PROJECT OVERVIEW FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERS

Industries of Ideas

What is the Problem We Are Trying to Solve?

How is AI going to affect my state's industries and workers? Federal investments in new technologies, such as AI, additive manufacturing, or quantum computing, are transforming our companies and jobs. **We need to generate more reliable and credible economic insights** about how these "idea industries" are emerging and how they will affect the workforce. Right now, traditional data sources aren't telling us what we need to know, and new information sources may not be reliable.

What is the Industries of Ideas Project?

Industries of Ideas (IofI) began as a successful NSF-funded pilot with three states (Ohio, Arkansas, and New Jersey) and university partners and now **plans to expand to up to eight states**. The data infrastructure develops new insights by:

- **Tracing the people** engaged in basic and applied research and the skills they bring to the workforce (e.g., where new ideas will create new demand for reskilling, upskilling, and new skill acquisition)
- **Identifying concentrations of skill** across employers, industries, and locations to help us anticipate potential impacts on the current and future workforce
- **Positioning stakeholders to create data products** that answer actionable questions using trustworthy data
- **Starting with AI** and extending to other critical and emerging technologies to understand how they emerge across industries and places

What Have the Pilot States Built?

- **Ohio and Arkansas** developed new measures of emerging technologies, of whether local employers are creating or destroying high-wage and low-wage jobs, and of shifting credential demands in hiring.
- **Arkansas** is building these insights into Project Launch, a tool used by more than 250,000 students that also serves employers, job seekers, and UI claimants.
- **New Jersey** is mapping its R&D investments, especially in health and disease research, to see how they reshape workforce needs and whether the state trains and retains top AI talent.

Who are the Partners?

The National Science Foundation (NSF) through the Technology, Innovation, and Partnership (TIP) Directorate is funding this effort because the agency wants to understand how its investments are impacting regional firms and jobs in specific technology areas. Read about it here. Partners include:

- University of Michigan Institute for Research on Innovation and Science
- MDRC
- Ohio State University
- Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
- New York University
- National Association of State Workforce Agencies
- Education Commission of the States
- Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness
- New Jersey Department of Labor
- Arkansas Department of Shared Administrative Services

What is CREC's Role?

CREC seeks to engage economic development leaders to ensure that the data infrastructure and products developed for this project are timely, local, trustworthy, and actionable for immediate use.

How Can You Get Involved?

IofI will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) in December 2026 to select the next cohort of states. **The nonbinding Request for Information (RFI) is your chance to build on the pilot and shape the RFP.** Any state agency or university can propose ideas, but the response should include the following elements:

- What project or projects could be launched in your state that would expand the IofI pilot?
- What data, tools or models would you need to use?
- What would be the value proposition to your state?
- What partners would you need to make the project successful?
- With whom are you currently collaborating?
- What budget would you anticipate needing to advance a pilot that produces meaningful results for stakeholders in your state? (A rough order of magnitude for key components is fine.)

Key Dates			
RFI released	October 1, 2026	**RFP application due**	February 24, 2027
RFI webinar	October 22, 2026, 12-1 pm ET	**Applicants selected**	March 9, 2027
RFI due	November 20, 2026	**Projects begin**	April 5, 2027
RFP released	December 15, 2026	**Convening**	April 29 to 30, 2027

Learn More and Contact Us

Join the October 22 RFI informational webinar; register for the IofI workshop series (Series 2: critical and emerging technology measures; Series 3: employer-based workforce dynamics measures); and explore IofI work products. To stay up to date, sign up for official IofI updates: https://industriesofideas.ai/contact-us/.

Want to connect to talk about what this could mean for your state? Contact Allison Forbes, CREC SVP of Strategy and Innovation (aforbes@crec.net, 703-504-2872).