Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Accelerate Charitable Giving

Grand Challenges

Request for Proposals

Applications due no later than April 21, 2026, 11:30 a.m. U.S. Pacific Time

Before applying to this Grand Challenges request for proposals (RFP), applicants should familiarize themselves with the supporting documents, including the terms and conditions of the Gates Foundation, the Rules and Guidelines, Application Instructions, and Frequently Asked Questions.

If you are planning to apply to this RFP, we will be hosting a dedicated webinar on March 23, from 7:00-8:00 AM Pacific Time. This session will provide a comprehensive overview of the RFP details and an opportunity to have your questions answered. To participate in the webinar, please register and submit your questions in advance. If you cannot attend live, the webinar will be recorded and available on this challenge page after the session.

Background

The Gates Foundation's Philanthropic Partnerships Team (PPT) mobilizes resources and cultivates champions for global health and development (GH&D), ensuring that philanthropy helps the world's most vulnerable children survive and thrive.

Many people want to make a difference but aren't always sure how to turn that intention into action. Our work helps donors move from interest to impact, working alongside individuals, foundations, advisors, and other sector partners while strengthening the broader systems that support effective giving.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is advancing rapidly, reshaping how people access information, make decisions, and engage with the world. For philanthropy, this creates an opportunity to rethink how AI can help donors discover causes and move from interest to action at moments when it matters most.

To explore this opportunity, PPT is launching the **AI to Accelerate Charitable Giving** Grand Challenges RFP to explore how AI can strengthen philanthropic practice and unlock new possibilities for generosity. The Challenge aims to enhance human decision-making with AI-powered tools, data, and insights that help donors give more and give sooner.

The Challenge

We are seeking applications and use cases of AI that address the core question: ***How might AI support donors to give more and give sooner?***

This RFP is focused on supporting donor-facing applications and underlying systems of giving that test and demonstrate bold, innovative applications of AI that strengthen and expand philanthropic giving. Desired outputs include generating practical evidence and examples to inform broader practice across the philanthropic sector. We are particularly interested in solutions that increase support for GH&D.

For this RFP, GH&D refers broadly to efforts that improve health, economic opportunity, and human well-being in low- and middle-income countries. Within this field, we are especially interested in efforts that reduce preventable mortality, combat infectious diseases, and expand pathways out of extreme poverty, consistent with the Gates Foundation's long-term goals.

Projects do not need to focus exclusively on GH&D to be competitive. However, proposals that clearly demonstrate applicability to GH&D challenges, or that generate insights relevant to these priorities, will receive additional consideration. We welcome proposals that address the needs of various donor types including everyday donors, high-net-worth individuals, foundations, or other entities relevant to the challenge areas below.

We invite proposals that address at least one of the following challenge areas:

1. Help donors connect with causes and understand where to give to achieve their giving goals

How can AI help people discover causes they care about, understand why they matter, and see where their giving can make a meaningful difference?

Many donors want to give but struggle to navigate a crowded and complex landscape of causes, organizations, and appeals. Geographic distance, limited context, and uncertainty about effectiveness can make it difficult to decide where to focus funds or where to begin.

We seek solutions that help donors make sense of their options, connect their values to specific opportunities, and build confidence that their contributions can make a meaningful difference across a range of issue areas, including GH&D. Examples include:

- AI-powered recommendation engines that match donors to issues they care about.
- Personalized learning tools that adapt content, depth, or recommendations as a donor's understanding, interests, and confidence evolve over time.
- Immersive or narrative tools that make global issues feel human and relatable.
- Applications that help donors visualize the impact their dollars can create.

2. Turn interest and intent into donations

How can AI create pathways to help people move from motivation to meaningful contribution?

Many people are motivated to contribute yet fail to follow through because the giving process feels complex, overwhelming, or uncertain.

We seek solutions that reduce friction, enable follow-through on the intention to give, and foster sustained engagement beyond a single transaction. Examples include:

- Tools that simplify logistical barriers to giving such as cross-border vetting, due diligence, or compliance challenges.
- Systems that build community or shared motivation among donors.
- Designs that make giving feel clear, safe, and meaningful.

3. Develop the foundational systems and infrastructure that enable AI-powered giving

How can we ensure that AI systems reflect accurate philanthropic data and values so that giving and social impact are part of the information people access every day?

As AI increasingly shapes how people learn and make decisions, philanthropy must be represented in the underlying data and tools that drive these systems.

We seek focused, practical projects that ensure philanthropic data is visible, credible, and usable by AI systems in ways that support donor understanding, confidence, and giving. Examples include:

- Data pipelines or open standards that expose charitable data to algorithms
- Training models to better recognize and contextualize social impact
- Applications that make nonprofit websites and payment platforms more interoperable with AI agents (i.e., enabling agents to donate to nonprofit organizations)
- Solutions that detect and prevent fraud or misuse in donation processes supported by AI

AI Ethics and Responsibility

The Gates Foundation is committed to harnessing AI for social good while mitigating risks such as bias, inequity, and potential harm, particularly to vulnerable populations. As AI-enabled tools increasingly shape how people access information and make decisions, ethical and responsible use of AI is a foundational consideration that should inform how solutions are designed, tested, and deployed.

Applicants are not required to submit a separate response on ethical and responsible AI considerations. However, proposals should demonstrate thoughtful awareness of ethical issues as part of the project's learning and experimentation process, including how potential risks may evolve as systems are tested with real users. The Foundation may request clarification during the application review process as needed.

In evaluating proposals, reviewers will consider alignment with the Foundation's AI principles, which are summarized below:

1. AI efforts should align with the Foundation's mission to improve health, reduce poverty, and expand opportunities for those facing the greatest challenges.
2. AI solutions should be informed by the needs and perspectives of the community they are intended to serve.
3. Potential risks and unintended harms should be identified and addressed throughout the AI lifecycle, including monitoring for unintended consequences.
4. Personal and sensitive data must be handled responsibly and protected from misuse.
5. AI solutions should be designed for broad benefit and be accessible and usable in their intended contexts.
6. Be transparent about how AI is used, including its purpose, limitations, and governance.

Funding Level

We will consider applications requesting awards up to $150,000 USD per project, with a grant duration of up to 1 year. Budgets should align with the scale and complexity of the proposed work. Indirect costs are allowable and should be included within the total requested funding (subject to the Gates Foundation's indirect cost policy).

Travel expenses for in-person convenings with peer grantees hosted by the Gates Foundation will be covered separately by the Foundation. Please only include additional travel costs within your proposed budget.

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must be able to conduct all project activities and reporting in English and be willing and able to participate in up to three virtual and/or in-person learning convenings with peer grantees over the one-year grant period. Eligible entities for this initiative include:

- **Nonprofit and Civil Society Organizations,** including registered nonprofits and charities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations.

- **Mission-Driven For-Profit Organizations.** For-profit entities that have a clear public-benefit mission aligned with the goals of the RFP are eligible. Funding cannot be used for core commercial product development or general business operations. Proposed activities must advance equitable, responsible, or safe uses of AI in ways that benefit society.

- **Consortia, Partnerships, & Collaborative Proposals.** Proposals may be submitted through partnerships and other collaborative arrangements. In such cases, one lead organization must serve as the primary applicant and submit the proposal, with partner organizations included as sub-grantees.

For this initiative, the following entities are **not eligible**:

- Individuals and organizations classified as individuals for U.S. tax purposes.
- Government agencies or departments.
- Academic institutions applying independently (unless part of a consortium led by an eligible organization).

Proposal Requirements

Recognizing that AI-enabled philanthropic tools are part of an evolving field, we value both measurable donor outcomes and the production of practical learning about what works, what does not, and why. Proposals are encouraged to contribute insights that can inform broader philanthropic practice, even where initial approaches require iteration.

We are looking for proposals that:

- **Have relevance to the challenge areas**
    - Apply AI in clear, compelling ways to motivate donors to give more and give sooner, directly advancing one or more of the challenge areas.

- **Illustrate expected impact**
    - Articulate the meaningful change the project is expected to produce that can inform broader philanthropic practice.

- **Plan for feasibility**
    - Describe the methodology for pressure-testing and validating the proposed concept, including how AI tools, models, or data pipelines will be tested and evaluated in real-world conditions to assess feasibility.

- **Have plans for measuring success**
    - Describe how success will be assessed during the grant period including the indicators or methods used to evaluate both pilot outcomes (i.e., changes in donor behavior or confidence) and learning outcomes.
    - Explain how these insights will inform broader philanthropic practice.

- **Describe potential scale**
    - Articulate how the project could be sustained, scaled, or shared beyond the grant period.
    - Demonstrate the potential for adaptation or extension across geographies, donor types, philanthropic issues, or giving platforms.
    - Go beyond narrowly tailored, organization-specific use cases to create insights, tools, or approaches that improve donor experience or decision-making and have broader applicability across the philanthropic ecosystem.

- **Use responsible AI practices and safeguards**
    - Identify risks related to responsible AI use and describe plans to mitigate them, including fairness, transparency, privacy, and data governance.

We will not consider funding for proposals that:

- Do not address the core question: How might AI support donors to give more and give sooner?
- Do not identify at least one challenge area and demonstrate how the proposed solution meaningfully aligns with it.
- Do not apply AI as a central component of the proposed solution.
- Lack clear relevance to donor decision-making and charitable giving, including meaningful applicability to GH&D.
- Do not include a practical plan to test, measure, and generate actionable learning within the grant period that informs broader philanthropic practice.
- Primarily support commercial product development, general business operations, or private profit.
- Fail to demonstrate responsible AI practices, including attention to bias, privacy, transparency, and data governance.
- Request more than $150,000 USD, exceed a one-year grant term, or are submitted by ineligible entities.