



Data and Society Accelerator Program

Our Accelerator program aims to advance nonprofit data maturity while equipping nonprofit organizations with the tools and expertise they seek to develop and test proof-of concept data experiments.

Many nonprofit organizations have unique datasets that – alone or in combination with other data – may offer deeper insights into the needs of beneficiary groups, more precise evaluation of programmatic interventions, or greater confidence in anecdotal evidence relevant to their missions. Program staff working on data-centric projects may have a new hypothesis about the information contained in their organization’s datasets that – if validated – could dramatically improve decisions, activities and impact.

Yet through our conversations with 300+ nonprofits over the past four years, we have learned that the in-house infrastructure, tools, and technical expertise required to yield these insights are often out of reach due to prohibitive costs and overburdened nonprofit staff. Nonprofit organizations may have an interest in building their advanced analytics and data technology capacity, but lack the resources required to make the case that such an investment is worthwhile.

In response, our Data and Society team designed the Accelerator program: providing interested nonprofits with a nine-month grant in support of developing and testing a proof-of-concept data experiment using a data exploration and analysis platform managed by Patrick J. McGovern Foundation’s (PJMF) in-house data engineers. These grants enable our Accelerator grantees to gain up to six months of experience using an advanced analytics "sandbox" that can handle large, complex datasets -- foregoing the need for these organizations to set up and invest in a test infrastructure before knowing if it’s a good fit for their teams.

Accelerator program grantees demonstrate a commitment to shared learning -- including documenting and setting an example for how others in their field can advance nonprofit data maturity in an impactful, responsible, inclusive way. Once selected, they will team up with our in-house technical team to:

- Translate problem definitions into data questions
- Prepare the data for ingesting, and
- Use a cloud-based platform to determine whether the datasets explored contain the information needed to answer those previously defined questions

Beyond our in-kind contributions of infrastructure and expertise, we may also provide supplementary support to cover expenses associated with running your data experiment of up to \$100,000.

Actionable outcomes and learning. We define success as advancing your organization's data maturity through the process of delivering a conclusive response to your data hypothesis and determining actionable next steps for your program – whether that entails outlining a means to address newly identified data gaps and quality issues, sharing promising insights with potential partners, or targeting larger grantmaking organizations to advance your data project.

Expected Time Commitment: Accelerator projects are high-touch grant engagements. Our in-house technical team will dedicate between 40-50 hours of face time to your organization for project scoping, onboarding, technical syncs and peer learning activities during the course of the nine-month grant period. We expect each Accelerator grantee to drive their project forward, but our in-house technical team will work alongside your team to get your data experiment onboarded to the platform and into a steady state, as well help troubleshoot issues as needed along the way.

Application process: Our next cohort of Accelerator grantees will focus on the theme of **Climate Change and Environmental Issues**. The call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) will run from Jul 30, 2021- Aug 31, 2021, during which we will review submissions on a rolling basis. Those organizations who meet our initial criteria for impact potential and technical fit will be asked to join a series of exploratory and technical project scoping conversations prior to being invited to submit a formal proposal for consideration.

Final decisions around Cohort 2 will be made in November 2021, with 10-12 Accelerator projects to be launched in 2022.

To submit an Expression of Interest, visit: <https://mcgovern-portal.givingdata.com/campaign/EOI>

Have a question not covered here? Send us an email at accelerator@mcgovern..org

