



AI Coalition for Social Impact, Convened by Blackbaud, Officially Opens the Free AI for Social Impact Certification Program

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Free, product-agnostic, expert-led course content is designed to train social impact practitioners in responsible and effective AI use

CHARLESTON, S.C., July 14, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- The [AI Coalition for Social Impact](#) —convened by Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB), the world's leading provider of AI-powered solutions for social impact—today opened the [AI for Social Impact Certification Program](#) with the launch of the first course: AI Fundamentals for Social Impact. The free, product-agnostic certification program is designed to help organizations build the confidence, skills and governance needed to use artificial intelligence responsibly and effectively.

"AI could bring the greatest unlock of mission acceleration in the history of social impact, but adoption alone is not enough," said Carrie Cobb, chief data and AI officer at Blackbaud. "The key is building AI maturity: investing in education and best practices to govern AI well, plus deploying tools designed for specific workflows. This training—combined with the right technology—will empower organizations to move from tentative AI use to transformative AI results."

Recent data from the Blackbaud Institute (June 2026) found that 85% of nonprofit professionals now use AI at work, and half of organizations increased their AI use in 2026 over last year; however, only around 10% are seeing major gains as a result. The AI for Social Impact Certification Course creates a tangible path forward for organizations looking to build AI maturity that will drive enduring value for their missions.

The first course in the certification program features three lessons, led by experts from AI Coalition for Social Impact member organizations:

- **Lesson 1: Foundations of AI** | Led by Ari Kaplan, a pioneer in digital transformation and currently the global head of evangelism at Databricks, this course offers a clear, accessible introduction to the world of artificial intelligence for social impact professionals. Ari brings his decades of experience translating complex technical concepts into practical frameworks. The course explores the foundations of AI, including its history, evolution, and the key types of AI in use today. It explores not just what AI is, but how to understand and evaluate it in ways that strengthen missions and empower teams.
- **Lesson 2: Navigating AI Tools and Trends** | This course, guided by Daniel Wallace and Dante Gabrielli of McKinsey & Company, provides a practical overview of today's AI landscape and what it means for social impact organizations. It explores why AI transformation is happening now, why many organizations struggle to move beyond pilots, and how emerging tools like AI agents are reshaping how work gets done. Through clear frameworks, real-world examples, and accessible explanations, this course helps demystify AI and connect technology trends to mission-driven outcomes. The course is designed to help organizations understand where they are on the AI maturity journey and how to take informed, thoughtful next steps.
- **Lesson 3: Understanding Generational Perspectives of AI** | This course, led by Dr. Laurene Currie, Responsible AI Research Scientist at Blackbaud, explores how attitudes toward AI differ across age groups and what these differences mean for adoption in the social impact sector. Drawing on real-world research and examples, Laurene provides insight into generational trends, trust factors, and expectations around AI use. The course is designed to inform how organizations can tailor AI strategies and communication to engage diverse audiences effectively.

The [AI Coalition for Social Impact](#), convened by Blackbaud in 2025 brings together leaders from philanthropy, technology, education, and corporate social responsibility to provide guidance, shared standards, and practical resources for responsible AI use. This free, product-agnostic certification program is the coalition's flagship initiative. Course 2, Responsible AI Principles and Regulations, will be available later this year.

Organizations and individuals can learn more, register for the course, and share the opportunity with their networks at:

<https://www.blackbaud.com/ai/certifications>

About Blackbaud

[Blackbaud](#) (NASDAQ: BLKB) is the world's leading provider of AI-powered solutions for social impact. Serving nonprofits, educational institutions, companies committed to corporate social responsibility, and individual change makers, Blackbaud propels impact at scale with the sector's most intelligent solutions for fundraising and engagement, education solutions, financial management and CSR and grantmaking. With the deepest expertise powered by the world's largest philanthropic data set, the most connected workflows, and the most powerful impact network, Blackbaud's solutions are building a future where resources are unleashed at the speed of need. Blackbaud has been recognized by Fast Company, Newsweek, Quartz, Forbes and more for AI innovation, responsible leadership and workplace excellence. Blackbaud has operations in the United States, Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, India and the United Kingdom, supporting users in 100+ countries. Learn more at www.blackbaud.com or follow us on [X/Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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