

The Foundation Review

A publication of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University

Call for Abstracts for Volume 17, Issue 3 Themed Issue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Philanthropy

Abstracts of up to 250 words are invited for Volume 17, Issue 3 of *The Foundation Review*. This themed issue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Philanthropy will focus on the experiences, lessons, and challenges of foundations that are using or preparing to use AI as part of their philanthropic strategies and impact across multiple sectors. Submit abstracts to ffsubmissions@gvsu.edu by April 18, 2025. If a full paper is invited, it will be due June 30, 2025, for consideration for publication in late 2025.

Overview

Even as artificial intelligence (AI) is now seeing broad implementation across professional environments and sectors, most foundations have only begun to consider and test how AI could contribute positively, inclusively, and responsibly to their philanthropic missions. AI has the potential to streamline and enhance foundation processes and meaning-making, but its use carries serious risks and strengthening institutional and individual capacities to implement and use AI ethically, equitably, and effectively is no small lift. This is an important topic for philanthropy to consider and prepare for, especially given the extremely rapid advancements in AI technology and its proliferation across society and the marketplace. These new tools have the potential to change how philanthropy operates and achieves its impact.

This themed issue will focus on the experiences, lessons, and challenges of foundations using or preparing to use AI as part of their philanthropic strategies and impact delivery across multiple sectors. Articles should help to inform foundations' decisions around AI intention, ethics, policy, and practice.

Topics that articles might address in this issue include:

The goal of this themed issue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Philanthropy will be to document early lessons and inform foundations around their understanding of AI's functionality and uses and their readiness to engage with AI tools, processes, and knowledge building. Possible topic ideas include:

Societal Impact and Mission

- How can foundations grapple with **AI's costs and benefits** – its enormous capacity for advancing human endeavors and the very great risks it poses to society (e.g., energy use, climate impacts, inequitable access, extractive data practices) – and make informed decisions?
- What can philanthropy learn from our **history of engaging with the drivers of digital technology** (policy, markets, culture, and technology itself) to improve our practices in ways that advance our missions?
- What are the **appropriate roles and relevance of philanthropy** in the development of policies and practices around AI use, especially given the rapid developments and greater influence of market and government forces?

- What can we **learn from the different political contexts** where AI policies, regulations, and practices have been tested or implemented outside of the U.S.?
- What **ethical questions and recommended practices** are critical for philanthropy to address around data and knowledge privacy, security, ownership, and sovereignty, given AI's reliance on mass data and knowledge aggregation?

Foundation Capacities & Practice to Advance Inclusion and Equity

- How can foundations maximize the **benefits of AI for streamlining foundation bureaucracy, information gathering, and use**, while also ensuring more equitable access to the technology by communities, especially communities of color and communities without equitable access to philanthropic investments?
- What **internal capacities or other mechanisms for readiness** will foundations need to put in place in order to prepare staff, trustees, donors, and grantees to decide on and implement effective technology policies, budgets, and practices to ensure that AI positively contributes to mission?
- How can foundations address the **challenges of ensuring equitable access** to AI, while also ensuring that users broadly will **share equitably in the benefits gained and potential harms incurred** from AI's outputs, given the technology's reliance on human-designed algorithms reflecting dominant and colonial cultures and mindsets?

Abstracts are solicited in four categories (authors do not need to specify a category for their submission):

- **Results:** Papers in this category generally report on findings from evaluations of foundation-funded work. Papers should include a description of the theory of change (logic model, program theory), a description of the grantmaking strategy, the evaluation methodology, the results, and a narrative discussion. The discussion should focus on what has been learned both about the content (e.g., what has been learned about communications strategies) and about grantmaking and other foundation roles (convening, etc.). We especially seek papers that describe “hard lessons” – efforts that were not successful in achieving the intended outcomes in the timeframe envisioned.
- **Tools:** Papers in this category should describe tools useful for foundation staff or boards. By “tool” we mean a systematic, replicable methodology intended for a specific purpose. For example, a protocol to assess community or organizational readiness or standardized facilitation methods would be considered tools. The actual tool should be included in the article whenever practical. The paper should describe the rationale for the tool, how it was developed, and available evidence of its usefulness.
- **Sector:** Papers in this category address issues confronted by the philanthropic sector as a whole, such as diversity, accountability, etc.
- **Reflective Practice:** Papers in this category rely on the knowledge and experience of the authors, rather than on formal evaluation methods or designs. In these cases, it is because of their perspective about broader issues, rather than specific initiatives, that the article is valuable.

Papers should emphasize the practical applications of any findings. Reviewers will be evaluation professionals, foundation program and evaluation staff and board members, and other experts in the content

area. Reviews of the full paper will be double-blind. Authors can view full manuscript specifications and standards before submitting an abstract at https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/tfr/for_authors.html.

Book Reviews: *The Foundation Review* publishes reviews of relevant books. Please contact the editor to discuss submitting a review. Reviewers must be free of conflicts of interest.

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