

AI & Democracy Grants

The [Digital Technology for Democracy Lab](#) invites proposals for funding for research projects that focus on AI & Democracy. We are notably interested in works that reveal the social, political, and cultural dynamics that emerge around the infrastructural integration of AI systems into institutions and people's lives, as well as the role of governments, institutions, and organizations in the development and promotion of AI systems. These could be found in local, state, and national policy spaces in the US or globally; in political discourse and political campaigns; in the economy; in cultural and educational institutions; or in fora concerned with the environmental and planetary implications of AI.

Funding can be requested for up to \$50,000 per project, with the possibility of applying for an additional \$50,000 for a second year based on successful activities during the first year. Funds will be available for use beginning July 1, 2026.

We expect that these grants will support work that might lead to applications for external funding from projects such as the [Humanity AI Initiative](#), the Mozilla Foundation's [Democracy x AI Cohort](#), or Open AI's [Democratic Inputs to AI grants](#). Applicants are invited to indicate how the seed funding will help support such applications from these or other external funders.

Should they need it, projects selected for funding will receive a supplemental support project from the Data Analytics Center in UVA Research Computing. This support extends beyond the standard [no-cost services](#) typically available to faculty, offering dedicated resources designed to accelerate technical implementation.

Specifically, grants accepted with an AI component will receive:

- **Expanded Project Consulting:** Access to Data Analytics Center (DAC) experts for in-depth guidance on project feasibility, custom workflow development, and model optimization that exceeds the scope of standard basic collaboration.
- **Dedicated Compute Resources:** Support for high-performance computing (HPC) allocations to ensure the necessary infrastructure for data-intensive tasks and model training.

Applicants are encouraged to outline their anticipated computational needs in their proposals if they anticipate utilizing the Data Analytics Center.

To apply:

By 5p.m. March 20th, please submit a proposal of up to 2-pages, single spaced, for your research project with an overview, methods, timeline, public outreach and impact. Please include details about who would lead and be involved in the project, how it might lead to external funding, and whether you might use support from the Data Analytics Center. Lead applicants must be UVA

faculty (including tenure-track and general faculty), but the projects can include participants from postdoctoral fellows and students.

Our committee will evaluate these initial proposals and invite some applicants to participate in a conversation about the project in order to develop a fuller proposal for funding that will be due by the end of April, with final funding decisions made in early May.

Please send the proposal to submissions.karsh@virginia.edu, with the subject line “DTD AI & Democracy Grant Proposal Submission.”

IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, March 20, 2026, 5:00 PM – AI & Democracy Grant proposals due

March, April – Notifications sent, conversations with committee scheduled

Late April, date TBD – Fuller proposal due, specifics provided by committee

Early May 2026 – Notifications provided

July 1, 2026 – Funding awarded

Additional details regarding reporting requirement and possible extensions will be provided with the funding agreement.