Unlock Funding for Girls' STEM Programs: AI Tools to Transform Your Grant Finding and Proposal Writing

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CALIFORNIA
Girls STEM
NGCP Collaborative

The California Girls **STEM** Collaborative brings together organizations throughout California that are committed to informing and motivating girls to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (**STEM**), serving as a regional network of the National Girls Collaborative Project.

![CALIFORNIA Girls STEM Collaborative — NGCP]

Our Approach

- **Networking and Collaboration**: Building connections among people and programs to support each other throughout CA
- **STEM Resources:** Sharing curriculum, training tools, role model resources, etc.
- **Research:** Sharing data and research to support organization's work and fundraising efforts
- **Professional Development:** Supporting organizations do their jobs better - providing fundraising, program evaluation, and best practices training
- **Advocacy:** Educating California's leaders on the importance of engaging girls in STEM and keeping it a priority

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Collaborative
NGCP

If you are interested in getting on our mailing list to receive free resources and invitations to events email:

cagirlsstemcollaborative@gmail.com

Or find us on the National Girls Collaborative Project website and fill out the sign up form

Introductions

Organization

Location

What's Your "AI Wish"?

"If an AI could instantly solve ONE administrative task in your grant writing process today, what would it be?"

Today's Roadmap

- ❖ AI Quick Survey
- ❖ AI Fundamentals
- ❖ AI in Grantsmanship
- ❖ Finding Funding
- ❖ –Pause/Check-in–
- ❖ Reading RFPs
- ❖ Strategic Decision Making
- ❖ Practical Proposal Development
- ❖ –Break–
- ❖ Making AI Your Own
- ❖ Prompt Engineering
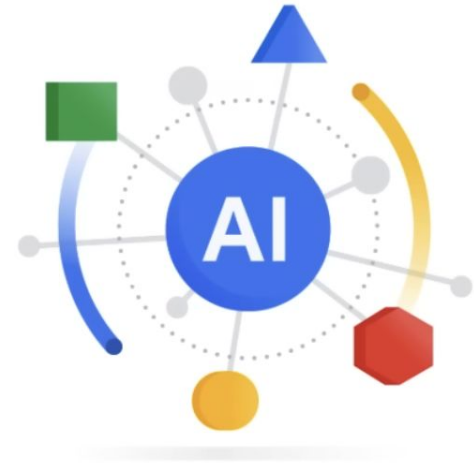- ❖ Q&A

AI Fundamentals

AI Is All Around Us

AI is used to enhance productivity, personalize experiences, and automate complex tasks across many industries.

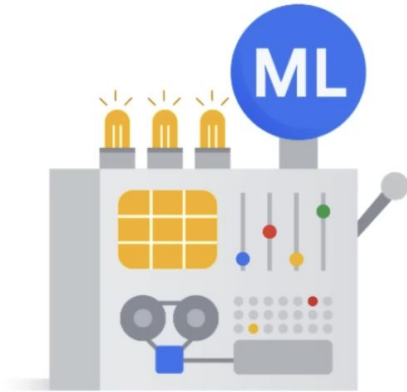# Common Ground: What is Artificial Intelligence?

AI is the theory and development of computer systems able to **perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence.**

Artificial Intelligence

is a discipline
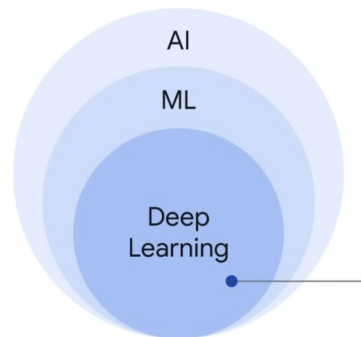
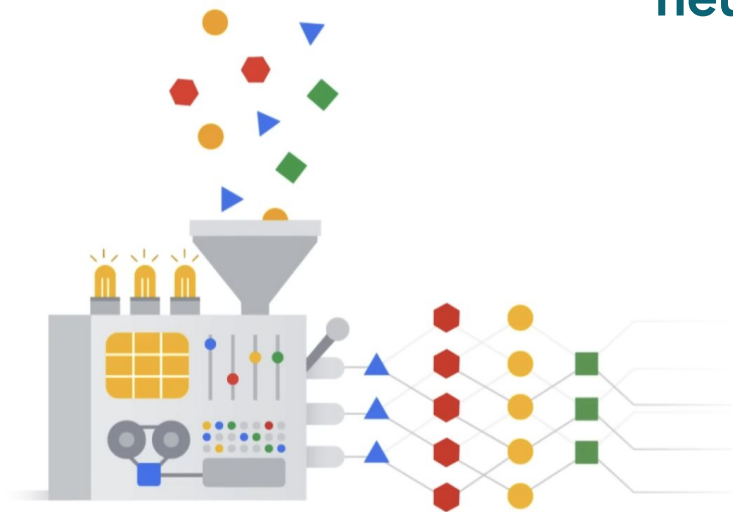# Common Ground: What is Machine Learning?

Machine Learning gives computers the ability to **learn without explicit programming.**

Machine Learning

is a subfield

Common Ground: What is Deep Learning?

Deep learning is a subset of machine learning. Deep learning works by **training neural networks on sets of data**.
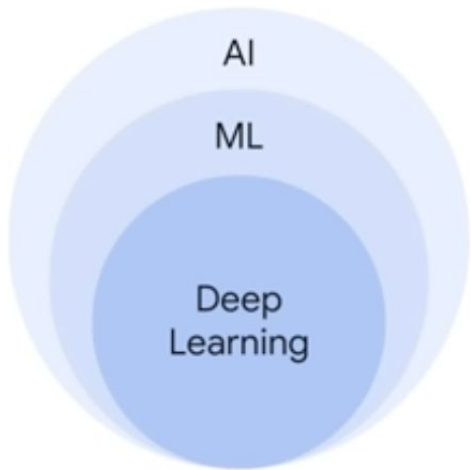
Putting it all together

AI

ML

Deep
Learning

Artificial Intelligence

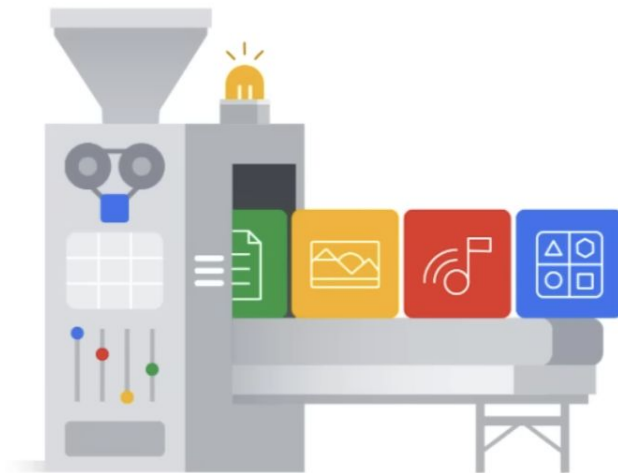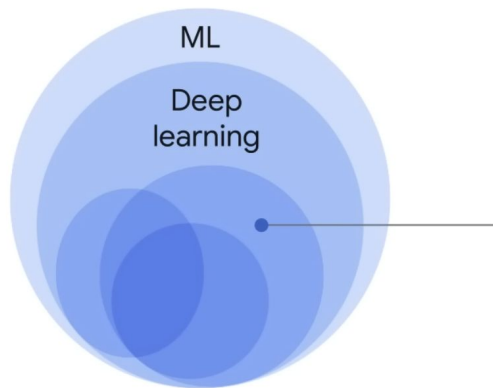is a discipline

Machine Learning

is a subfield

Image Source: Introduction to Generative AI

What is Generative AI?

Generative AI is a subset of Deep Learning that **generates new data based on the data it was trained on.**

AI in Grantsmanship

AI for Grants

- Research: Prospecting, Donor profiles
- Ideas Generation: Spark ideas, Expand ideas, Analyze ideas, Summarize ideas
- Writing: Outlines, ReWrites, Editing, Summaries, Draft proposal sections
- Visuals: Data visualization, Infographics
- Proofreading
- Budgeting: Budget considerations, Budget justifications
- Planning and Productivity: Project plans, Automation, Task assignment, Reminders
- Management
- Reporting

Safety & Ethics

- **Privacy First:** NEVER upload confidential donor lists, sensitive financial data, or private client names into public AI tools.

- **Human-in-the-Loop:** AI can "hallucinate" (make up facts). **You** are the expert. You must verify all dates, data, and requirements.

- **Accountability:** You are 100% responsible for the final submission. AI is the co-pilot; you are the Captain.

Finding Funding with AI

Finding Your Funding

Deep Research with AI

For Use with Google (and other search engines)
Federal, state, and private foundation grants available in [year] for a nonprofit that provides [mission] to [people] in [service area].

Let's Try It!

P **Persona**: Identify your role. This gives context to your request.

A **Aim**: State your objective so the GPT can focus on your desired outcome.

R **Recipients:** Specify the audience. This step gives the GPT the information it needs to tailor language, tone, and content to resonate with recipients.

T **Theme:** Describe the style, tone, and any related parameters.

S **Structure**: Note the desired format of the output: bullet points, in code, even emojis.

PARTS Prompt
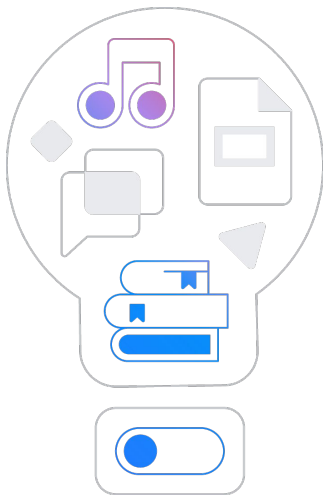
The better the input,
the better the output!

Deep Research with AI

For Use with Google (and other search engines)
Federal, state, and private foundation grants available in [year] for a nonprofit that provides [mission] to [people] in [service area].

For use with any AI search app
I work with a nonprofit that provides [mission] to [people] in [service area]. Please provide a list of current or upcoming grant opportunities in [year] that align with this mission and geographic focus. Include federal, state, and private foundations where possible. Only include opportunities that match this type of organization. For each opportunity, include the grant funder name, description, eligibility, scope, deadline, and website links if available.

Let's Try It!

Tools for Smarter Prospecting

Pause – Reflect

- What questions do you have so far?

- How do you think AI could help you now?

Reading RFPs with AI

5-minute RFP "Shred"

- **Summarization:** "Summarize this RFP: What are the 3 main goals and the 3 biggest constraints?"
- **Compliance Check:** "Extract all 'Must-Haves' and submission requirements into a table."
- **Alignment Check:** "Based on our mission [Paste Mission], what are the 3 biggest risks or gaps in applying for this specific grant?"

The "Deep Summarize" Prompt

Try this Prompt:

"I am going to paste a Grant Solicitation. Please act as a senior grant consultant and provide:

1. A 3-sentence summary of the program.
2. The maximum grant amount and the deadline.
3. A list of all required attachments.
4. Any eligibility restrictions (e.g., geographic or organizational type)."

Let's Try It!

Human-in-the-Loop Checklist

Always Do This:

✓ **Verify Deadlines:** AI has been known to get dates wrong—check the RFP yourself.

✓ **Confirm Eligibility:** If the AI says "Yes," double-check the original text for the word "Exception."

✓ **Check the 'Vibe':** AI can read the data, but it can't read the *relationship* history between your CEO and the Funder.

Strategic Decision Making with AI

The "Go/No-Go" Filter

Using AI to Guard Your Time:

- **Objective Analysis:** Humans are often optimistic ("We can *make* this project fit!"). AI is ruthlessly logical about word-for-word alignment.

- **The "Alignment Audit":** Use AI to compare your project goals against the funder's stated priorities.

- **Risk Identification:** Ask AI to find the "mismatch."

  - *Example:* "Tell me three reasons why our organization might NOT be a good fit for this specific grant."

Alignment Audit Prompt

Try this Prompt:

"I will provide our project summary and the funder's mission.

1. Rate our alignment on a scale of 1-10.
2. List the 3 strongest points of connection.
3. Identify 2 specific areas where our project might seem out of scope for this funder."

Outcome: You get an instant "heat map" of your proposal's strengths and weaknesses before you write a single word.

AI as "Mock Reviewer"

Getting Inside the Reviewer's Head:

- **Rubric Analysis:** If the funder provides a scoring rubric, feed it to the AI.

- **The "So What?" Test:** Ask the AI to read your draft and answer: "If I am a busy reviewer, what is the one most compelling reason to fund this, and what is the biggest unanswered question?"

- **Anticipating Hurdles:** AI can help you brainstorm potential "tough questions" a reviewer might have about your budget or sustainability plan.

Decoding Past Success

Learning from "The Winners":

- **Pattern Recognition:** Feed the AI a list of projects this funder has supported in the past (found on their website or 990s).
- **The "Unwritten" Preferences:** Ask: "Based on these past winners, what characteristics does this funder value most? (e.g., Innovation vs. Proven Models, Rural vs. Urban, Collaborative vs. Single-Org)."
- **Strategy:** Tailor your "vibe" to match the funder's historical preferences.

Practical Proposal Development with AI

The Wall of Text Continues...

The Human-AI Workflow

The 3-Step Success Cycle:

1. **AI Start:** Feed the AI your raw notes, data points, and the funder's questions. Get a "rough" first draft.

2. **Human Edit:** This is the most important step. Inject your "Heart," check for accuracy, and ensure it sounds like *your* organization.

3. **AI Polish:** Feed the edited version back in for a final grammar check, tone alignment, and character-count verification.

The "Drafting Accelerator"

Stop Rewriting the Same Narrative:

- **The Scenario:** You have a 500-word "About Us" section, but the grant only allows 1,500 **characters**.

- **The AI Solution:** Feed the AI your long-form history and ask it to: *"Summarize this into exactly 1,200 characters while keeping our mention of the 2022 Innovation Award."*

- **Reuse & Recycle:** AI can take your successful 2024 Education grant and "re-flavor" it for a 2026 Workforce Development grant in seconds.

Meeting Word & Character Counts

The Grant Writer's Greatest Enemy: The Character Limit.

- **The Prompt:** "I need to trim 150 characters from this paragraph without losing the mention of our budget or our partner organization. Use more concise phrasing."

- **Why this works:** AI is exceptional at "word-smithing"—finding shorter synonyms and removing "filler" words (like *that, very,* or *in order to*) that eat up your space.

Refining

Polishing for Impact and Clarity:

- "Make this more emotionally compelling"

- "Simplify this for a general audience"

- "Rewrite this in a more professional tone"

- "Strengthen the urgency of this section"

- "Make this sound more natural and human"

- "Add more concrete examples"

- "Rewrite this with a more donor-centric focus"

- "Make this sound like it was written by a seasoned grant writer"

Critiquing

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement:

- "Critique this grant proposal from the perspective of a funder. What questions might they have? What improvements can I make?"

- "What types of statistics would strengthen this proposal?"

Customizing Proposal for Different Funders

Upload the funder information.

Viewing the Proposal Through a Funder's Lens:

- "Analyze this funder's website and grant guidelines. What key themes or phrases should I incorporate into my proposal?"

- "Rewrite this grant proposal summary to align with this funder's priorities while keeping it persuasive and concise."

Data Privacy

Protecting Your Community & Donors:

- **Confidentiality:** Public AI models (like the free versions of ChatGPT or Gemini) "learn" from your data.

- **The "Never" List:**

  - Never upload donor names or addresses.

  - Never upload sensitive financial audits or bank details.

  - Never upload identifiable client stories or medical details.

- **The "Placeholder" Strategy:** Replace sensitive info with brackets: *"A 45-year-old client named [NAME] in [CITY] experienced..."*

Responsible AI & Bias

Recognizing the Limitations:

- **Hallucinations:** AI can be "confidently wrong." It may invent a statistic or a grant deadline. **Verify everything.**

- **Algorithmic Bias:** AI is trained on historical data, which may contain biases against certain communities.

- **The Human Filter:** Use your expertise to ensure the AI's output aligns with your organization's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

7-minute Refresh Break

Making AI Your Own

Custom GPTs

Build Your Custom GPT

A custom GPT is a specialized, tailored version of ChatGPT designed for specific tasks, workflows, or knowledge domains without requiring coding knowledge. Created via OpenAI's platform, these AI assistants use custom instructions, uploaded knowledge files, and connected external tools to deliver highly relevant, consistent responses, often used to automate repetitive tasks.

Priming & Prompting

Fine tuning your GPT:

- **Priming**: setting up the context or background information before making specific prompts
- **Prompting**: providing specific instructions or questions to ChatGPT to elicit a desired response

Prime Your Custom GPT

Give your GPT context for it's work. Upload your org's:

- Mission
- Past successful grant applications
- Programs & Services information
- Research, case studies, or statistics
- Budgets, reports, and impact data
- Newsletters
- Success stories

Prompt Engineering

Prompt Engineering

Consider:

- **Persona**: Set the expertise level of the AI
- **Context**: Provide the background
- **Task**: Use clear action verbs
- **Constraints**: Define boundaries
- **Output format**: Specify what you want
- **Tone**: Match your audience
- **Examples**: Show what "good" looks like
- **Audience**: Tailor the complexity

Prompt Engineering

Let's look under the hood

GPT Prompts for Your Nonprofit

1. Thank You Letters
2. Impact Reports
3. Fundraising appeals
4. Survey Creation
5. Reports
6. Storytelling
7. Blog writing
8. Email fundraising
9. Social Media posts and captions
10. Fundraising ideas
11. Data Analysis
12. Donor Prospecting

Final Thought

AI is a powerful assistant, not the author. It is here to handle the blank page, accelerate our research, and polish our prose—but it cannot feel the passion of your mission or build authentic trust with a funder. **Use AI to do the heavy lifting so *you* can focus on the heart of the story.**

Q&A

Thank You!!!!!