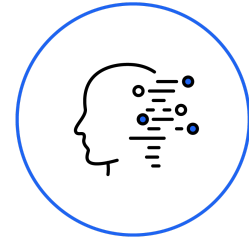# OpenAI's 2025 Nonprofit Jam

An After-Action Report on the Successes, Heroes, Community Building, and Lessons Learned

August 2025

OpenAI

Foreword

At OpenAI, we're building tools to help people solve hard problems. That includes nonprofit organizations working on the frontlines in their communities. Nonprofits are often the first to step up when their states, cities and localities face tough challenges, but they're far too often the last to benefit from transformative and disruptive new technologies. Our recent Nonprofit Jam flipped that script – putting our technology in nonprofit groups' hands, and spending a day co-creating tools to support their work.

We believe in democratizing innovation so the benefits of AI reach as many people as possible, not just a select few. On July 17, we partnered with the Walton Family Foundation, Emerson Collective, and more than 15 regional partners nationwide to bring nearly 1,000 nonprofit leaders together at 10 locations across the country – from Arkansas and Ohio, to California and New York – for a hands-on day of learning practical ways to build with AI. I joined Robin Hood and 100 local nonprofit leaders in Brooklyn, NY to share my excitement about using the Nonprofit Jam to learn how we can help amplify the impact of community organizations through AI.

At my session and the other ones across the country, nonprofit leaders worked directly with OpenAI technical experts and volunteers to explore how ChatGPT can help draft fundraising emails and grant proposals, summarize and translate documents, and streamline internal operations. Just as important, we at OpenAI listened and learned from the people who know their communities best so we can build AI that truly meets their needs. OpenAI is governed by a nonprofit, so helping philanthropic organizations harness AI is core to our mission of building AI that benefits everyone, not just the few. That's democracy by design.

This report (1) summarizes what happened at the Nonprofit Jam; (2) details what participants said about the event; (3) highlights the successes with nonprofit leaders who had never used AI before; (4) evaluates the workflows that participants said were most popular; (5) offers recommendations about making future Nonprofit Jams better; and (6) lists OpenAI's takeaways on AI adoption for nonprofits.

We want to thank all of our local partners, as well as Decoded Futures, the National Center for Civic Innovation, and the Fund for the City of New York for supporting the event and sharing their insights on how nonprofits can adopt and leverage technology to best serve communities.

We also want to thank the more than 100 OpenAI employee volunteers who worked with these nonprofit leaders during the Jam session, heard their feedback on our tools and the event itself, and

have since shared the feedback internally in order to make our tools and future sessions work even better.

The Nonprofit Jam reflects our commitment to making the benefits of AI accessible to everyone.

Nicole Seligman
Member of OpenAI's Board of Directors
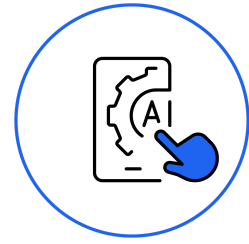
"AI tools directly into your hands": What happened at the Jam

On July 17, OpenAI partnered with the Walton Family Foundation, Emerson Collective and regional partners to host nearly 1,000 nonprofit leaders at 10 different sites across the country – from Bentonville, Arkansas and Columbus, Ohio, to Brooklyn, New York and Salinas, California.

Nearly 700 different organizations participated in the one-day Nonprofit Jam, including AltaSea in Los Angeles, Envision Dallas, United Way of Delaware, and the Colorado Blueprint to End Hunger. At each location, these nonprofit leaders met with peer organizations and leaders from communities. They received instructions and tips from on-site volunteers on how to leverage AI tools to help solve real problems. And then they put that instruction to practice, creating a working prototype that they applied to their work that very day.

In particular, these nonprofit leaders had access to an "AI Prompt Cookbook" – developed by our partners at Decoded Futures – for prompting ChatGPT for common nonprofit challenges.

"Nonprofits do incredibly important work, solving some of people's biggest challenges, often thanklessly, tirelessly, and with fewer resources that they need," OpenAI's Sam Altman said in a video message to welcome participants to the Jam. "That's why we think it's so important to get AI tools directly into your hands to help you scale your impact, do more of what you're great at, and ensure that the benefits of AI reach everyone, not just a select few."

Leaders in the nonprofit sector saw the Jam as a successful exercise in building technical capacity for their grantee nonprofits. "The Nonprofit Jam exceeded its goal of giving community leaders the tools, skills, and mindsets to strengthen connection, collaboration, and impact," said Romy Drucker, Director of the Walton Family Foundation's Education Program.

By the Numbers

996
nonprofit leaders

695
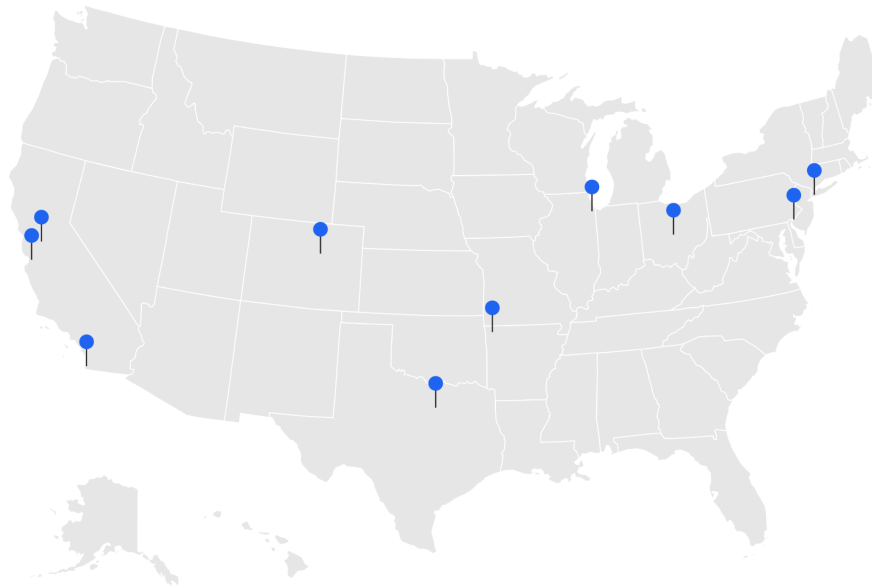unique organizations

250
volunteers

10
locations:

Bentonville, AR
Brooklyn, NY
Chicago, IL
Columbus, OH
Dallas, TX
Denver, CO
Los Angeles, CA
Salinas, CA
Oakland, CA
Wilmington, DE

Habitat for Humanity

Rebecca Thompson
https://dallasareahabitat.org/

Rebecca works at Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity, whose mission is to build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable homeownership for individuals and families. During the Jam, they were building a system for revenue recognition that's good for finance and development. Rebecca's organization is just beginning to discuss how to incorporate AI into its workflows.

"Today was the best day of my professional career. I left so inspired!" – Rebecca

"Hands-on learning": What participants said

According to a survey taken after the Nonprofit Jam, 87% of participants said it was "very helpful" or "excellent"; 78% said they left with a functional workflow; 95% said they were likely to apply AI in their organizations; and 97% said they'd recommend the Jam to other nonprofit leaders.

What Participants Said

87%
said the Jam was very helpful or excellent

97%
would recommend it to other nonprofit leaders

78%
said they left the Jam with a functional workflow

95%
said they were likely to apply AI in their organization

The post-Jam survey also asked participants to describe what the most valuable part of the event was for them. Some of the responses:

"Learning how to use ChatGPT effectively as a tool"

"The incredibly helpful staff and volunteers that were floating around that we could ask questions to"

"Space to learn about and explore ChatGPT"

"The connections and community"
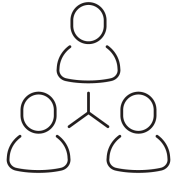
"Having a tech at our table"

"Learning how to write good prompts"

"The practicing and hands-on learning"

"The one-on-one support from the OpenAI team was AWESOME"

What was most valuable?

1.
Networking & Peer Learning

2.
Prompting & Skills Development

3.
Hands-on Learning & Practice

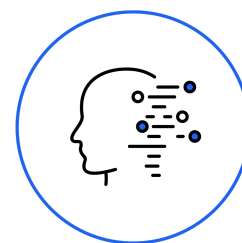# 4.
Expert Support & Mentoring

5.
AI Cookbook & Templates

"It blew me away": What first-time users said

Another highlight from the Nonprofit Jam were the testimonials from first-time users of AI tools and ChatGPT. While some nonprofit leaders had familiarity using AI tools, others said they had never used it before attending the Jam.

"It blew me away… I am in love," said first-time user Maria Matos, President and CEO of the Latin American Community Center in Wilmington, Delaware. Matos was particularly impressed how ChatGPT was able to translate her grant proposals to and from Spanish.

Johane Cherico, Matos' colleague at the Latin American Community Center, also said she had never used ChatGPT until the Nonprofit Jam, where she experimented with it by drafting fundraising emails and making translations.

"I don't even have time to think of all the ways in which this can help me," Cherico said.

What is your current stage of AI adoption?

37%	27%	23%	13%
implementing	exploring	piloting	scaling

Fostering Wishes Foundation

Donna Storan
https://fosteringwishesfoundation.org

Donna is the founder and executive director of Fostering Wishes Foundation, which provides special-occasion wishes and everyday necessities to foster children. Donna had never used ChatGPT before, but said the Jam session taught her how to save as much as $5,000 in better bar-coding inventory.

She also said that how Chat improved her grant-writing gave her "goosebumps."

"My brain is blown" – Donna
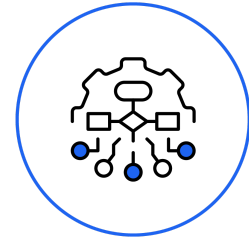
"Building a custom GPT": What workflows were most popular

Participants said they hoped to incorporate AI into a wide variety of workflows, with ideas clustering around several recurring themes. Many plan to use AI to streamline grant writing and proposal development by drafting initial proposals, refining language, and responding to RFPs more efficiently.

"We are using AI more now for grant applications, and we're turning to AI when we need to search for information," said one nonprofit leader.

Others aim to expand their data management and analysis capabilities, including organizing survey responses, extracting insights from reports, and improving database upkeep.

A large group expressed interest in building custom GPTs or lightweight apps tailored to organizational needs. Examples included donor engagement tools, internal knowledge bases, and automated meeting note summarizers.

Content creation was another major theme, with plans to use AI for drafting newsletters, blogs, and marketing copy. A smaller but notable segment focused on social media and marketing automation, from campaign planning to post scheduling.

Several nonprofits see AI as a way to improve training and onboarding for staff and volunteers by using conversational tools to answer common questions and guide new hires. Many said they planned to build on prototypes developed during the Jam, suggesting a strong link between hands-on learning and future adoption. Some responses highlighted excitement about potential future uses of the technology, and others were concrete and tied to immediate organizational goals.

All these workflow observations were valuable to senior leaders on OpenAI's product and engineering teams, who shared internally about how the company's products could be improved based on what they saw at the Jam. The OpenAI team of volunteers left the Jam committed to the "build with" approach, partnering with people and communities to shape solutions that reflect their needs and experiences.

Participants' most popular workflows

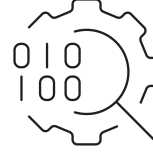| 1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Grants & Fundraising	**Project/ Process Automation**	**Docs, Writing & Reports**	**Education, Curriculum & Training**	**Custom GPTs, Agents & Chatbots**	**Marketing & Social Media**

Defy Ventures

Quan Huynh
https://www.defyventures.org/our-community/defy-socal

Defy Ventures works to give people with criminal histories a second chance, and Quan – who served 22 years in prison before graduating from Defy's program – is now the organization's executive director in Southern California.

Quan uses ChatGPT for 85% of his workflow and has built multiple custom bots to dramatically increase efficiency across his nonprofit work – including bots for grant writing, contract generation, and donor roleplay. He also says the technology has helped with his organization's digital newsletters, which generated a 260% increase in monthly donors in six months.

"The Donor Dialogue bot that I created at the Nonprofit Jam helped me secure a commitment from one of the nation's largest financial institutions for a $50K investment in our work," Quan said. "The bot walked me through different scenarios and primed me for the meeting, and it went even better than I could have expected."
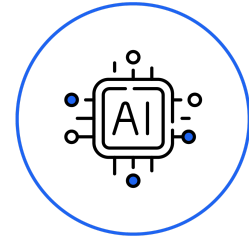
"Maybe more time?" Making future Jams better

Participants at the Jam identified five main areas for improvement at future events. The most common request was for more hands-on time to experiment with tools, build workflows, and apply new skills to participants' own projects. Some wanted longer open work sessions; others suggested breaking the event into smaller segments with practice woven throughout.

"Maybe more time? It was a packed day, but maybe a follow up?" said one participant. "Possibly expand it into a two-day event over a weekend and call it a bootcamp!" said another. "I think breaking people up into groups based on which one of the five categories you are trying to solve," said a third.

A second theme was pacing and structure. A number of respondents felt certain sections moved too slowly or too quickly, and recommended a tighter agenda. Relatedly, some asked for more examples and use cases, particularly from the nonprofit sector, to help them connect the technology to their daily work.

Another recurring suggestion was to tailor content for different experience levels, perhaps by offering separate tracks or breakout rooms for beginners and advanced users. A smaller group mentioned technical and venue improvements.

Overall, the feedback shows participants want to keep the collaborative, skills-focused approach while increasing opportunities to apply learning in real time, refine content delivery, and make the experience more personalized.

Top ideas to make the next Jam better

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Improved Structure & Guidance	**Pacing & Timing Adjustments**	**Environment & Logistics**	**Enhanced Peer Collaboration**	**More Content & Advanced Training**

Karen's Club

**Karen Peterson**

https://www.karensclub.org/

Karen Peterson is a Stage 4 breast-cancer survivor, and the nonprofit she founded equips patients – especially those from underrepresented communities – with the tools and knowledge they need to navigate diagnostic testing, participate in research and make informed healthcare decisions.

Before the Jam, Karen was skeptical about using AI to support her mission. But her perspective shifted dramatically afterward. She discovered that ChatGPT could process and summarize complex clinical trial data quickly, ask clarifying questions, and craft compelling stories for grants, newsletters, and the group's website.
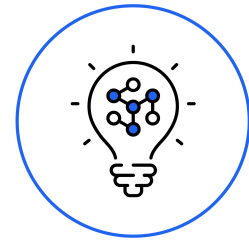
Five takeaways on nonprofit AI adoption

The Nonprofit Jam also helped us at OpenAI identify strategies for helping nonprofits confidently adopt AI. The biggest breakthroughs came from making AI feel approachable, giving people space to experiment, and showing real examples from peers they trust. With hands-on practice, ready-to-use resources, and human support, participants left with the skills—and the confidence—to keep building.

1. Overcoming hesitation and building confidence is the first step
We learned that the biggest barrier isn't technology; it's uncertainty about where to begin. Programs that demystify AI, give permission to experiment, and frame ChatGPT as a collaborator—someone who can refine prompts, draft GPT instructions, or troubleshoot—help spur curiosity. A great first step: ask, "I'm a [job role] at [org]. What are 10 ways ChatGPT could help me?"

2. Community-based learning accelerates adoption
We also found that spotlighting credible, mission-aligned examples from trusted nonprofit peers and rooting learning in local context helps participants see AI as relevant and attainable. Peer examples break down perceptions that AI is "for someone else" and accelerate adoption.

**3. Hands-on, supported learning is essential and multiplies impact.**
We learned that nonprofit staff benefit from structured, facilitated environments where they can practice with AI and apply it to real challenges. This is more effective than self-study and helps turn abstract potential into practical skills. Tech mentors, peer exchange, and local conveners who foster a trusted, inclusive environment and understand nonprofit contexts dramatically improve learning outcomes and model how to continue experimenting after the event.

4. Tangible, role-specific resources drive adoption
Prompt cookbooks, templates, and other ready-to-use resources make it easy to see "what good looks like" and to adapt AI for real-world tasks. These materials help bridge the gap between possibility and action.

5. Addressing concerns upfront builds informed, confident users
Finally, we learned that answering common questions about AI (e.g. hallucinations, bias, and privacy concerns, and when not to use AI) helps nonprofits make sound judgment calls and adopt the technology responsibly.
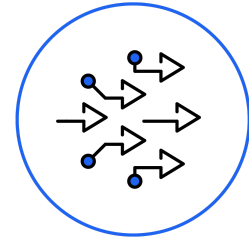
Conclusion

OpenAI's 2025 Nonprofit Jam demonstrated the impact when the organizations tackling society's most urgent challenges gain the skills and confidence to put AI to work. In just one day, nearly 1,000 leaders from across the nonprofit landscape—from food banks looking for innovative ways to feed the hungry, to children's hospitals trying to raise life-saving funding more effectively, and countless more — learned how to use AI to support their communities more quickly, cost efficiently, and effectively.

Some 250 OpenAI staffers and partner volunteers supported the Jam's 10 sites across the country to learn from the nonprofit leaders and provide tailored, in-person instruction. And the feedback was clear: direct, immersive learning can transform what's possible, regardless of how much participants knew about AI beforehand. It also reaffirmed that the solutions to hard problems lie within the communities themselves.

First-time users walked away with tools they could use immediately to save money, speed up tasks, and expand their impact. More seasoned participants used the Jam to learn how to leverage ChatGPT's most powerful features, hone their skills, and prototype customized tools that they hope to adapt across their organizations. Many left not only with tangible new skills, but also with a renewed sense of optimism about what AI will be able to enable them to achieve in the future.

For us, the Jam highlighted the importance of democratizing access to AI so that it reaches as many people as possible, of partnering with local organizations that know their communities the best, and of listening to these groups so we can build tools *with* them instead of *for* them. This all speaks to how OpenAI's corporate structure—which started as a nonprofit, remains a nonprofit, and will continue to be a nonprofit—is designed to advance our mission of building AI that benefits all of humanity. The Jam was one part of that work. Our [OpenAI Forum](#) is another, giving leaders from every field a place to deepen their understanding of AI, exchange ideas, and learn from each other's successes and setbacks.

Future Jams will build on what we learned this time: refining the structure and format of the training programs, providing more mentoring, maintaining a way of providing ongoing peer support, and continuing to meet organizations where they are.

From a workforce program in Southern California to a community college career center in New York City, the challenges nonprofits face are complex, but AI can tangibly scale their impact. Their work couldn't be more important, and we're honored to support it.

The Nonprofit Jam illustrated the kind of future OpenAI aims to build: one where AI works for everyone, and where the people on the ground solving problems in their communities have full access to a transformative technology that gives them every advantage possible to succeed.
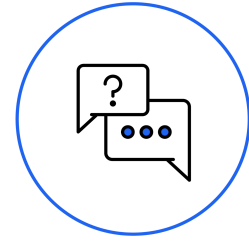
Appendix: More Testimonials from the Jam

Salinas, CA

"At the OpenAI Jam, I discovered there's actually a science to writing great prompts, like a recipe for getting the best out of AI," **said Alex Rodriguez, Director of Design and Software Development at Digital NEST**. "So I built a full-stack app that uses OpenAI's API to rate the prompt and instantly remix it into a 10/10. It's like having an AI prompt coach in your pocket."

Denver, CO

"It was a powerful session and a reminder that AI isn't just for tech giants — it's a tool for mission-driven innovation," **shared Vanessa Vergara, Clinica Colorado's Medical Director.** "From data equity to multilingual access to automating the admin chaos, the possibilities for nonprofits are incredible. Big thanks to OpenAI for creating space for nonprofit leaders to learn, connect, imagine, and build."

Oakland, CA

"As a tech-education nonprofit, we should model cutting-edge tools," **noted Samia Zuber, Executive Director at Hack the Hood**, which serves underestimated youth and young adults. Samia's team plans to use AI to lighten administrative load and to co-create an AI literacy module for students.

Columbus, OH

Creative Living provides safe, affordable, wheelchair accessible apartments for adults with disabilities. At the Jam, **Executive Director Mike Lightbody** built "MaxGPT," which he says is more than a chatbot. "MaxGPT carries institutional wisdom, answers questions about housing, advocacy, accessibility, and offers support grounded in the values we were built on. For residents, it could mean instant answers with heart. For our board and staff, a trusted guide to our mission and legacy."

Chicago, IL

Jeffrey Beckham, Jr., CEO of Chicago Scholars, shared that they just launched Skills Tree, an in-platform resume-builder powered by ChatGPT and an in-platform interview tool to help scholars get real time feedback. Jeffrey also shared a benefit of the Jam "is the ecosystem of being around other nonprofits that work in similar spaces allows for cross community-building."

Los Angeles, CA

Colette Black, Chief Development and Marketing Officer at JVS SoCal shared on LinkedIn "I had a full-on aha moment: AI isn't distant, daunting tech—it's interactive, iterative, and shockingly fast. You

can go from prompt to product in minutes, even if you're new to it." JVS SoCal helps underserved Californians—like veterans, youth, refugees—turn job struggles into success.

Bentonville, AR

"The experience was both inspiring and deeply practical," said **Erika Guy, HR & Development Director at [The Donald W. Reynolds Boys & Girls Club](#).** "During the AI Jam, I began designing a prototype that will help streamline tasks like grant writing and donor communication—work that is essential to our sustainability but often time-intensive. What I learned during the workshop will allow us to spend less time on paperwork and more time delivering high-quality programs and deepening community impact."

Brooklyn, NY

Gisselle Ramirez, Co-Founder of the Sensory-Friendly Gardening & Art Program at Bronx Special Kids, shared on [LinkedIn](#) that her team "used ChatGPT to make our sensory gardening program more accessible for disabled children in the Bronx. We built: Bilingual lesson plans, AAC-friendly visuals, Adaptive materials for non-speaking learners, and Inclusive signage and take-home tools. AI isn't just about efficiency—it's about equity. When we pair tech with lived experience, we can build joyful, inclusive spaces where every child is celebrated."

Dallas, TX

"OpenAI tools have been a game changer" shared **Lou Celli, Vice President of [Envision Dallas](#)**. "For people who are blind, being able to use voice prompts to empower communities to search the internet, get info they can use in emails, grant apps, everyday work, etc. -- it's a game changer for them. It helps level the playing field for those who are blind and visually impaired."

Wilmington, DE

"With OpenAI, the transportation team at Nurses & Neighbors Collaborative is one step closer to creating an agent that can provide transportation solutions to accessing care in one call" wrote **Bet Key Wong, Founder & Project Lead at Nursing-Transportation Partnership**, on [LinkedIn](#). "I never had so much tech support (all the folks on stage in the photo) without creating a ticket!"