

AI for Nonprofits & Foundation Grantmakers

How to Responsibly Adopt AI in Your Organization

Philanthropy Southwest | Community & Health Foundations Convening | February 25, 2026

Meet Your Presenters

Michael Thomas

Founder & CEO, ConnectIDD



- 13+ years leading My Possibilities, serving 700+ adults with IDD weekly
- Completed \$30M campaign for college-style IDD campus in Plano, TX
- ConnectIDD supports 15+ disability orgs nationwide in capacity building & strategy
- Board: Collin College Foundation, Baylor Scott & White - Plano
- MBA, UT Dallas | Philosophy, SMU

Richard Margolin

CTO & Co-Founder, Naviguide.ai



- Naviguide.ai: AI platform for workplace accommodations & inclusive employment
- Co-founded RoboKind: robots serving 1,300+ schools for autism & STEM education
- 25+ years in AI, robotics & assistive technology development
- EY Entrepreneur of the Year, Dallas AI 75, Forbes Tech Council
- Cognitive & Computational Neuroscience, Trinity College | Mechanical Engineering UT Arlington

Today's Agenda

01



AI 101

What it is, how it works, and why it matters for your mission

~15 min

02



AI in the Nonprofit Sector

Current adoption, trends, and what your peers are doing

~10 min

03



Responsible Adoption

Governance, ethics, and building trust with stakeholders

~10 min

04



Live Demo: AI-Powered Grant Research

You help us source info; we build a proposal in real time

~20 min



AI 101

What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters for Your Mission

What is AI, Really?



Think of it like...

AI has read billions of documents and learned patterns from them. When you ask it a question, it draws on those patterns to generate a helpful response.

It's like having a very well-read research assistant who never sleeps, never forgets what they've read, and can draft things in seconds.

But it can make mistakes, doesn't "know" things the way humans do, and needs human judgment.

Key Terms (No Jargon)

Generative AI

Creates new text, images, or code (like ChatGPT, Claude)

Prompt

The question or instruction you give the AI

Hallucination

When AI confidently generates incorrect information

LLM

Large Language Model — the engine behind tools like Claude

What Can AI Do for Your Organization?



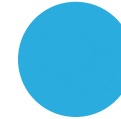
Grant Writing

Draft proposals, LOIs, and narratives from program data



Research

Analyze community needs, find data, scan funder priorities



Communications

Donor emails, reports, social media, newsletters



Data Analysis

Summarize survey results, visualize outcomes, identify trends



Operations

Meeting notes, board prep, policy drafting, onboarding



Program Design

Logic models, theory of change, evaluation frameworks



AI in the Nonprofit Sector

What's Happening Right Now Across the Field

The State of AI in Nonprofits (2026)

92%

of nonprofits
use AI

7%

report major
impact gains

76%

have no
AI policy

Key Insight

The gap is not adoption — it's impact.

Most nonprofits are using AI informally: one person drafting emails with ChatGPT. Only 7% have built it into organizational workflows. 81% use AI individually without shared practices.

The opportunity: moving from personal productivity tool to organizational capability.

What Foundations Are Thinking About AI



Top Concerns

- Data security & privacy (70%)¹
- Accuracy & misinformation (63%)¹
- Bias & representation (57%)¹
- 23% of foundations won't accept AI-generated applications²
- 67% undecided on AI-generated grant applications²



Opportunities

- 61% of nonprofits using AI for development & fundraising³
- Saving 15–20 hours/week on administrative tasks⁴
- 43% of donors say AI has positive/neutral effect on giving²
- 30% of foundations increasing payout in response to demand³
- **Only 15% of foundations talking to grantees about AI³**

¹ Nonprofit Tech for Good, 2026 AI Marketing & Fundraising Statistics

² Candid.org / Nonprofit Tech for Good, Donor Perceptions of AI Report

³ Center for Effective Philanthropy, AI With Purpose, Sept 2025

⁴ Cerini & Associates / TechSoup, 2026 Nonprofit Trends Guide



Responsible AI Adoption

Building Trust While Building Capability

A Simple Framework for Responsible AI



Governance

- Create an AI policy
- Designate an AI lead
- Board awareness



Transparency

- Disclose AI use to stakeholders
- Label AI-assisted content
- Keep humans in the loop



Quality

- Always review AI output
- Fact-check claims & data
- Test with real scenarios



Equity

- Check for bias in outputs
- Ensure diverse training input
- Center community voice

Getting Started This Week

1

Pick One Use Case

Start small. Grant research, meeting summaries, or donor communications are great entry points.

2

Try a Free Tool

Claude.ai, ChatGPT, or Google Gemini all have free tiers. Spend 30 minutes exploring.

3

Draft a Simple AI Policy

Even 1 page: what tools are approved, what data can be shared, who reviews output.

4

Share With Your Team

Show colleagues what you learned today. Normalize experimentation and learning together.



Live Demo

Let's Build a Grant Proposal Together — With AI

How This Demo Works



You Give Us a Scenario

What issue area does your foundation fund? What decision are you trying to make?



AI Assesses the Community Need

We'll use Claude to analyze community data, identify gaps, and surface insights for your funding strategy



We Draft an RFP or Strategy

AI helps structure an RFP, evaluation criteria, or funding rationale based on the data



We Refine Together

You tell us what to change — watch AI iterate in real time based on your priorities

AUDIENCE: What issue area and funding decision should we tackle?

1 Define the Scenario



Your Turn – Help Us Build This

What issue area does your foundation fund?

(e.g., community health, disability services, workforce, youth development, housing)

What funding decision are you trying to make?

(e.g., evaluate a new program area, assess community need, design an RFP, review a proposal)

We'll use your answers to drive the entire demo from here.

▶ [Switch to Claude.ai live screen](#)

2

Assess the Community Need

Sample Prompt

"You are an expert nonprofit grant maker at a community health foundation. We are considering funding [audience topic] programs in [region]. Analyze the community need: provide census data, health disparity statistics, existing funded programs, and gaps where our funding could have the greatest impact."

What to Watch For

- AI quickly surfaces data to inform your funding priorities
- **Always verify data points — AI can hallucinate statistics**
- Use this to supplement your due diligence, not replace it

▶ [Live in Claude.ai — watch the research unfold](#)

3 Draft an RFP or Funding Strategy

Sample Prompt

"You are an expert nonprofit grant maker. Based on the community needs analysis above, draft an RFP for a \$[amount] grant cycle focused on [topic]. Include: funding priorities, eligible applicant criteria, required proposal components, evaluation rubric, and timeline. Ensure the language encourages applications from small and emerging nonprofits."

What to Watch For

- AI structures a complete RFP framework in seconds
- Notice how it ties the RFP criteria back to the community data from Step 2
- **This is a starting point — your board priorities and institutional knowledge shape the final version**

▶ [Live in Claude.ai — watch the draft take shape](#)

4 Refine Together



Your Feedback Drives This Step

What would make this RFP stronger for your foundation?

Try asking AI to:

- *"Add evaluation criteria that prioritize equity and community voice"*
- *"Create a scoring rubric for reviewing applications"*
- *"Simplify the application requirements for smaller nonprofits"*
- *"Draft board-ready talking points summarizing our funding rationale"*

This iterative process is where AI really shines — each revision takes seconds, not hours.

▶ Live in Claude.ai — audience-driven refinement

Tips for Great AI Prompts

The secret: start with a role, then be specific about the task

Vague Prompt

"Help me evaluate grant proposals."

No role, no details → generic, unusable output

Role-Based Prompt

"You are an expert nonprofit grant maker. We received 12 proposals for our \$500K community health fund. Create a scoring rubric that weights equity, measurable outcomes, organizational capacity, and community engagement."

Role + specifics → targeted, actionable results

The Prompt Formula

Role + Context + Task + Format + Constraints

"You are an expert nonprofit grant maker with deep experience in health equity funding. Our foundation is launching a \$300K grant cycle for rural telehealth access in North Texas. Draft an RFP that includes funding priorities, eligibility requirements, a proposal scoring rubric, and a timeline. Make the language accessible to first-time applicants."

Key Takeaways



AI is already in your sector — the question is how to use it well



Start with governance: even a 1-page policy sets you apart from 76% of nonprofits



Always keep a human in the loop — AI assists, it doesn't replace your judgment



Pick one use case, try it this week, and share what you learn with your team



Talk to your grantees about AI — only 15% of foundations are doing this

Resources to Explore

Free AI Tools

[Claude.ai](#) | [ChatGPT](#) | [Google Gemini](#) | [Microsoft Copilot](#)

Nonprofit AI Reports

[2026 Nonprofit AI Adoption Report \(Virtuous\)](#) | [TechSoup AI Benchmark](#) | [CEP AI With Purpose](#)

AI Policy Templates

[TechSoup AI Hub](#) | [Fundraising.AI](#) | [NTEN AI Resources](#)

Grant Research Tools

[Candid.org](#) | [Instrumentl](#) | [GrantStation](#) | [OpenGrants.io](#)



Questions & Discussion

Thank you for joining us today!

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Resources Created During the Session (hyperlinked below)

- [Board Talking Points](#)
- [Smith Supports Proposal](#)
- [RFP – Disaster Resilience Grant Program](#)

COMMUNITY HEALTH FOUNDATION OF CENTRAL TEXAS
FY2026 DISASTER RESILIENCE GRANT PROGRAM

Request for Proposals

Total Grant Pool: \$100,000 | Individual Awards: \$25,000 – \$100,000

Travis County • McLennan County • Bell County, Texas

Application Deadline: April 30, 2026

A Note to Small and Emerging Nonprofits

We strongly encourage applications from organizations with annual budgets under \$500,000, organizations founded within the last 5 years, and groups led by and serving communities of color, veterans, or low-income households. If your organization has never applied for foundation funding, we invite you to contact our program staff before the deadline for a no-obligation pre-application conversation. No prior relationship with this foundation is required or expected.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Central Texas is among the most flood-prone inland regions in the United States, and the three counties served by this grant program — Travis, McLennan, and Bell — have each experienced federally declared disasters within the past 24 months. The July 2025 Independence Day floods, the spring 2024 severe storm sequence, and a pattern of recurring flash flood events have compounded long-standing health disparities in communities that were already under-resourced