

CEP's Statement of AI Approach and Philosophy

At CEP, we see AI (in its varied forms) as a tool that can help us work more efficiently and effectively, especially through the automation of repetitive, time-intensive tasks. We also firmly believe that **AI adoption is not an end in itself. Everything we do, including our use of AI, is in service of our [mission](#).**

Over the past several years, we have deployed AI across the organization in ways that allow staff to focus on higher value responsibilities. However, our work depends on strong interpersonal relationships, human judgement, and trust. We are not aiming to use AI in every way it can be used. We are not aiming to be on the cutting edge of adoption of new tools (nor to be laggards, either). Our goal is to use AI in targeted, strategic, thoughtful, and disciplined ways that are consistent with our mission and standards of rigor, trust, and appropriate risk management.

While CEP has benefited from the use of AI in certain ways, we recognize that these technologies can also create unintended, negative consequences. These include environmental impacts as well as the potential to embed biases and errors into work products. We also believe there are aspects of our work where human involvement is essential, including building and maintaining strong relationships with our audience, exercising judgment, and developing original thinking. Indeed, we believe that there are a range of tasks, from maintaining strong relationships with our audience to producing most original writing, in which use of, or certainly over-reliance on, AI can be problematic. **Many aspects of our work have always, and will continue to be, driven by nuance, thoughtfulness, and critical thinking that AI cannot provide.**

Core beliefs that guide our philosophy and approach to AI:

Form Follows Function

We adopt AI only when it supports mission and achievement of our goals as articulated in our strategic plan and our annual workplans. Our use of AI should contribute to our effectiveness or efficiency — whether by generating insights and new ideas in service to our mission or reducing our time to execute tasks.

Measured Adoption

We take an iterative approach — piloting tools, evaluating impact, and adopting broadly only when there is clear evidence of value and when we understand the associated risks and, crucially, the reliability and accuracy of information generated by AI. We will regularly re-evaluate and iterate as AI evolves.

Human Judgment and Decision Making

We take responsibility for our judgments, decisions, and products. We have an individual and collective responsibility to check AI output for accuracy, bias, and quality. AI may inform — but will never replace — our judgment.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We recognize that AI systems can reinforce bias and harmful power dynamics if not carefully designed and monitored. We are committed to evaluating tools with a DEI frame and to ensuring that our institutional commitment to DEI is furthered, not undermined, in our work that utilizes AI. We also acknowledge that AI can be used in equitable and inclusive ways. For example, AI can be helpful in assisting those with auditory/visual processing issues or learning difficulties.

Data Responsibility and Privacy

We treat data stewardship as a core ethical obligation, especially given our promises of confidentiality to survey respondents as well as clients. We protect sensitive information and ensure that any AI system we use adheres to strong data governance and privacy standards.

Skill Building

We invest in our people, ensuring staff understand both the potential and limitations of AI. We foster a culture of critical thinking, responsible experimentation, and continuous learning. We will continue to invest in professional development of staff capabilities for cognitive and creative skills broadly, with AI as a companion rather than a replacement for those critical skills.

Accountability

We will communicate clearly about the role of AI in our work and maintain accountability for the outcomes of our use of AI both internally and externally.

What This Looks Like in Practice:

- Research and analysis support, including sentiment analysis and qualitative comment summaries; synthesizing complex project information for updates and collaborations; literature reviews and information extraction from lengthy documents including transcripts; and note summarization.
- Data analysis and technical operations, including analytics support and automated report counting; excel troubleshooting and complex spreadsheet comparisons; and coding and summarization.
- Content, creative, and communication support, including copyediting; idea generation, summaries, and first edits; chatbot support for one of our program websites; and event logistical planning.

These uses also have clear boundaries. All assertions (i.e., statements of fact) created by generative AI must be independently verified as accurate using a reliable, authoritative source. AI tools may not be the sole determinant for decisions related to hiring, grant approvals, or financial planning. Generative AI tools should not be used as the sole source of content for written communications or other public-facing content.

With all of the above, we do not allow staff to share with AI tools lists or files provided to CEP that contain identifying information about survey respondents or participants, such as names, email addresses, student IDs, or other identifying information. Survey qualitative responses may be analyzed using AI in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#). We also ensure accountability and oversight through policies, staff trainings, security measures, and transparency.

At CEP, staff are the experts. AI is simply a tool, not a substitute for human expertise.