

Schmidt Sciences AI in Science Fellowship

Community Initiatives Fund, Round 2

Available to Schmidt Sciences' AI in Science Fellowship fellows and alumni

Purpose

The second round of the Community Initiatives Fund will open to applications from today to 31 August, 2025. As with the first round, awards up to US \$100,000 are available to support community initiatives or events. These initiatives should bring together current and/or alumni Fellows, alongside other guests and experts, to explore important but neglected questions related to applying AI/ML approaches in science. Community initiatives may be events (e.g., a workshop; retreat; conference), but may also be other forms of collaborative, community-oriented activities.

Each initiative should lead to at least 2 of the objectives below:

- new insights (either understanding, guidance, or further questions for exploration) related to collective challenges
- new research collaborations and/or communities of shared practice and learning
- meaningful skills development among attendees/participants related to applying AI/ML tools in science

How it works

What are important but neglected questions?

- “Important” = answering this question would help advance the application of AI/ML in science in a meaningful way.
- “Neglected” = there are currently very few or no spaces for people to engage with each other to explore the questions.

Who can apply and what is their responsibility?

- Each initiative must have at least one active Fellow as its leader **and** endorsement from their Program Coordinator (endorsement provides that the University is ready and willing to support the Fellow to execute a high-quality event)
- Fellows may team up with other Fellows or Alumni to apply together
- Awards will be disbursed only to the nine partner universities of this program, not to individuals. In instances where Fellows from multiple universities apply together, the award will be made to the university that endorses the proposal (see section 2 of the application template below)
- Schmidt Sciences should not be relied on for logistics/operational support. However, once selected, we will organize a kick-off call to share initial advice on your

workflow/ideas. We can also provide graphics design support for your initiative (such as digital logo and workshop collateral design)

Who can attend and participate in the community event?

- Fellows and Alumni of the AI in Science Fellowship should constitute more than half of all attendees
- External guests are also welcome and encouraged. These could be speakers and experts to guide conversation and other peers who are exploring related topics/questions.

When is the event?

- The event must take place in 2026 (preferred prior to July 1, 2026)
- We expect to make decisions by November 1, 2025, but the awards for the selected proposals may take a few months to process

Where is the event?

- The event should be held at a suitable and practical location. This means selecting a location that most guests can easily access and that will lead to productive engagements among the attendees.
- Where possible, you should aim to leverage in-kind support from the partner Universities (e.g., make use of venues that are already available to you)

What can the funding be spent on?

- Initiatives can be up to US \$100,000, and must be used solely to support charitable or educational activities as more particularly described in your application
- We anticipate that funding will be spent on items such as securing an event venue, overnight accommodation for attendees, food, honoraria for speaker(s) or facilitator(s), and any internal travel (to/from accommodation to the event venue)
- Travel costs can take up large parts of an event budget and require a sizable amount of administration and planning. We strongly suggest you consider having attendees fund and organize their own travel (i.e. flight/train) to and from the event. You may include a travel scholarship in your budget to provide financial support for those who cannot cover their own travel cost.

What next?

If you're interested, we encourage you to join our virtual QnA session to help you decide whether you'd like to apply. Also speak with your program's leadership team about ideas and strategies for applying.

The virtual Q&A sessions will be:

- **August 4 at 8:30 am ET**
- **August 4 at 12:30 pm ET**

- August 18 at 8:30 am ET
- August 18 at 12:30 pm ET

Zoom info: [Link](#) (Meeting ID: 478 388 2171 and Passcode: **schmidt**)

Application

To apply to host a community initiative, please submit an application [using Survey Monkey here](#) before **31 August, 2025**.

SurveyMonkey will ask you to complete a brief form (Applicant Information) and upload a proposal. Proposals should be no more than 3 pages *plus* a budget spreadsheet, comprising the information outlined below.

- **Section 1: Purpose, Impact, Format (estimated 2 pages)**
 - Purpose
 - Description of the core topic/question of this initiative
 - Explanation of why it is an important topic/question
 - Explanation of why it is neglected. Compare and contrast with any existing events/approaches that are close to this topic, and explain why they do not quite meet the needs of the community
 - Tip: We are trying to understand what will be particularly *value-additive* about this gathering. In the instances where you're exploring a common/popular topic, please succinctly explain what is new or different about your approach and why it matters.
 - Expected outcomes (please describe any actions, outputs, and/or outcomes you hope attendees will leave with/or do, in addition to any outcomes for the broader scientific community if relevant)
 - Proposed format of the event, tentative agenda, and schedule (point out any innovative features of the format)
 - Proposed method for community follow-up and/or disseminating materials post-event
 - What makes you confident that your desired attendees are interested and will attend
- **Section 2: Logistics (estimated 1 page)**
 - Desired number of attendees and their approximate backgrounds/interests
 - (If available) List of early interested attendees, or any "temperature checking" you have done to gauge interest
 - Key milestones for planning and executing the event

- Any details on venue, location, and other operations that you already know, or ideas you may be brainstorming for where to host
 - Tip: Aligning your event location with existing major conferences or similar can be an effective way to reduce the burden of travel
- Lead organizer(s) on content, including a description of their relevant experience
- Lead organizer(s) on logistics, including a description of their relevant experience (for example, on executing and administering similar type of community initiatives and events)
- Endorsement from the AI in Science Fellowship Program Coordinator or Lead (digital signature on the bottom of your application is sufficient) - *this endorsement signals the University's confirmation that the proposed plan is feasible and they will support its execution*
- **Section 3: Budget (spreadsheet)**
 - Estimated total cost and breakdown of major expense categories, such as:
 - Venue
 - Catering
 - Materials
 - Accommodations
 - Ground Transportation (e.g., Uber Vouchers)
 - Facilitation or Honoraria for speakers
 - Administrative Support (outside of typical program support)
 - Compensation for the organizing team (reasonable compensation considered US\$1-2K per person on a small organizing team, depending on event size)
 - Potential Travel Scholarship (including details of how this scholarship would be deployed to Fellows)
 - Any additional funding sources or in-kind contributions, such as venue, personnel or consumables