

WRITE YOUR ORGANIZATION BRIEF IN FIVE MINUTES

The single most useful thing an executive director can do before using AI on anything. One page, written once, pasted into every real conversation so the tool never starts from zero.

THE PROBLEM WITH STARTING FROM ZERO

The model forgets you between conversations. Retyping who you are, what your programs do, and how you sound is the reason most people give up after a week. The fix is a single document, written once and refined over a month, that you paste at the top of any real work: a thank-you letter, a grant report, a board memo, a volunteer email.

WHAT GOES IN IT (SEVEN HEADINGS, ONE PAGE, PLAIN TEXT)

Mission. One sentence, the way you say it out loud, not the way it reads in the bylaws.

Programs and who we serve. Each program in a sentence: what it does, for whom, roughly how many people a year. No individual names or details about anyone you serve.

How we sound. Three or four adjectives, then two short real samples of your writing. "Warm, plain, specific. We say 'you' a lot. We never say 'impactful.'"

How we work. What a new staff member learns in week one: hours, how intake works in general terms, who signs what, how you handle donations, volunteer basics.

People and roles. First names and roles of staff and board officers who might be mentioned.

Funders and restrictions. In general terms only: the kinds of funders you have, which programs are grant-restricted, reporting cadence. No figures that go stale.

Never. Things the tool must never do or say on your behalf: promise a service to a specific person, quote an outcome you have not measured, name a person served, make a political statement, use exclamation points.

Watch out. Nothing about a specific person you serve goes in the brief, and nothing about a specific donor. No names, no case details, no giving history. The brief is about your organization, and it will be pasted a lot.

GET A FIRST DRAFT IN FIVE MINUTES

Open Claude or ChatGPT, paste this, and answer the questions honestly and briefly. Then edit the result by hand.

PROMPT: DRAFT OUR ORGANIZATION BRIEF

Interview me to build a one-page "organization brief" for our nonprofit that I can paste into future conversations so you understand who we are. Ask me one question at a time, no more than twelve questions total, covering: our mission in one sentence, our programs and who they serve (in general terms, no individual details), how we sound (I'll paste two samples), how we work day to day, key people and roles, our funders and any restrictions in general terms, and things you must never do or say on our behalf. When you have enough, write the brief in plain text under 400 words with those seven headings. Do not invent numbers; leave a blank where you need one.

HOW TO USE IT

Save it somewhere the whole staff can copy from in two seconds. Any time you ask an AI tool for something real (a thank-you, a grant section, a board update, a volunteer schedule note), start the message with "Here is our organization brief:" and paste. Notice how different the answers get.

- Run the prompt. Answer every question in a sentence or two.
- Edit the draft until every line is true. Cut anything you would not say out loud.
- Paste it into your next three real requests and compare the results to before.
- Share it with staff. Put a reminder on the calendar to revise it in 30 days.