



Blackbaud Introduces Lantern™, the First Domain-Specific Language Model Purpose-Built for Fundraising

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COLUMBUS, Ohio, Sept. 29, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Blackbaud (NASDAQ: BLKB), the world's leading provider of AI-powered solutions for social impact, today at [hbcon.2026](#) unveiled Lantern™, the first domain-specific language model purpose-built to optimize fundraising intelligence.

The social impact sector is being underserved by large language models. While 85% of social impact professionals say they are using AI in their daily jobs, only about [10% of organizations](#) are realizing significant dividends on their investment. Blackbaud has entered a strategic collaboration with Databricks to ensure the social impact sector gets the best outcomes from AI. Lantern is built on more than four decades of experience in fundraising workflows, decisions, and results, so that it understands giving behavior rather than buying behavior. This gives social impact organizations tailored intelligence to help them raise more so they can continue solving society's most pressing challenges.

"Every organization has access to powerful AI, but frontier models learn from the internet, while Lantern learns from philanthropy," said Mike Gianoni, president, CEO and vice chairman of the board of directors, Blackbaud. "With more than \$100 billion raised, granted or managed through our platforms every year, Blackbaud has deep expertise on social impact and generosity, including why, when and how people give. Lantern understands fundraising goals, donor dynamics and nonprofit priorities in ways general-purpose AI doesn't and puts actionable intelligence into the hands of fundraisers so they can make the best-informed decisions."

Frontier AI meets fundraising expertise

Working with Databricks, Blackbaud is combining leading open-weight models on the Databricks Data + AI Platform with more than 40 years of social impact intelligence. Lantern is post-trained on synthetic scenarios modeled on Blackbaud's comprehensive Social Impact Signal Graph™ to reflect real-world fundraising patterns and bring the unique complexity of fundraising to the model. This flexible approach enables Lantern to evolve as technology advances.

"There is an enormous opportunity for the philanthropy world to benefit from AI, but seeing returns requires the right data, context and governance," said Andy Kofoed, president, global field operations, Databricks. "Together, Blackbaud and Databricks are giving nonprofits the data foundation they need to scale their fundraising and maximize their real-world impact."

Lantern is developed under Blackbaud's [Responsible AI principles](#) with privacy, transparency and sector-appropriate governance at its core to serve the unique needs of social impact organizations.

A model that supports social impact

Lantern understands the rhythms of fundraising, including how relationships are built, nurtured and transformed into generosity. It can illuminate opportunities that might otherwise go unseen, helping social impact organizations navigate complexity, uncover new possibilities and focus their energy where they can create the greatest impact. It reflects the importance of things like retention, upgrade paths and lifetime relationships, all of which are central to fundraising but not native to general-purpose AI models.

"The future of AI isn't about who has the largest model; it's about who best reflects the world their customers operate in," said Carrie Cobb, chief data and AI officer, Blackbaud. "Lantern was purpose-built to reflect fundraising, leveraging decades of sector expertise with the intelligence embedded in Blackbaud's Social Impact Signal Graph. The result is trusted intelligence that is more relevant, more transparent and more actionable because it understands the relationships, behaviors and opportunities that drive impact for our customers. The sector doesn't need more AI. It needs AI designed to support social impact."

Lantern is being built with input from Blackbaud customers including [Boston University](#), [Hesed House](#) and [YMCA of the North](#) to support the outcomes frontline fundraisers want to achieve.

"Every industry has its own language, expertise, decision-making processes, rules and guardrails," said Tim Cerato, assistant vice president, constituent relationship management, Boston University. "One of the biggest unlocks for AI is its ability to understand those nuances and amplify the effectiveness of the people doing the work. We see tremendous potential in technologies that augment the knowledge and expertise of our teams, expanding what people can accomplish and allowing them to focus their energy on the work that drives the most meaningful outcomes."

Availability

Lantern will be embedded within Blackbaud's [Platform for Good™](#), bringing fundraising intelligence directly into the solutions organizations use every day to engage supporters, grow generosity and advance their missions.

Lantern will begin powering select Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT® and Agents for Good™ capabilities in 2027, with broader availability planned across Blackbaud's Platform for Good.

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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Forward-looking Statements

Except for historical information, all of the statements, expectations and assumptions contained in this news release are forward-looking statements that involve a number of risks and uncertainties, including statements regarding expected benefits of products and product features. Although Blackbaud attempts to be accurate in making these forward-looking statements, it is possible that future circumstances might differ from the assumptions on which such statements are based. In addition, other important factors that could cause results to differ materially include the following: general economic risks; uncertainty regarding increased business and renewals from existing customers; continued success in sales growth; management of integration of acquired companies and other risks associated with acquisitions; risks associated with successful implementation of multiple integrated software products; the ability to attract and retain key personnel; risks associated with management of growth; lengthy sales and implementation cycles; technological changes that make our products and services less competitive; and the other risk factors set forth from time to time in the SEC filings for Blackbaud, copies of which are available free of charge at the SEC's website at www.sec.gov or upon request from Blackbaud's investor relations department. All Blackbaud product names appearing herein are trademarks or registered trademarks of Blackbaud, Inc.

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