

FACTSHEET

GENERATIVE AI FOR NONPROFITS: PRACTICAL TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Adapted from [Generative AI for Nonprofits: Practical Tips for Starting Small and Building Smart](#) (2025) by Nate Wong for [Candid](#).

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a type of AI that can produce new content, synthesize information, and support a wide range of tasks, drawing from vast existing datasets and the **prompts** that are inputted – the text-based questions or instructions that a user enters into a generative AI platform to guide its output.

For nonprofits, generative AI is most effective when used to enhance efficiency and advance mission-driven goals, rather than simply to stay current with technology trends.

Exploring generative AI starts not with having all the answers but with **a commitment to curiosity, honesty, and care for your mission, your team, and the communities you serve.** When used ethically and responsibly, generative AI can *deepen human insight, strengthen relationships, and help us learn together* how to use technology in service of truth and shared values.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: THREE FIRST STEPS



01. Assess the benefits, risks, and ethical implications of AI applications to prioritize high-value and responsible uses.



02. Develop protocols with legal, technology, and program teams to guide ethical implementation.



03. Start with a small pilot to test approaches, refine guidance, and share lessons before scaling up across a program or organization.

GETTING STARTED: THREE STRATEGIES

01. Integrate generative AI into recurring team activities.

Start by integrating AI tools into existing workflows. Develop a shared “prompt library” to help staff draft weekly updates, board memos, or other routine communications more efficiently. Position generative AI as a *tool* to minimize administrative tasks and create more time for mission-focused work.

02. Build space for learning and reflection.

Small-scale “mini pilots” or weekly challenges with specific goals (e.g., drafting a donor thank-you note) can help staff explore generative AI in practical ways. Support this learning with spaces such as lunch-and-learns or collaborative forums where colleagues can share tips, discuss results, and identify useful insights.

03. Identify and elevate internal champions.

Establish a peer champion model to encourage responsible and confident use of generative AI. Champions act as accessible points of contact, sharing resources, examples, and lessons learned to strengthen organization-wide understanding and engagement.

ADOPTING AI: FOUR TRAPS TO AVOID

01. “Shiny Object Syndrome”

Avoid adopting AI solely to follow trends. Performative or forced use can waste resources and complicate future technology rollouts. Instead, prioritize applications that **deliver real efficiencies and advance your mission.**

02. The ‘AI Does It All’ Myth

AI cannot replace human judgment. While it can improve accuracy and offer recommendations, final decisions require **human discretion, contextual understanding, and trust**, particularly when supporting vulnerable populations and communities experiencing marginalization.

03. Ignoring Data Ethics

Using AI platforms without clear guidelines can put data at risk. **Clear protocols** must be developed to support staff in understanding what information can be used and what information is off limits. These protocols will protect private data and sensitive information from AI platforms that continuously learn from public inputs.

04. Overloading Staff Without Support

Introducing AI tools without guidance, training, or clear vision/mission alignment can undermine trust. Tools should be **rolled out systematically**, with **dedicated policies, pilot programs, and sufficient time** for staff to build confidence, particularly for those concerned about AI’s societal impacts.