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Nonprofit AI Policy Template

A fill-in policy framework built around the eight decisions
every nonprofit AI policy must make

Companion to the article "[How to Write an AI Policy for Your Nonprofit](https://centerfornonprofitai.org/insights)"
centerfornonprofitai.org/insights

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How to Use This Template

This template gives your leadership team a structure, not a finished policy. The research is clear on this point: the conversation that produces the policy predicts successful AI adoption more than the document itself. Every section you adapt together is that conversation happening.

The legend:

[Bracketed gold text] marks a decision your organization must make. Replace it with your answer.

Italic grey "Guidance" notes explain why the section exists and what good looks like. Delete them before adoption.

The process, briefly: assemble a small working group (an executive sponsor, whoever owns your data, and two or three staff already using AI day to day). Work through the eight sections in order. Give your board a draft review and an adoption vote. Plan on weeks, not quarters.

Done looks like this: adopted by leadership, acknowledged by every person it covers, one named owner, and the first review date already on the calendar.

This template is free to adapt for your organization's internal use. It may not be republished or resold. For the reasoning and evidence behind each section, read the companion article at centerfornonprofitai.org/insights.

Artificial Intelligence Policy

[ORGANIZATION NAME]

Effective date: [DATE] · Policy owner: [NAME, TITLE] · Next review: [DATE, within 6 months]

1. Purpose and Scope

Guidance (delete before adoption): State what you hope AI makes possible for your mission, not only what you fear. A policy that reads as pure restriction gets ignored. Then define exactly who and what it covers; volunteers and contractors touch your data too.

[ORGANIZATION NAME] adopts this policy to ensure that artificial intelligence tools are used in ways that advance our mission, protect the people we serve, and preserve the trust of our donors, funders, and community. We adopt it because [STATE THE POSITIVE: e.g., "AI tools can return staff time to direct service, and we intend to capture that benefit responsibly"].

This policy applies to [staff / volunteers / board members / contractors (list all that apply)] whenever AI tools are used in connection with organizational work or data, on any device.

2. Permitted and Prohibited Uses

Guidance (delete before adoption): Tier by risk rather than banning tools by name. Tools change monthly; risk categories don't. Anything affecting a person's access to services, employment, or benefits belongs in the highest tier.

Tier 1: Encouraged (no approval needed): [e.g., drafting internal documents, summarizing public materials, brainstorming, editing your own writing]

Tier 2: Permitted with review (named reviewer must approve output before external use): [e.g., donor-facing communications, grant narratives, published content]

Tier 3: Prohibited without written executive approval. This covers any use that influences decisions about an individual's services, employment, or benefits; [add organization-specific prohibitions]

3. Data Protection

Guidance (delete before adoption): The most important lines in the policy. Mainstream AI tools were not built with nonprofit data obligations in mind; the obligation stays with you. When in doubt, keep it out.

The following may never be entered into any AI tool that has not been approved for sensitive data: donor records and giving history; names or identifying details of the people we serve; health, financial, or case information; personnel records; passwords and credentials; anything covered by a grant agreement, contract, or privacy law, including [HIPAA, FERPA, or state laws that apply to your work].

Tools approved for sensitive data, if any, and the data each is approved for: **[LIST, or "None at this time"]**

4. Human Oversight and Accountability

Guidance (delete before adoption): A person, never a tool, is accountable for every output. Name where human review is mandatory.

AI-assisted work products remain the responsibility of the staff member who produces them. Human review is mandatory before: **[e.g., anything published externally; anything sent to a donor or funder; any decision affecting a person]**. The reviewer for each category is: **[NAME ROLES]**.

5. Disclosure

Guidance (delete before adoption): Decide in advance when you will tell donors, funders, and the people you serve that AI was involved. Undisclosed synthetic content has already damaged donor trust at real organizations; a one-sentence standard prevents it.

We will disclose the use of AI when: **[e.g., AI-generated images or voices appear in fundraising or program materials; AI drafts a substantial portion of donor-facing content; AI interacts directly with constituents, such as a chatbot]**. Our standard disclosure language is: **["..."]**

6. Tool Evaluation and Approval

Guidance (delete before adoption): New tools get approved before staff use them, not after. Keep the mechanism light: a short request, a named approver, a decision within days. Heavy processes push use underground.

New AI tools are requested through **[PROCESS: e.g., a short form to the operations director]** and approved by **[ROLE]**. Before approving any tool or new use, the approver answers five questions:

- Who benefits from this use of AI, and who carries the risk if it goes wrong?
- What data feeds this tool, why was that data collected, and would the people it describes be comfortable with this use?
- Could we explain this decision, in plain language, to the people it affects?
- Who is excluded or misrepresented by how this tool categorizes people?
- When the tool is wrong, who will notice, and who will fix it?

A use that cannot survive these questions is not approved, whatever its efficiency case. The current approved-tool list is maintained at: **[LOCATION]**

7. Training and Literacy

Guidance (delete before adoption): A policy staff cannot apply is a liability document. Pair adoption with basic AI literacy so people understand why the rules exist, not just what they are.

All covered individuals receive an orientation to this policy within **[TIMEFRAME]** of adoption or onboarding. **[DESCRIBE: e.g., a one-hour briefing plus a one-page do/don't summary]**. Questions about permitted use go to **[ROLE]**, and asking is always the right call.

8. Ownership, Review, and Escalation

Guidance (delete before adoption): AI capability changes quarterly; review this policy every six months. Name one owner. Make reporting a concern safe and simple.

This policy is owned by **[NAME, TITLE]** and will be reviewed every six months, or sooner when significant new tools or uses emerge. Suspected violations or concerns are reported to **[ROLE / CHANNEL]**. Honest mistakes are treated as learning; concealment is treated as a violation.

Adoption

Adopted by (name, title):

Signature:

Date adopted:

Policy owner:

First scheduled review:

Developed from the Center for Nonprofit AI's eight-decision policy framework. Evidence and reasoning: centerfornonprofitai.org/insights · Assess your organization's broader AI readiness: centerfornonprofitai.org/ai-readiness-assessment