

Philanthropies Launch New Initiative to Ensure AI Advances the Public Interest

Washington, D.C.: Today, a group of ten leading philanthropies announced a bold new initiative to ensure that AI advances the public interest in the areas of need identified today by Vice President Kamala Harris. Participating foundations are committed to leveraging and aligning grantmaking toward progress on these urgent issues.

These institutions are collectively contributing more than \$200 million in funding toward public interest efforts to mitigate AI harms and promote responsible use and innovation. Going forward, they will coordinate on new actions in this space and will convene in the new year with a cross-sector set of actors to take stock of progress.

When developed, deployed, and used responsibly, AI technologies can help address pressing challenges in health, climate, education, and other issues. But AI systems are also creating significant and tangible harms – often with a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities – and pose serious threats to civil rights, human rights, worker rights, and national and international security.

Moreover, while developments in AI have the potential to contribute to economic prosperity, sustained, broadly shared progress requires engaged action from communities, workers, government, and the public. As the development and deployment of AI systems accelerates, including the growing use of generative AI across our economy and society, dedicated and coordinated action across sectors is critical to address existing harms and emerging challenges together.

The philanthropies that are part of this initiative include: The David and Lucile Packard Foundation; Democracy Fund; the Ford Foundation; Heising-Simons Foundation; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; Kapor Foundation; Mozilla Foundation; Omidyar Network; Open Society Foundations; and Wallace Global Fund.

The above philanthropies welcome the leadership of Vice President Harris in identifying five critical areas of need to help ensure the benefits of AI are broadly shared and harms are mitigated:

1. Ensure that AI **protects democracy and the rights and freedoms of all people**;
2. Leverage AI to **innovate in the public interest** and deliver breakthroughs to improve quality of life for people around the world;
3. Empower **workers to thrive** amid AI-driven changes across sectors and industries;
4. Improve **transparency, interpretability, and accountability** for AI models, companies, and deployers; and
5. Support the development of **international AI rules and norms**.

These philanthropic leaders commit to aligning their investments and scaling civil society's efforts to ensure that AI advances the public interest across these key areas. The following actions illustrate some of the ongoing work supported by these philanthropies, which builds on years of investment.

Actions to ensure that AI protects democracy and the rights and freedoms of all people:

Philanthropies acting in this pillar are supporting initiatives to protect U.S. democracy from the potentially destabilizing effects of AI. These efforts include defending free and fair elections while combating disinformation and the undermining of public trust. The philanthropies are also funding projects to develop inclusive, rights-respecting AI governance frameworks and to guard against harmful impacts to historically marginalized communities.

Actions to leverage AI to innovate in the public interest and deliver breakthroughs to improve quality of life for people around the world:

The philanthropies are seeking to ensure that current and future AI innovators are leveraging AI to improve quality of life for all people and serve the public interest. Projects include efforts to build policymakers' understanding and use of AI and relevant technology to shape effective and equitable policy, and to redefine computer science education, research, and technology to center the needs, problems, and aspirations of all. They also include investments in inclusive technology development, educational opportunities in ethical design, and other programs that encourage responsible technology development and deployment.

Actions to empower workers to thrive amid AI-driven changes across sectors and industries:

The philanthropies are aligning investments to maximize the benefits and mitigate the harms of AI for all people by empowering workers to shape how AI systems impact their work, current and emerging industries, and the world's economies. Funding supports efforts to ensure AI systems respect labor rights and foster quality jobs by ensuring workers guide AI and its impact on working conditions. The philanthropies will also work to pioneer new economic thinking on competition, trade, and industrial policies to strengthen worker autonomy and power and integrate labor priorities into broader technology policy agendas while taking other actions to empower workers.

Actions to improve interpretability, transparency, and accountability for AI models, companies, and deployers:

Under this initiative, philanthropies are supporting efforts to hold AI companies accountable for racial, social, and economic bias, as well as funding projects to develop and advocate for strategies to increase transparency and accountability for AI companies and deployers. Philanthropies are supporting endeavors that focus on a broad range of AI-driven harms and advance research to address power disparities and monopoly in the tech industry, among other efforts.

Actions to support the development of international AI rules and norms:

The philanthropies aligned in this initiative are working with global partners to advance the development and implementation of responsible international AI governance and norms. Funded projects include development of policy frameworks, research that illuminates impacts of discrimination and bias, and advocacy efforts to ensure civil society has a seat at the table as international rules are developed.