FREE FOR MINNESOTA NONPROFITS

The AI starter kit for nonprofits

Fewer hours on paperwork. More hours for the people you serve.

works with the free versions

BY THE END OF THIS KIT YOU'LL HAVE

- [ ] Thank-you letters that go out the week the gift arrives
- [ ] Board minutes drafted the morning after
- [ ] One folder that gives your AI a memory
- [ ] A grant tracker that tells you what your funders reward
- [ ] 13 weeks of cash, with the tight weeks flagged
- [ ] An AI that walks you through all of it

11 everyday jobs, one page each: the basic prompt, a tip and prompt to get more from it, and the better prompt. Every prompt has a Copy button.

want a hand with this kit?

Book a free call with Zach. He'll help you put it to work, one job or the whole setup.

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MainStreetAI SOLUTIONS

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Pick the job that eats your week

Start anywhere. Tap a line to turn to it.

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short on time? copy the whole kit into your AI and say "walk me through this"

START HERE

How to use this kit

Copy a prompt. Fill in the brackets. Fix what comes back before anyone else sees it.

Every job has three steps

The basic prompt most people type. A tip and a prompt that get more from it. Then the better prompt, which names the outcome, the reader and the limits so the first draft lands close.

Short on time

Tap Copy guide for AI at the top, paste it into ChatGPT, Claude or Copilot, and type "walk me through this." It takes you through one job at a time.

Three rules

Keep the sensitive numbers out

Donor names, gift amounts and program details are fine to use. Leave out card and bank numbers, Social Security numbers and health details, and turn off model training first (page 20).

Check every fact and number

AI can be wrong and sound sure. The better prompts make it mark what's missing. You still check.

A person signs off

Anything going to a donor, a funder or your board gets a human read first.

START HERE

Six habits of a better prompt

The questions a good manager asks before handing off any job. Ask them of AI too.

1 Name the outcome, not the task

"A thank-you letter" is the task. "The donor sees what their gift did and gives again" is the outcome. AI writes toward whatever you name.

2 Say who reads it, and when

A board member skimming on a phone before the meeting needs something different from a funder scoring a stack of applications.

3 Match the checking to the stakes

Money, grants, minutes, anything signed: your numbers only, show the math, mark the gaps. A wrong number in a grant costs more than a missing one.

4 Make it ask before it answers

"Ask me three questions first." "Tell me what's weakest." You want a partner, not a yes-machine.

5 Tell it what not to do

What flopped last time. Words you never use. Promises you won't make.

6 Keep what you learned

AI forgets when the chat ends. Your files don't. Save what worked, and next time starts ahead.

START HERE

Your "about us" note

Ten minutes, once. Every answer after it sounds like you.

tip Save it as a file called About us. Paste it at the top of any chat, or put it where your AI keeps standing instructions: custom instructions in ChatGPT, or a Project in ChatGPT or Claude.

```
About us: [organization] is a nonprofit in [city], Minnesota. We [what you do, in one sentence] for [who you serve]. We have [number] staff and about [number] volunteers. Our year-end appeal, our biggest grants and [anything else] keep the lights on.

How we write: plain words, warm but not gushing, no exclamation points, short paragraphs. We say [the words you use, e.g. "neighbors" not "clients"]. We never say [words or claims you avoid].

What we have learned not to do: [e.g. long letters, guilt in appeals, promising outcomes we can't count].

Rules for every answer: use only the facts and numbers I give you. Do not invent statistics, results, quotes or names. If something is missing, write [NEED: what is missing] instead of guessing. For anything important, ask me up to three questions before you write, and when you finish, tell me in one line what is weakest about it.
```

YOUR FILES

Give your AI a memory

Every chat starts from zero. AI only knows what you hand it, so keep a few plain notes and hand them over every time.

```
AI Kit/
  00 Start here/   About us, House rules, Project list
  Prompts that work/   prompt + your edits + why
  Donors/      gift list, what gifts do, story bank
  Grants/      grant tracker, one file per funder
  Programs/    programs file, words list
  Money/       cash sheet, vendor list
  Board/       minutes template, action items
  Projects/
    2026 Year-end appeal/
      Project note   where it stands today
      History        newest on top
  Archive/     finished projects
```

Put it in your shared drive

Google Drive, OneDrive or Dropbox, so the whole team works from one memory.

Start here gets read first

One page each. House rules holds the three rules plus anything your board has decided about AI.

Your donor database stays where it is

These files hold only what AI may see. Plain text or Google Docs work best.

YOUR FILES

Start and end every session

Two prompts. One loads your memory in. The other saves what you learned back out.

At the start

tip Paste or attach About us, House rules and the project note first.

```
Read these files before we start: About us, House rules, and the project note for [project]. In three lines, tell me where this project stands and what you think the next step is. If anything in them conflicts, or something we decided looks wrong now, say so before we begin.
```

At the end

```
Before we stop, write a history entry for [project], under 150 words, dated today:
- What we decided, and why.
- What we tried that did not work, and why.
- What is still a proposal, not a decision.
- The next step and who owns it.
Then tell me if anything in the project note should change, and give me the new wording. If we found a prompt worth keeping, write it out for my Prompts that work folder.
```

Paste the entry at the top of History. Next week's you, or the next person, picks up exactly where you stopped. Plain files work in any AI you use now or later.

YOUR FILES

Make it learn

Most AI setups stay as good as they were on day one. This one gets better at your work every month, because it rewrites its own instructions from what worked.

1 Turn off model training

One setting, two minutes (page 20). Your donor and grant details stay yours.

2 One Project per area

Donors, Grants, Money, Board. ChatGPT and Claude both have Projects: standing instructions plus attached files, remembered in every chat inside it.

3 A monthly tune-up

End every session with the history prompt. Once a month, hand it the History and run this:

```
Monthly tune-up. Here are this Project's current instructions and the last month of History entries. Rewrite the instructions so you do better next month: add what worked as a rule, add what failed as something to avoid, remove anything stale, keep it under one page. Show me every change and why, and wait for my OK.
```

want a hand setting this up?

Book a free call with Zach. He'll help you put it to work, one job or the whole setup.
(763) 218-9224, zach@mainstreetai.solutions

DONORS

Thank a donor

A gift comes in. The thank-you should go out the same week.

1 The basic prompt

It works. It also sounds like everyone else's.

```
Write a thank-you letter to [name], who gave $[amount] to our nonprofit.
```

2 Get more from it

tip Keep this week's gifts in one sheet (first name, date, amount, fund, which gift this is for them) and paste the rows in.

```
Here are this week's new gifts: [paste rows]. Write one thank-you per row.
Flag anything missing, and any gift of $250 or more.
```

3 The better prompt

The outcome, the reader and the limits, so the first draft is close.

```
I need a thank-you letter that makes [first name] feel their gift did
something specific, so they give again. They gave [amount] on [date] to
[organization], which [what you do]. This is their [first / tenth] gift. One
real thing it will do: [example].

The donor reads it at home in under a minute. Under 200 words, plain and
warm, no exclamation points, no "generous" or "heartfelt". Include exactly:
"No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift." Sign it from
[name, title].

Use only the facts I gave you. If something is missing, ask before you write.
Then tell me in one line what is weakest.
```

Habits used: outcome first, who reads it, what not to do, asks before guessing.

You get a short letter that points at one real result, with the line the IRS looks for on gifts of $250 or more.

want a hand? Zach Heinrich will help you set up your gift list on a free call, (763) 218-9224.

DONORS

Year-end appeal

The one letter that brings in the most gifts of the year.

1 The basic prompt

You get the letter every donor already threw away last December.

```
Write a year-end fundraising letter for our nonprofit asking people to donate before December 31.
```

2 Get more from it

tip Last year already told you what works. Keep last year's letter with its numbers (how many went out, how many gave, the average gift) and start there.

```
Here is last year's appeal and its results: [paste letter, number sent, number of gifts, average gift]. Based only on these numbers, tell me three things to change this year and why.
```

3 The better prompt

Aimed at one group, built on one story, with last year's lesson in it.

```
Goal: a year-end letter that gets [this year's donors / lapsed donors / first-time donors] to give by [deadline]. The reader is sorting December mail and decides in ten seconds whether to read on.

Build it around one story: [what happened]. What a gift does: [true examples only]. The ask: [amount or range]. How to give: [website, mailing address].

Before you write, ask me up to three questions that would make this stronger. Then write it under 400 words, plain and warm, no exclamation points, with a P.S. that repeats the ask. Do not invent results, statistics or quotes. Last year's letter [worked / fell flat] because [reason]; do not repeat [what fell flat].
```

Habits used: outcome first, who reads it, asks before writing, what not to do.

You get a one-page appeal built around a real story, aimed at one group of donors.

DONORS

One story, three uses

Something good happened in a program. Get it into the newsletter, on social media and in a donor email.

1

The basic prompt

Three versions that all sound the same.

```
Turn this story into a newsletter article, a social media post and a donor email: [story]
```

2

Get more from it

tip Stories are your best fundraising asset. Keep a story bank: date, program, what it shows, and whether you have permission. Ask staff every Friday for one line.

```
Here is our story bank: [paste]. Which three stories have permission, haven't been used in 60 days, and best fit [season or campaign]? One line each on why.
```

3

The better prompt

One point, three readers, every fact unchanged.

```
Here is a story from [organization]: [what happened, in a few sentences].

The one thing I want people to take away: [one sentence]. Write three versions, each built for where it is read:
1. Newsletter, about 200 words, for supporters who already know us.
2. Social post under 60 words, for someone scrolling who has never heard of us. Lead with the person, not the organization.
3. Two sentences for a donor email, ending with what their gift made possible.

Keep every fact exactly as I gave it. Add no quotes, numbers or outcomes. If the story is missing something a reader would ask, list it as a question.
```

Habits used: outcome first, who reads it and where, gaps as questions.

You get three versions with the same facts, each shaped for its reader.

GRANTS

First draft of a grant section

A grant asks for a need statement. You have notes, no draft.

1 The basic prompt

You get a generic need statement any funder has read a hundred times.

```
Write a need statement for a grant for our [program] program.
```

2 Get more from it

tip Your past applications know what each funder rewards. Keep one row per application (funder, amount, approved / denied / no response, any feedback) and run this before you write.

```
Here is our grant tracker: [paste]. For each funder: our success rate, who they are trying to reach, what they like to see, and what we still don't know about them. Then what our approved applications have in common. Mark any guess as a guess.
```

3 The better prompt

Built on what this funder rewards, with every gap marked.

```
I am drafting the [section] for [funder]. Their question, word limit and scoring notes: [paste]. They fund [audience], like to see [what they like], and our history with them is [approved / denied / no response].

After reading this they need to believe: [e.g. the need is real, local and growing, and we can meet it]. The reader is a program officer scoring a stack of these.

My notes: [who you serve, how many, results so far, statistics with sources]. No names of people we serve.

First, tell me which scoring points my notes don't support yet. Then write the draft in the funder's order, under the limit, using only my facts. Mark gaps as [NEED: what is missing]. A wrong number costs more than a missing one.
```

Habits used: outcome first, who reads it, checking matched to stakes, built on your history.

You get what your notes can't prove yet, then a draft written for this funder.

GRANTS

Plain-words program description

Your program description reads like a grant. A new volunteer or funder needs it in ten seconds.

1 The basic prompt

Simpler, but still written for nobody in particular.

```
Make this program description simpler: [paste it]
```

2 Get more from it

tip Keep one Programs file: each program's description and its numbers, every number with a source and a date. Five versions of one program is how wrong numbers get into grants.

```
Here is our Programs file: [paste]. Find every place two descriptions of the same program disagree, every number without a source or date, and every insider word an outsider wouldn't understand.
```

3 The better prompt

Three readers, three moments, the same facts.

```
Here is how we describe [program] now: [paste it; grant language is fine].

Three people need to understand it, each in a different moment:
1. Someone on our website deciding in ten seconds whether we help people like them: two sentences.
2. A funder who has never heard of us: one paragraph.
3. A new volunteer explaining us out loud at an event table: three short sentences they could memorize.

Plain words, about an eighth-grade reading level. Keep every fact and number exactly as given, and add no results or claims. Then list the words in my original an outsider wouldn't understand.
```

Habits used: who reads it and when, tells you what's weak.

You get three versions, shortest to fullest, and a list of your insider words. Read the volunteer one out loud.

BOARD

Board minutes

The day after the board meeting, while your notes still make sense.

1 The basic prompt

Polished minutes, with a vote or two the AI filled in itself.

```
Turn these notes into board meeting minutes: [paste notes]
```

2 Get more from it

tip Take your notes under the agenda headings and keep one running list of action items (item, owner, due date). The structure comes with the notes.

```
Here are our open action items and today's notes: [paste both]. Which items were closed, which carried over, and which were never mentioned? Give me the updated list and what goes on the next agenda.
```

3 The better prompt

An official record: accuracy before polish.

```
Turn my rough notes from our [date] board meeting into minutes the secretary can correct and the board can approve. These are an official record, so accuracy matters more than polish. Our format: [paste your minutes template, or describe it].

Include: who attended, whether we had a quorum ([number] needed), each motion with who made it, who seconded and the vote, and action items with an owner and a due date.

Do not add, smooth over or summarize anything that is not in my notes. Do not guess at a vote or a name. Put anything unclear in a list at the end called "Questions for the secretary".

Notes: [paste your notes]
```

Habits used: outcome first, checking matched to stakes, what not to do.

You get minutes in your format, plus a list of what the notes left out, so nothing gets made up.

CASH FLOW

Next 90 days of cash

Start of a quarter, or a big grant payment or bill is coming.

1

The basic prompt

A neat table built on numbers the AI guessed.

```
Make me a cash flow plan for the next three months. We have $[amount] in the bank.
```

2

Get more from it

tip Next to every expected payment, add the date it actually arrived. That one column shows you which money runs late.

```
Here are six months of expected vs actual income: [paste]. Which sources arrive late, and by how many weeks on average? One trust rule per source.
```

3

The better prompt

Every number traceable, and the bad case planned for.

```
I need to see, before it happens, any week in the next 13 weeks when [organization] could run short of cash. This goes to our treasurer, so every number must trace back to what I give you.

Cash on hand [date]: [amount]. Money in, by week: [grants, donations, events, fees, each with its week and sure or not sure]. Money out, by week: [payroll as one line, rent, insurance, bills, one-time costs]. Our trust rules: [paste].

Build a week-by-week table: starting cash, in, out, ending cash. Flag every week below [cushion]. Use only my amounts and show your math. If an item has no week, ask me. Then show a second version where the "not sure" money arrives a month late, and list three payments I could ask to move.
```

Habits used: outcome first, checking matched to stakes, plans for the bad case.

You get 13 weeks of cash with the tight weeks flagged, and the same table if a grant runs late.

CASH FLOW

Find the spending leaks

Cash feels tight. Get a second look at where the money goes.

1

The basic prompt

Generic cost-cutting tips that could apply to anyone.

```
Where can we cut costs? Here are our expenses: [paste]
```

2

Get more from it

tip Most leaks hide in renewals nobody owns. Keep a vendor list: vendor, what it's for, monthly cost, renewal date, who owns it.

```
Here is our vendor list: [paste]. Which renewals come up in the next 90 days? For each, the questions to ask before it renews, including whether they offer a nonprofit price.
```

3

The better prompt

Ranked by what it could save, with the programs protected.

```
Goal: find [amount, or "any"] in monthly spending we could cut or renegotiate without hurting our programs.

Our monthly expenses for the last [number] months, by category and total only: [paste. Payroll as one line. No account numbers, card numbers or names]. What we must not cut: [your list].

Look for services we may pay for twice, costs that grew month over month, small recurring charges that add up, and anything unusual. For each: what you noticed, the dollar amount from my numbers, and the one question I should ask to check it. Rank them by what they could save. Use only my numbers, show your math, and say plainly when something only looks odd.
```

Habits used: outcome first, what not to touch, checking matched to stakes.

You get a ranked list of spending to question, with the question to ask about each.

EVERYDAY

Volunteer schedules

An event or a busy program week is coming. Match shifts to people.

1

The basic prompt

Every shift filled, often with the same three people.

```
Make a volunteer schedule for our event on [date]. Here are the volunteers: [names].
```

2

Get more from it

tip Keep a roster with first name, experience (new, regular, can lead) and shifts this month. Contact details stay in your own system.

```
Here is our volunteer roster: [paste]. Who is at risk of burning out, who hasn't been asked in 60 days, and who is ready to lead a shift? One line each.
```

3

The better prompt

Every shift covered, nobody burned out.

```
Build a volunteer schedule for [event or program] on [dates] that fills every shift without burning out our regulars.

Shifts: [each shift, its time, how many people, and any that need experience]. Volunteers: [first names only, when each can work, experience level, shifts already this month].

Rules: no one works more than [number] shifts, and every shift with a new volunteer also has an experienced one. Use only the people and times I gave you. If a shift can't be filled, mark it OPEN.

Then write a reminder text under 50 words for two days before, with [name], [shift time], [location] and [where to check in] as placeholders, and a one-line thank-you for after.
```

Habits used: outcome first, the people behind it, what not to do.

You get a shift table with open spots marked, plus a reminder and a thank-you to send.

EVERYDAY

Answer a hard email

An email upset you. You need a calm reply today.

1

The basic prompt

Polite, apologetic, and it promises things you never agreed to.

```
Help me reply to this email: [paste it]
```

2

Get more from it

tip Decide your answers once, calmly: your policies on refunds, complaints and privacy, and what staff can promise. Save replies that went well, names removed.

```
Here are three replies we sent to hard emails that went well: [paste, names removed]. Describe our tone in five short rules I can save.
```

3

The better prompt

Starts with what they actually want, and promises nothing extra.

```
Here is an email I need to answer: [paste it, with the sender's last name and contact details taken out]. Our tone rules: [paste them].

What I want to happen after they read my reply: [e.g. they feel heard and we meet next week, or the matter is closed]. What I want to say, as blunt as I like: [your points]. What I will not agree to: [anything].

First, tell me in two lines what you think they actually want, in case I'm reading it wrong. Then write a reply under 150 words: calm, answers each of their points, says what happens next. Do not apologize for anything I did not list, and do not promise anything I did not say.
```

Habits used: outcome first, what they really mean, what not to promise.

You get a second read on what they want, and a reply you can send the same day.

EVERYDAY

Event checklist

Six to eight weeks before a fundraiser, open house or volunteer day.

1 The basic prompt

A long generic list, with the permit buried at the bottom.

```
Make a checklist for planning our fundraiser on [date].
```

2 Get more from it

tip Every event teaches you something. Keep one file per event: the checklist you used, budget vs actual, attendance, and what went wrong.

```
Here is last year's event file: [paste]. List what ran late, what ran over budget and what we'd skip, then turn each into a rule for this year.
```

3 The better prompt

Biggest risks first, last year's lessons built in.

```
Help me plan [event] on [date] at [place]. Success looks like: [e.g. 120 guests and $15,000 raised]. About [number] guests, [number] volunteers, budget [amount]. Already settled: [venue, food, sponsors]. Rules from last year: [paste].

Make a checklist by week, from [number] weeks before through the day after, with a blank "who" column. Put the tasks that can sink the event if they slip (permits, insurance, the venue contract) at the top of each week. Then a day-of run sheet by time, setup to cleanup.

Do not invent vendors, prices or sponsors. If something often needs a permit, insurance or a license (raffles, alcohol, food), list it as a question to check, not as a fact.
```

Habits used: outcome first, biggest risks first, last year's lessons.

You get a week-by-week list with the risky tasks on top, and a day-of schedule.

NEXT STEPS

Accounts and nonprofit pricing

One setting to change, and the nonprofit offers worth checking.

Turn off model training

In ChatGPT: Settings, Data controls, "Improve the model for everyone", off. OpenAI says workspace content in ChatGPT Business and Enterprise is not used for training by default.

Microsoft

Eligible nonprofits get up to 300 free Microsoft 365 Business Basic licenses, plus discounts on paid plans.

Google

Google Workspace for Nonprofits includes the Gemini app and NotebookLM at no cost.

OpenAI

Nonprofits can get up to 75% off ChatGPT Business or Enterprise.

A one-page AI policy

Which tools are approved, what never goes in, who checks drafts. Save it as House rules.

Checked October 2026. Offers change, so confirm on each company's nonprofit page: Microsoft, Google, OpenAI, ChatGPT data controls.

NEXT STEPS

Where to start this week

About an hour, spread over five days. By Friday you have a working setup and one job done better.

Monday 15 minutes	Make the folder. In your shared drive, create AI Kit, then 00 Start here inside it, with three blank docs: About us, House rules, Project list.
Tuesday 10 minutes	Fill in About us (page 5) and paste it into your AI's custom instructions or a new Project.
Wednesday 20 minutes	Pick the job that eats the most time. Run its basic prompt, then its better prompt, and compare.
Thursday 15 minutes	Do that job's tip: build the one sheet it mentions. Messy is fine. It just has to exist.
Friday 5 minutes	Run the end-of-session prompt (page 7). Save the entry in History and the winning prompt in Prompts that work.
Next week repeat	One more job. After a month, run the tune-up (page 8). By then it knows how your organization works.



stuck on any step?

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(763) 218-9224, zach@mainstreetai.solutions

MAIN STREET AI

Want a hand with this kit?

Book a free call with Zach. Bring the job that eats your week, and he'll help you set it up so it works every month, one job or the whole kit.

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scan to book your free call

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