



Biotech Pathways Initiative

2026 Funding Opportunity Announcement

Background

Gilead Foundation works to make better health possible. Through early preventive efforts, transformed care delivery, and comprehensive community support, we are helping create a future where individuals understand and act on their health, patients receive the care they need, and people build lasting wellness beyond the clinic.

Together with local community partners, Gilead Foundation helps address the social determinants of health by investing in organizations that advance science and innovation, expand access and health equity, and strengthen people and communities.

Grant Focus Area- Science and Innovation

Biotechnology and life sciences are central to the Bay Area's economy and identity, supporting significant employment and economic output.¹ Despite this, employers across the life sciences ecosystem continue to face challenges filling roles requiring applied technical and laboratory skills, signaling a gap between workforce demand and available talent.²

At the same time, access to biotechnology learning, career awareness, and industry-aligned skill development opportunities is not equally distributed across communities.³ These disparities limit both the size and diversity of the future workforce and reduce access to high-opportunity careers. A diverse and prepared biotech workforce is not only an equity imperative- it also strengthens innovation by expanding the range of perspectives and experiences brought to scientific problem-solving.⁴

Research indicates that the middle and high school years represent a critical window for shaping long-term engagement in STEM pathways. Studies show that interest in STEM careers is often formed by middle school and sustained participation depends on access to structured learning experiences that build both academic knowledge and applied skills, with evidence linking advanced coursework and hands-on skill-building opportunities to higher rates of persistence into STEM degrees.^{5 6 7}

¹ 2025 Life Science Economic Impact Report, Biocom California

² 2025 Life Sciences Workforce Trends Report, Life Science Workforce Collaborative

³ NSF NCSES, Diversity and STEM: Women, Minorities, and Persons with Disabilities 2023.

⁴ NSF NCSES, "Representation of demographic groups in STEM

⁵ Tai, R. H., Liu, C. Q., Maltese, A. V., & Fan, X. (2006). *Planning Early for Careers in Science*. Science.

⁶ Sadler, P. M., Sonnert, G., Hazari, Z., & Tai, R. H. (2012). *Stability and volatility of STEM career interest in high school*.

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2024). *Career and Technical Education in the United States*.

In biotechnology—where pathways require cumulative technical skill development—gaps in access to high-quality learning opportunities during middle and high school contribute directly to attrition in the talent pipeline, underscoring the importance of targeted interventions that translate early interest into sustained preparation and readiness.

The Gilead Foundation Biotech Pathways Initiative proposes a Bay Area–first approach to expand equitable access to biotechnology experiences and build the skills needed to pursue biotechnology and life sciences career pathways.

Grant Program and Purpose

Gilead Foundation’s Biotech Pathways Initiative aims to strengthen the Bay Area biotech talent pipeline by supporting programs that:

- **Build foundational knowledge** by reinforcing core biotech and life sciences concepts and increasing awareness of biotech careers and pathways.
- **Develop applied, industry relevant skills** through structured, hands-on learning experiences aligned with biotech and life science applications.
- **Provide real-world learning experiences** that connect classroom learning to authentic lab, research or industry- adjacent environments.

Gilead Foundation is committed to advancing equitable access to opportunity and will prioritize programs that reduce barriers to participation and expand access for students from communities that have been historically underrepresented in STEM and biotech fields.

This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) focuses specifically on programs supporting middle and high school–aged students, recognizing this developmental window as critical for translating early interest into the skills and experiences needed to pursue biotech career pathways.

Overview of Funding Priorities

To support meaningful participation in biotechnology pathways, Gilead Foundation will prioritize programs that provide students with sustained experiences that build knowledge, develop applied skills, and connect learning to real-world applications.

Gilead Foundation will prioritize funding across the following areas:

1. Knowledge and Academic Readiness

Programs that strengthen foundational understanding of biomedical and life sciences concepts and increase awareness of biotechnology careers and educational pathways. Competitive proposals will:

- Increase student awareness of biotechnology careers and pathways
- Reinforce core concepts through applied or project-based learning
- Align with middle and high school science curricula
- Support progression into advanced STEM coursework or related pathways

2. Applied Skill Development

Programs that provide structured, hands-on experiences designed to develop technical and transferable skills relevant to biotechnology and life sciences fields. Competitive proposals will:

- Emphasize lab-based or simulated lab experiences
- Build skills such as experimental design, data analysis, and scientific problem-solving
- Align with skills needed for advanced coursework, Career Technical Education (CTE) programs, or postsecondary study
- Offer opportunities for students to complete projects, capstones, or other applied work

3. Real-World Learning and Career Exposure

Programs that connect classroom learning to real-world biotechnology and life sciences applications and expose students to potential career pathways. Competitive proposals will:

- Provide exposure to authentic lab, research, or industry-adjacent environments
- Offer industry-connected learning opportunities such as site visits, mentorship, or guest speakers
- Help students understand how skills translate into education and career pathways
- Foster connections between students and professionals in biotech or related fields

Examples of Eligible Programs

Below are examples of programs that may fit within the funding priorities. These examples are provided for illustrative purposes only and should not be considered exhaustive or limiting.

- School-based biotechnology pathway programs that integrate academic coursework with hands-on lab experiences and industry-aligned skill development
- Career and Technical Education (CTE), dual-enrollment, and early college programs that provide sequenced coursework and technical training aligned with biotechnology and life sciences pathways
- Out-of-school or extended learning programs that build foundational knowledge and applied biotechnology skills
- Community College dual enrollment programs
- Programs that expand access to laboratory environments, including investments in instructional equipment or upgrades to classroom labs that enable hands-on, industry-aligned learning
- Career-connected and experiential learning opportunities, such as student-led research projects, internships, mentorship, site visits, or capstone experiences that connect students to real-world biotechnology and life sciences settings and applications

Grant Awards

Gilead Foundation will consider requests up to \$300,000 over a two-year period. All programs should cover a two-year period, with a program start date of January 1, 2027. Grant requests should be proportional to the scope, complexity and reach/impact of the program. Grant requests should reflect reasonable, good faith estimates of the true costs related to the proposed project. Second year funding is contingent on first year performance.

Eligibility Criteria

Organization(s) must meet the following eligibility criteria to apply:

- Nonprofit status: Applicants must be a U.S.-based nonprofit organization with current 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.
- Geographic focus: Programs must primarily serve students within the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

- Program alignment: Applicants must demonstrate experience delivering programs related to STEM education, workforce development, or career pathway development for middle and/or high school-aged students, with a preference for programs aligned to biotechnology, life sciences, or related fields.
- Target population: Programs should prioritize and serve students from communities that have been historically underrepresented in STEM and biotech fields.
- Organizational capacity: Applicants must demonstrate a proven track record of sound financial stewardship and the ability to implement and manage programs of similar scope and complexity.
- Collaborative capacity: Applicants should demonstrate strong partnership capabilities and the ability to collaborate effectively with schools, community-based organizations, or workforce partners, as appropriate.

Gilead Foundation encourages applications from organizations of varying sizes and funding levels. Proposals across the full grant range of \$100,000 to \$300,000, over a 2-year period are encouraged, recognizing that effective programs may vary in scale. Programs that leverage multiple funding sources or partnerships to expand impact are also encouraged.

Selection Criteria

Gilead Foundation welcomes proposals that align with the Biotech Pathways Initiative and advance at least one of the funding priority areas outlined above. Proposals that integrate multiple priority areas to provide more comprehensive student experiences are encouraged.

Successful proposals will:

- Make a meaningful contribution to preparing and diversifying the Bay Area biotechnology and life sciences workforce
- Demonstrate a clear and compelling program model, including well-defined goals, activities, and intended outcomes
- Deliver integrated learning experiences that build foundational knowledge, develop applied skills, and connect learning to real-world biotechnology and life sciences applications, including hands-on experiences such as lab work, scientific problem-solving, and data analysis
- Clearly articulate student progression, including how participants build knowledge, skills, and experience over time through project-based, experiential, or capstone learning
- Demonstrate an understanding of the target population and address barriers to participation, with intentional strategies to expand access for students historically underrepresented in STEM and biotech fields
- Define clear, measurable outcomes and include a robust evaluation approach, with plans to collect, analyze, and apply data to assess program effectiveness and inform continuous improvement
- Demonstrate organizational capacity and experience, including the ability to implement programs of similar scope, manage resources effectively, and deliver measurable results
- Leverage partnerships and collaboration, where appropriate, to strengthen program delivery, reach, and impact
- Ensure the program budget, requested amount, and duration are aligned with the scope and expected impact of the proposed work

- Where feasible, demonstrate potential for scalability or replication.

Evaluation and Reporting

Projects must include clear, measurable, and time-bound goals and a well-defined plan for tracking progress toward those goals. All applications must demonstrate the applicant's capacity to implement the proposed program and include details on how data will be collected, analyzed, and used to inform program improvement.

Gilead Foundation is committed to learning from our partners and strengthening the impact of funded programs. Through evaluation and reporting, the Foundation aims to better understand what strategies are most effective in building student knowledge, developing applied skills, and preparing students to pursue biotechnology and life sciences pathways.

Funded organizations will be expected to measure and report on outcomes across the following areas, as applicable:

- Student Learning and Skill Development, including gains in foundational knowledge, applied technical skills, and scientific problem-solving
- Pathway Readiness and Progression, including increased readiness for advanced STEM coursework, continued engagement in biotechnology or life sciences learning opportunities, and progression into subsequent education, training, or pathway experiences
- Career Awareness and Exposure, including increased understanding of biotechnology and life sciences careers, awareness of education and training pathways, and participation in career-connected learning experiences
- Participation and Access, including the number of students served and the extent to which programs reach students from communities historically underrepresented in STEM and biotechnology and life sciences fields

Examples of indicators may include the number of students served; gains in student knowledge and applied skills; participation in advanced coursework or subsequent pathway opportunities; and increased understanding of biotechnology and life sciences careers and pathways.

Grantees will be required to submit periodic and final reports that include both quantitative and qualitative data. Second-year funding is contingent upon demonstrated progress toward agreed-upon goals and outcomes.

Gilead Foundation anticipates working collaboratively with funded organizations to further refine evaluation approaches and identify key performance indicators that reflect program goals and impact.

Funding Restrictions

Gilead Foundation funding cannot support:

- Medications or the purchasing of medications
- Direct medical expenses, including laboratory tests or clinical care
- Existing organizational deficits or general operating expenses not directly tied to the proposed program
- Basic biomedical research, clinical research, or clinical trials

- Projects that include the purchase, utilization, prescribing, formulary position, pricing, reimbursement, referral, recommendation, or payment for pharmaceutical products
- Individuals with prescribing authority or physician group practices
- Events or programs that have already occurred
- Government lobbying activities
- Organizations that discriminate based on race, color, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression

Gilead Foundation funding may support program-related equipment, instructional materials, or minor facility upgrades (e.g., lab improvements) that are necessary to deliver hands-on learning experiences, provided these costs are directly tied to the proposed program and represent a reasonable portion of the overall budget.

How to Apply

The initial step to apply for a Gilead Foundation grant is the completion of a Letter of Interest (LOI). The LOI process is intended to help the Gilead Foundation identify programs that are well-aligned with the initiative's goals and to support a focused and competitive full proposal process.

To complete the LOI, please follow the steps below:

1. Visit <https://www.gilead.com/responsibility/giving-at-gilead/gilead-foundation>
2. Under the "How to apply" section- click "Apply Now"
3. You'll complete a short eligibility quiz (select "Building Community" when prompted)
4. Create a Giving Hub account or login to an existing account
5. And complete the short LOI

Organizations with LOIs selected for further consideration will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Key Dates and Deadlines

- Deadline to submit LOI: August 28, 2026
- Selected applicants notified of invitation to submit full proposal: September 4, 2026
- Deadline to submit Full Proposals (by invitation only): September 25, 2026
- Funding decisions announced: October or November 2026
- Grant period start date: January 1, 2027

Inquiries

Submit questions about this announcement to gileadfoundation@gilead.com using the subject heading "Biotech Pathways Initiative" and your organization's name.

Disclaimer Statement

- Submission of an LOI or full application does not guarantee funding.
- Gilead Foundation reserves the right to approve or deny any submitted LOI or application for any reason, at its sole discretion.
- The number of funding requests awarded will depend on the number and quality of applications received.
- If an LOI is accepted, applicants will be required to provide a detailed budget as part of the grant application.

- Recipients receiving support will be required to submit interim and final reports, which will include both programmatic outcomes and budget reconciliation, and provide any required data for state, federal, or country reporting purposes (e.g., Open Payments/Sunshine Act).
- Award of a grant in any one cycle does not imply that any subsequent grant for the same project or a similar project will be awarded without further application and approval.
- Previous funding from Gilead Foundation does not imply or guarantee future funding.

Appendix A - Indirect Cost Guidelines

Gilead Foundation prefers, whenever possible, that specific allocable costs of an applicant organization's project should be requested and justified in the proposal as direct costs, including those for dedicated ongoing project management, facilities and support (further definitions are provided below).

We seek to fund the actual cost of the proposed project, and to support the efficiency and effectiveness needed to advance student learning and readiness for biotechnology and life sciences pathways. Gilead Foundation will consider supporting a consolidated indirect cost fee on a case-by-case basis (where allowed under local laws and regulations), provided that it constitutes 10% or less of the total proposed project cost.

For the purpose of funding the grants, Gilead Foundation has established basic definitions and guidance to be used by our applicants and prospective applicants (see below).

Through our philanthropy and grants programs, Gilead Foundation does not match the indirect-cost rates that the U.S. federal government may pay to its applicants and contractors. We recognize that this means that our applicants may need to engage in cost-sharing between projects, tap into unrestricted funds, or conduct other fundraising activities to cover unbudgeted operation costs.

Indirect Cost Definitions

- Facilities not acquired specifically and exclusively for the project (e.g. Foundation, Institute, or University headquarters)
- Utilities for facilities not acquired for and not directly attributable to the project
- Information technology equipment and support not directly attributable to the project
- Depreciation on equipment
- Insurance not directly attributable to a given project
- General administrative support not directly attributable to the project. Examples are as follows:
 - Executive administrators
 - General ledger accounting
 - Grants accounting
 - General financial management
 - Internal audit function
 - IT support personnel
 - Facilities support personnel
 - Scientific support functions (not attributable to the project)
 - Environment health and safety personnel
 - Human resources
 - Library & information support
 - Shared procurement resources
 - General logistics support
 - Material management
 - Executive management
 - Other shared resources not directly attributable to the project
 - Institutional legal support
 - Research management costs