

AI USE POLICY STARTER

The shape of an AI policy for your nonprofit

From NonprofitNext | nonprofitnext.ai

HOW TO USE THIS

There is no universal AI policy that fits every nonprofit. The right policy for a hospital system looks nothing like the right policy for a community organization. What follows is the skeleton. The sections are the ones nearly every workable policy contains. The answers are yours to write.

Work through it with your leadership team first. Bring staff in before it is final, because the people already using these tools know things you do not. Take it to your board last, once it reflects how your organization actually works.

This is a fillable form. Type into the fields below, then save or print.

SECTION 1. SCOPE

What this section decides: which tools this policy governs.

AI now covers chatbots, writing assistants, image generators, data analysis platforms, meeting transcription, and scheduling software. Some of it is already built into the email and case management systems you own. Name what you mean.

Our policy covers:

Our policy does not cover:

SECTION 2. APPROVED USE

What this section decides: whether you keep a list, or set categories.

An approved list gives clear guidance and requires someone to maintain it as tools change. Categories give staff flexibility and require them to exercise judgment. Both are defensible. Pick one on purpose.

We use (an approved tool list, or use categories):

Who maintains it:

SECTION 3. CONFIDENTIAL AND CLIENT INFORMATION

What this section decides: what staff may type into an AI tool.

Free versions of many platforms use what they receive to train their models. Paid enterprise versions often operate under different terms. Client names, case notes, medical details, immigration status, and financial data each deserve an explicit answer, not a general instruction to be careful.

Never entered into any AI tool:

Permitted only in these tools:

How we would know if this rule were broken:

SECTION 4. TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE

What this section decides: where you tell people AI was involved.

Funders and donors are beginning to ask. Decide before you are asked. Consider grant applications, funder reports, donor communications, newsletters, social media, and program materials.

We disclose AI use in:

SECTION 5. IMAGES AND CREATIVE CONTENT

What this section decides: whether you use AI generated imagery, and where.

Some organizations accept it broadly. Others draw a firm line, particularly when the mission touches community voice, equity, or the creative economy. This is a values question before it is a technical one.

Our position:

SECTION 6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND VALUES CONSIDERATIONS

What this section decides: whether the footprint of these tools matters to you.

Training and running large models consumes energy and water. For organizations whose missions touch climate or environmental justice, there is real tension here.

Our position:

SECTION 7. OVERSIGHT

What this section decides: who owns this when a question arrives on a Tuesday.

Who approves a new tool:

Who a staff member asks when unsure:

Who updates this policy:

SECTION 8. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

What this section decides: whether the policy changes behavior or sits in a shared drive.

How we introduce it to staff:

Ongoing support we provide:

SECTION 9. REVIEW CYCLE

What this section decides: when you look at this again.

A policy written today will need real revision within a year. Set the date now, or determine the trigger, such as adopting a major new tool or a change in funder requirements.

We review this policy:

THE FIVE DECISIONS MOST ORGANIZATIONS GET STUCK ON

1. Which specific tools are approved, and who keeps that list current as the tools change.
2. Whether staff may enter any client information into any AI tool, and how you would ever know if someone did.
3. Whether you disclose AI use in grant applications and funder reports, before a funder thinks to ask.
4. Who holds authority to approve a new tool, and how long that approval takes.
5. What happens when a staff member uses AI in a way this policy never anticipated, which will happen.

Further reading: What Should Your Nonprofit AI Use Policy Actually Cover

<https://nonprofitnext.ai/what-should-your-nonprofit-ai-use-policy-actually-cover/>