

Artificial Intelligence (AI) to Accelerate Charitable Giving

Grand Challenges

Rules & Guidelines

Applications due no later than April 28 2026, 11:30 a.m. U.S. Pacific Time

Supporting Materials

- 1) Full RFP – [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) to Accelerate Charitable Giving](#)
- 2) [Application Instructions](#)
- 3) [Budget Template and Narrative](#)
- 4) [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) Document](#)

Key dates and deadlines*

Key Dates	Event
March 17, 2026	Application period opens
March 23, 2026, 7:00-8:00 a.m. US PST	RFP Webinar
April 28 2026, 11:30 a.m. US PST	Application period closes, deadline to submit
By end of July 2026	Applicants notified of decisions
Nov 2026	Estimated start dates

*Any changes to the Key Dates and Deadlines will be updated on the Grand Challenges website.

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, and 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)

Upon registration, applicants must provide information about the tax status of their organization as different terms and conditions may apply. You should confirm your organization's tax status with the appropriate advisor or entity within your organization such as your grants or contracts department, finance, or office of sponsored research. The foundation may request additional information regarding your tax status. For information about tax statuses, you may check with your own advisors and review information provided on the Internal Revenue Service web site at: www.irs.gov.

How to Apply

Please review the [Application Instructions](#) as you develop your proposal.

Changes to the Rules and Guidelines and to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be posted periodically, including any changes to the dates listed above. Please read the FAQ document before submitting any questions or concerns.

Awards

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](#)).

Review Process

Handling of Applications

When submitting materials to the Gates Foundation please keep in mind that because we have a focus on achieving charitable outcomes, we view information that we obtain through our grantmaking as a public good. Subject to the [Gates Foundation's Privacy Policy](#), the Gates Foundation may also share information you provide to us (either orally or in writing) with third parties, including external reviewers, consultants, contingent workers, key partners and co-funders. You should assume that nothing will be kept confidential and should not include any information in the proposal, budget, supplemental materials, or reports that you consider proprietary.

Additionally, the foundation is required by the IRS to publish a list of its grants. The foundation also provides general descriptions of its grants on its web sites, in press releases, and in other marketing materials. These Rules and Guidelines are subject to these [Terms of Use](#).

Review of Applications

The Grand Challenges application review process is executed in four steps:

1. The first step consists of screening applications to evaluate whether proposals address the key needs described in the topic. We screen for responses that are completely unrelated or specifically excluded. Excluded responses encompass ideas related to the topic but that, for strategic reasons, we are not funding under the Grand Challenges initiative. In addition, we exclude proposals that are considered incremental advances, appropriate responses that are similar to work in which the foundation or other GrandChallenges programs are already investing, or avenues of inquiry we deem ill-suited to the Grand Challenges initiative. Applicants with proposals removed from consideration during the screening process will be notified that their proposals were declined but will not receive specific feedback.

2. In the second step, reviews are chaired or co-chaired by technical leads from the foundation and, in some cases, other funding partners and are conducted by reviewers both outside and within the foundation. Reviewers are selected from the world's leading researchers and comprise both experts in the topic area and experts in complementary areas. Not all reviewers have deep expertise in the topic; please consider this information when drafting your proposal.

Reviewers will be 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.
3. The third step is the validation and final selection of the proposals to be funded by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may recommend the proposal be funded, subject to specific modifications which will be negotiated as part of the award process. Organizations invited to submit full proposals will be provided additional technical instructions at that time.
 4. The fourth and final step is a due diligence review and to directly discuss and negotiate any adjustments to the proposed project recommended by the Executive Committee. Investigators will be contacted as part of the due diligence review.

Management of Conflict of Interest

To identify and avoid conflicts of interest among application reviewers, such reviewers will not be permitted to review proposals from organizations with which the reviewer has self-identified conflicts of interest.

Eligibility and Notifications

Please review the [Gates Foundation's sample terms and conditions](#). Please note that depending on the tax status of your organization, alternate terms and conditions may apply. Please also review the [Gates Foundation's standard Request for Proposal \(RFP\) Terms and Conditions](#).

Privacy Notice and Terms of Use

When submitting materials to the Foundation please keep in mind that because we have a focus on achieving charitable outcomes, we view information that we obtain through our grantmaking as a public good. Subject to the [Gates Foundation's Privacy & Cookies Notice](#), the Foundation may also share information you provide to us (either orally or in writing) with third parties, including external reviewers, consultants, contingent workers, key partners and co-funders. **You should assume that nothing will be kept confidential and should not include any information in the proposal, budget, supplemental materials, or reports that you consider proprietary.**

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For more information, please review the [Grand Challenges Privacy and Terms of Use](#).

Representation:

By providing any Submission Materials, you represent to the Gates Foundation that (i) you have the right to provide any personal information submitted; (ii) you are a duly authorized representative of the Applicant and agree to be bound by the terms set forth above, without amendment and (iii) none of the information in your Submission Materials is confidential or proprietary.

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to many application questions can be found on the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) document.

Inquiries

Please direct all questions about this initiative, selection criteria or application instructions by e-mail to the following address: grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org.