

Fall 2026 Nano and Quantum Technology Entrepreneurship Challenge (NQTEC)

Supporting student & post-doc-led nano and quantum innovation and entrepreneurship

The Fall 2026 NQTEC Program provides funding and mentorship to student- or post-doc-led teams seeking to translate nano-/quantum-enabled innovations. NQTEC bridges the transition from the National Nanotechnology Coordinated Infrastructure (NNCI) to the future National Quantum and Nanotechnology Infrastructure (NQNI).

Overview of NQTEC Awards:

- Provide funding, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for students (undergrad/grad) and post-docs
- Help students and post-docs use nano- and/or quantum technologies to solve real-world problems
- Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship through student-led teams linked to infrastructures like [NNCI](#)
- Educate students on technology transfer and programs like [NSF I-Corps](#) and [SBIR/STTR](#)
- Encourage translation of original ideas and/or intellectual property (IP)

Awards

- Multiple awards of up to \$1,000 USD are available.
- Awards are used for instrument time at participating infrastructure sites and qualifying travel.
- Teams receive mentorship through the Virtual [NQTEC Accelerator Program](#).
- **The top 3 NQTEC teams receive additional support to pitch their ideas at the [TechConnect World Innovation Conference & Expo in Boston, MA, March 23-25, 2027](#).**

Key Dates

- **Aug. 20, 2026** – NQTEC RFP Opens
- **Sep. 21, 2026** – Applications Due
- **Oct. 9, 2026** – Program Kickoff / Awardees Announced Publicly
- **Oct. 9 to Nov. 20** – NQTEC Virtual Accelerator (mentorship, weekly webinar)
- **Dec. 4, 2PM ET** – NQTEC Virtual Showcase (top 3 teams selected)
- **Mar. 23-25, 2027** – NQTEC Finals on March 24th at TechConnect, Boston, MA

Eligibility

- Teams **must be led by a student (undergrad, grad, community college) or post-doc**.
- Team leads must be **currently enrolled at or affiliated with** a nano- or quantum technology infrastructure or network such as an [NNCI site](#) or [DOE Nanoscale Science Research Centers \(NSRCs\)](#).
- A staff or faculty **mentor** is required.

Apply Now through Sep. 21st

URL <https://forms.gle/v9tkLMqJbXwVPLMq5>



Review Process and Criteria

Awards are made based on the following criteria:

- Merit of the innovation proposed
- Commercialization potential
- Quality of the technology transfer strategy and future plans
- Extent to which infrastructure tools are used
- Team participation in the virtual NQTEC Accelerator program
- Availability of funds

Questions?

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