

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** CFGB Board  
**From:** Gus Heard-Hughes, Senior Vice President of Programs  
**Date:** 5/21/26  
**Re:** Nonprofit AI Training Initiative

**Purpose:** To equip Greater Birmingham’s nonprofits with the practical AI skills and hands-on experience they need to strengthen their organizations and deepen their mission impact. AI is already transforming how organizations communicate, manage data, and serve their communities — nonprofits that don’t develop real fluency risk falling behind at a moment of growing funding pressure and community need. A CFGB partnership with Birmingham AI and its for-profit partner, Caravan, would deliver intensive training and individualized support to ten selected nonprofits.

**Need / Opportunity:** Birmingham AI was founded on the conviction that AI adoption does not have to be the exclusive province of large companies or technical specialists — that a community can come together to get comfortable with AI, build shared knowledge and practice, think strategically about how to use it for positive ends, and get practical experience applying it to their work. Their vision is for Birmingham to be a leader in AI adoption and innovation. Since launching in 2023, Birmingham AI has grown into the region’s most active AI learning community, drawing more than 2,000 in-person participants through monthly flagship events at Innovation Depot and a growing series of sector-specific breakout sessions — including a dedicated nonprofit track that has brought nonprofit leaders, fundraisers, and program managers together to explore AI applications specific to their work.

Most Greater Birmingham nonprofits have had limited exposure to AI tools and even less structured support to adopt them. What this initiative would add is depth: moving ten organizations beyond awareness into hands-on, sustained adoption.

### Key Considerations

- The opportunity cost of not acting is real. AI tools available today — for communications, donor research, data analysis, and program delivery — are already saving staff hours at organizations that use them. Nonprofits that adopt AI now will have a meaningful capacity advantage in the years ahead.
- Caravan and Birmingham AI are credible and natural delivery partners. Birmingham AI’s sector-specific breakout model, including a dedicated nonprofit track, demonstrates both the experience and the intent to serve this community specifically. Programming is practitioner-led and designed to be accessible at every level of technical experience. CFGB staff had a day-long training with Caravan and found it extremely valuable.
- An intensive cohort model produces real adoption, not just awareness. Sustained, hands-on support over multiple sessions is meaningfully different from a one-time workshop and far more likely to result in lasting change.
- CFGB is well-positioned to curate the cohort from our grantee community, selecting ten organizations that are ready, motivated, and positioned to put AI to work for greater mission impact.

## Considerations

- Program design is still to be developed. CFGB and Birmingham AI / Caravan would discuss the curriculum, define the scope of individual support per organization, and establish a clear timeline before funds are disbursed.

**Evaluation:** Success will be assessed based on participation, adoption, and sustained use. CFGB should expect a program report within 60 days of completion and a follow-up survey at six months.

Outcome 1 – Participating organizations build AI fluency

- # of the ten organizations completing the full program
- Pre/post self-assessment of AI knowledge and confidence among participating staff

Outcome 2 – Organizations implement AI tools in their work

- # of specific AI applications or workflows adopted per organization
- Qualitative examples of AI use cases implemented (communications, data, fundraising, program delivery, etc.)

Outcome 3 – AI adoption improves organizational capacity

- Self-reported time savings or efficiency gains at six months
- # of organizations still actively using AI tools six months after program completion

## **Recommendation**

At its 5/6/26 meeting, the Building Capacity Committee recommended a \$60,000 allocation from CFGB Proactive funds to design and deliver an intensive AI training and technical support program for ten Greater Birmingham nonprofits, with the condition that there be more deliberation on the structure, outcomes, and specific implementation partners before moving forward. **We recommend that the CFGB Board approve this Building Capacity Committee recommendation for a \$60,000 allocation from CFGB Proactive funds for nonprofit AI training.**