn and what employers need is widening faster than institutions can adapt. As AI reshapes jobs and industries, workers are being forced to upskill at an accelerating pace. New research from the [IBM Institute For Business Value](#) shows that 67% of executives surveyed say job roles are becoming shorter-lived, and by 2030, 57% anticipate most current employee skills will be obsolete. At the same time, [Pearson](#) estimates that slow or unclear transitions between education and work cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$1.1 trillion each year.

While millions of people are turning to online courses and certifications to keep up with the labor market, many education and workforce institutions lack the data infrastructure, tools, and capacity to adapt at the same speed. Employers continue to face skills mismatches, learners struggle to understand which skills matter most, and public agencies frequently operate under resource constraints that make modernization challenging. This IBM Impact Accelerator initiative aims to address these challenges by supporting organizations working on how people learn, upskill, and find meaningful work amid rapid economic, AI-driven change.

"Education and workforce systems are under pressure to adapt faster than ever, but many lack the tools to do so," said Justina Nixon-Saintil, IBM Vice President and Chief Impact Officer. "Through this global RFP, IBM is supporting organizations that use AI to close the gap between learning and work in real time while strengthening the pathways that connect education to quality jobs."

The new cohort will support work that applies AI to systemic challenges in teaching, learning, and workforce preparation. Potential projects may include AI-enabled teaching and assessment tools, as well as personalized learning and career-guidance assistants that support learners at different stages. Areas of focus may span data platforms that connect learners to real opportunities and simulation or governance environments that help educators and policymakers test and refine responsible AI practices, including forecasting education needs.

Selected organizations will receive a two-year, pro bono technology and implementation grant, which will include access to IBM offerings such as [IBM watsonx](#), [Granite AI models](#), [IBM Cloud](#), [IBM Quantum](#), [Red Hat](#) open-source technologies, as well as support from IBM's ecosystem of researchers, designers, and consultants. The cohort will also benefit from the participation of strategic ally EY, which shares IBM's commitment to advancing AI-powered solutions for environmentally and economically stressed communities. Eligible applicants include nonprofits, government entities and government-owned enterprises, and nonprofit public or private colleges and universities. Applicants must be able to engage with IBM for a two-year period and conduct project work in English.

The RFP is now open. Proposals can be submitted through the [IBM Proposal Submission Portal](#) until March 25, 2026. Full eligibility criteria, FAQs, and application guidelines are available on the [IBM Impact Accelerator Education and Workforce RFP webpage](#). Questions may be directed to impact.accelerator@ibm.com.

Launched in 2022, the IBM Impact Accelerator is a social innovation program that offers grants of IBM resources, including AI technology, hybrid cloud and an ecosystem of experts, to enhance and scale nonprofit and government initiatives. In 2024, IBM [announced](#) a commitment to make up to \$45 million in cash and in-kind technology and services donations over five years to support populations facing environmental and economic threats around the world. Including the most recent [supply chain modernization cohort](#), the program has supported 25 organizations, and its projects have directly benefited approximately 2.5 million people across sustainable agriculture, clean energy, water management and resilient cities.

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