NSF Energy Storage Engine in Update New York
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
NSFengine@binghamton.edu
UpstateNYengine.org

Request for Proposals (RFP): Energy Storage Engine Scholars Initiative

Release Date: March 25, 2026
Proposal Due Date: April 27, 2026

Contact: Tim Thomas; tthomas@griffissinstitute.org; 315-404-3793

1. Introduction

The NSF Energy Storage Engine in Upstate New York (Engine) is entering its third year in Upstate New York and is launching a novel workforce development effort to focus on building a highly skilled, innovation-ready STEM workforce. The Engine is seeking proposals from research universities to serve as regional consortium leads for the Energy Storage Engine Scholars Initiative, a flagship program designed to develop energy storage scientists, engineers, and translational leaders.

Proposals, from prospective or existing consortia of educational institutions, should detail how their constituent members would collaborate in the formation of a consortium that will provide high-impact, co-curricular opportunities capable of instilling students with the needed skills.

Consortium leads will coordinate multi-institution partnerships, design and deliver scholar programming, and support the creation of a cohesive, vertically aligned talent pipeline from K–12 through postsecondary education. The Engine will also execute student internships or cooperative (co-op) student arrangements.

2. Initiative Goals

The Energy Storage Engine Scholars Initiative will:

1. Develop sector-ready STEM talent in energy storage technologies aligned with the Engine's Research Development and Translation (RD&T) focus areas which include battery safety, power engineering, sustainable manufacturing, and AI in energy storage.
2. Deliver applied, experiential learning integrated with academic curricula.
3. Provide paid internships and applied research experiences across partner labs, manufacturers, utilities, and research organizations, executed by the Griffiss Institute.
4. Create scalable pathways from K–12 through community college and university.
5. Foster innovation, leadership, and network engagement through mentorship, challenges, and professional networking.

3. Key Program Components & Consortium Responsibilities

NSF Energy Storage Engine in Update New York
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
NSFengine@binghamton.edu
UpstateNYengine.org

Each selected consortium will receive up to $1.35 million over three years to implement program activities. The Engine anticipates funding four consortia to collectively cover its service region and ensure broad pan-regional energy storage talent development opportunities.

Consortium leads will implement and facilitate the following six core components of the Energy Storage Engine Scholars Initiative:

- **Academic Alignment**
  - Recruit and select Scholars from applicants.
  - Ensure Scholars are enrolled in relevant STEM degree programs (engineering disciplines—including chemical, materials, electrical, mechanical, computer, and systems engineering—as well as chemistry and related fields).
  - Facilitate Scholars' completion of curated technical learning modules—covering battery chemistries, energy control, and intelligent manufacturing—delivered via an Engine-maintained platform. These modules will provide targeted, industry-relevant expertise aligned with the Engine's RD&T strategies. Applicants may also propose relevant non-credit coursework that can be integrated into the network to enhance learning outcomes.
  - In partnership with community colleges, facilitate the design and delivery of technical learning modules and foundational coursework to prepare students for advanced study and workforce readiness in the energy storage sector; provide dual-credit opportunities and support transitions from high school.
  - In partnership with high school partners, facilitate the design and delivery of preparatory experiences and early exposure to energy storage concepts to build readiness for post-secondary engineering pathways and energy storage careers.
- **Experiential Learning & Capstones**
  - Facilitate hands-on, applied projects and capstone experiences that mirror real-world energy storage challenges.
  - Ensure projects allow Scholars to translate theory into practice and develop sector-specific problem-solving skills not typically available in standard coursework.
  - Support applied projects for community college students that connect foundational knowledge to energy storage skills and prepare them for university-level research experiences.
  - Deliver interactive workshops and small-scale design challenges for high school students to introduce energy storage concepts and foster practical problem-solving abilities.
- **Innovation Challenges**
  - Facilitate Scholars' participation in technical simulations and problem-solving exercises hosted by the Engine.

- Support Scholars in developing creativity, systems thinking, and applied skills through these challenges.

- **Applied RD&T & Paid Internships**
  - Facilitate Scholars' access to applied RD&T projects and paid internships offered by the Engine.
  - Ensure Scholars gain exposure to professional tools, processes, and priorities while contributing to real-world energy storage research and industry objectives.
- **Networking & Technical Communication**
  - Support Scholars' networking with industry, government, and academic leaders.
  - Facilitate technical communication opportunities, including engagement in the **annual Energy Storage Symposium**, where Scholars present projects, research, and innovation outcomes.
  - In partnership with community colleges, guide students in presenting projects to peers and industry mentors, developing communication and professional engagement skills.
  - In partnership with high schools, provide opportunities for students to showcase work through workshops, school events, or local competitions to cultivate early presentation and presentation skills.
- **Mentorship & Civic Leadership**
  - Facilitate peer and professional mentorship among Scholars.
  - Develop protocols and programming to advance a connected talent pipeline from **K–12 through community college and university STEM programs**.
  - Support Scholars' leadership development, civic engagement, and outreach activities to strengthen the broader energy storage workforce ecosystem.

4. Consortium Structure & Scope of Work

Each consortium will be anchored by a research university and include community colleges and local K–12 districts and/or Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES). The research university will serve as the lead and contracting entity, responsible for preparing and submitting the proposal and, if awarded, executing a contract with the Griffiss Institute on behalf of the Engine. The university will serve as the primary point of contact representing the consortium throughout the proposal process and, upon award, will subcontract with consortium members in accordance with the approved proposal.

Each consortium will receive up to $1.35M over three years to carry out the scope of work.

The Engine Workforce Team will manage cross-consortium efforts such as:

- Scholar application processing
- Internship placement

NSF Energy Storage Engine in Update New York
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
NSFengine@binghamton.edu
UpstateNYengine.org

- Annual symposium organization
- Innovation challenge execution
- Data collection and reporting

5. Proposal Layout and Requirements

A complete proposal package should consist of the following elements (not to exceed 10 pages):

- **Cover sheet:** The coversheet should have the title; all consortium institution names and associated PIs.
- **Project Executive Summary** (Not to Exceed 1 page)
- **Project Description:** To include a Plan of Action, Milestones, Student Metrics, Deliverables, or other Work Breakdown Structure
- **Assessment Plan**
- **Budget Summary**
- **Appendix** (not counting against the page limit)
    - **Full Budget and Budget Justification, per the guidance below**
    - **Biographical sketches:** Biographical sketches are requested for all the PIs.
    - **References Cited**
    - **Letters of Collaboration, per the guidance below**
    - **Representations and Certification**: This initiative is funded through the National Science Foundation and the State of New York. Performance is subject to applicable federal law and regulations and to the provisions of the New York State Master Contract for Grants. Proposers must include confirmation that they maintain active and current New York Vendor Responsibility certification, and preferably, an active SAM.gov profile with representations and certifications. If proposers are unable to provide this, include a statement that these actions will be complete prior to award.
    - **Conflicts of Interest**: Proposers must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest related to this procurement, including any financial or governance relationships with the Griffiss Institute, its officers, directors, or employees. Griffiss Institute reserves the right to require mitigation measures or to deem a proposal ineligible where conflicts of interest cannot be adequately mitigated.

a. **Requested Budget Details**
Include any assumptions on which the proposed costs are made. The proposal should be based on an advanced payment vehicle requiring reconciliation of allowable costs incurred to advance payments on a regular basis with a final accounting upon completion. Allowable costs must comply with the cost principles and requirements of the State of New York's cost principles, as well as any additional terms in the underlying award(s) under which this initiative is funded.

Any proposed task should have a corresponding budget line item with direct labor and other direct costs (ODCs), if any, identified separately.

For all personnel costs, please identify key personnel by name or role, the proposed level of effort (e.g., hours, percentage of effort, or FTE), and the applicable base salary or labor rate. Fringe benefits and indirect costs should be identified as separate budget line items and applied in accordance with the institution's approved rate agreements.
Justification of salary rates may include institutional salary scales, published rate schedules, historical rates charged to other sponsors, or other reasonable and auditable methodologies. If hourly accounting is not used, please clearly define the basis of effort (e.g., academic year, calendar year, fiscal year) and the time period over which salaries and percentages of effort are calculated.

For all proposed ODCs, include a description of the anticipated expense, along with relevant quotes and the time period in which they are expected to be incurred, a description of the expense, and justification for the need for the expense.

For indirect costs, please provide any indirect rate agreements on which those costs are based.

Travel should be estimated for the coalition, including but not limited to PI's, Co-PI's, key project personnel, and campus or regional staff, to travel to an in-region annual symposium.

b. Letters of Collaboration
Proposers may include in the appendix of their proposal package any letters of collaboration that formally document collaborative relationships mentioned in the Project Description and Budget Summary. These relationships may be between the consortium institutions themselves, or between the consortium and any external government, community, or industry partners. We respectfully request that proposers do not include more general letters of support or endorsement.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent to which they clearly and coherently address the required program elements through the proposal components described in Section 5. Reviewers will assess the quality, feasibility, and alignment of the proposed approach, partnerships, staffing, and budget in advancing energy storage–focused education and workforce pathways.

a. **Institutional Overview & Experience**
Demonstrated experience in STEM education and workforce development. Proposals should reflect a track record of designing, implementing, and scaling innovative, high-impact programming that connects curriculum to experiential learning and defined education-to-employment pathways. Successful efforts funded by the Engine during Year 2 should be

NSF Energy Storage Engine in Update New York
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
NSFengine@binghamton.edu
UpstateNYengine.org

incorporated and leveraged as a mechanism to scale proven programs. Proposals should also demonstrate experience leading or coordinating multi-institutional or regional consortia.

b. **Coalition Structure & Regional Coverage**
Strength and appropriateness of the proposed coalition, including regional partners, defined roles and responsibilities, and governance structures that support coordinated delivery of energy storage–related education, training, and workforce activities.

c. **Program Delivery Plan**
Quality and feasibility of the proposed approach to Scholar recruitment and deployment of a cohesive co-curricular experience that is intentionally designed to support an education pipeline spanning K–12, community college, and university pathways. This includes clearly defined on-ramps, transition points, and articulation across academic levels, as well as experiential learning opportunities aligned with the Engine's RD&T thrust areas, innovation challenges, and mentorship, with clear alignment to energy storage workforce needs. Proposals should demonstrate how programming is vertically integrated and connected to industry-aligned experiential learning opportunities to support education-to-employment pathways and include projected numbers of students served at each academic level (9–12; community college; university).

d. **Capacity & Staffing**
Qualifications and experience of key personnel, effectiveness of the leadership and management structure, and adequacy of staffing and institutional capacity to deliver high-quality, scalable energy storage–focused programming.

e. **Budget & Funding Plan**
Clarity, completeness, and reasonableness of the proposed budget, including allocation of the $1.35M over three years, alignment with proposed activities and deliverables, and identification of any matching or supplemental funds. Budgets should clearly demonstrate efficient use of resources to support program impact and sustainability.

Proposals will be evaluated using a scoring rubric totaling 100 points based on the criteria above, with the following weights:

- Institutional Overview & Experience: 20 points
- Coalition Structure & Regional Coverage: 20 points
- Program Delivery Plan: 30 points
- Capacity & Staffing: 20 points
- Budget & Funding Plan: 10 points

Proposal reviewers may award up to **5 bonus points** for value-added services or innovative approaches that enhance program outcomes or sustainability. Detailed scoring guidance will be provided to the review panel.

NSF Energy Storage Engine in Update New York
Binghamton University
PO Box 6000
Binghamton, NY 13902-6000
NSFengine@binghamton.edu
UpstateNYengine.org

7. Timeline[1]

RFP Issuance	March 25, 2026
Proposal Submission Deadline	April 27, 2026
Review & Selection	April 28 – May 8, 2026
Consortium Award Notification	May 11, 2026
Program Launch	June 1, 2026

8. Submission Instructions

- Proposal Portal: Submit proposals electronically to RFP Portal found here https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/c4c32e3792a746158604d9b42d8629cb by April 27, 2026.
- PDF format, including cover letter signed by an authorized institutional representative.

Terms and Conditions

- The Griffiss Institute reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal, waive minor irregularities, and negotiate with the most qualified firm to ensure the best value.
- Any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal are the sole responsibility of the proposer.
- The issuance of this RFP does not commit Griffiss Institute to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a response.
- The Griffiss Institute may award a single contract for all services or multiple contracts for itemized services at its discretion.
- Any contract award is contingent upon the availability of funding and, where applicable, the successful receipt of external or sponsor-provided funds. The Griffiss Institute reserves the right to modify the scope, schedule, or funding level of any award based on funding availability.
- This RFP is being publicly posted on the Griffiss Institute's website and distributed to qualified prospective consortia to ensure open and fair competition.

We look forward to your proposals and the opportunity to collaborate on this important initiative.

[1] All dates are approximate and may be modified.