

Advising Tech Nonprofits

A Quickstart Guide

fast forward
accelerate good

What's a tech nonprofit?

A tech startup, building original software or hardware, that has selected a nonprofit business model in order to focus 100% on impact.

- Applies tech to social problems
- Serves the hardest to reach customer
- Solves problems that markets have failed
- Lower marginal costs - donated products and labor

Speaking the language

Tech nonprofits straddle the tech and social sector. They code switch between audiences.

FOR PROFIT STARTUPS

TECH NONPROFITS

Solution

A product looking for a market



Solution

A market failure in need of a product

Invest

Expected financial returns



Fund

Expected proof of impact

Profit

Financial gain



Impact

Social gain

Users

End-users of product/platform



Beneficiaries

End-users of product/platform

Revenue

Income from receipts, proceeds, or earnings



Revenue

Income from donations, fee for service, or earnings

Tech nonprofit judo

Nonprofit business models can be a competitive advantage. Ask these questions to discover if the team is poised to create significant impact.

- **Tech that Scales Impact**

Is the tech an add-on or the core strategy that will unlock exponential impact?

- ● **Nonprofit Business Model**

Does it leverage the nonprofit competitive advantages like royalty-free licenses, open sourcing, or volunteer labor?

- ● ● **Lived Experience with the Problem**

How well do the founders understand the problem they are trying to solve?

Micro-mentoring

Short on time, long on impact. Quick feedback sessions give tech nonprofits insight into business models, product, and pitching.



Listen

Listen to the entrepreneurs tell you their story. You'll get inspired.



Discover

Discover their pain points. What keeps them up at night? What could help?



Share

Share feedback on what you heard. Give context from your experience. Offer advice on new approaches.

How to know it's a match

┌ Context

Tech nonprofits founders tend to have experience with the problem they are solving, but lack experience running a business. Providing context on all aspects of businesses including management, product roadmaps, business development, and communications are valuable for tech nonprofits. Consider what gaps you can fill.

┌ Connections

Great ideas can come from anywhere. Opportunity does not. Access to networks is mission critical for tech nonprofits. Consider who in your network could help these entrepreneurs scale their impact.

┌ Capital

All startups need money. Raising seed-stage funding is particularly difficult for tech nonprofits. They must have a product before they can raise institutional philanthropic capital, but they need money to build the product.

Fellowships, sponsorships, and individual contributions are critical for establishing a runway to capital. Gifts, large and small, can make a measurable difference for early stage organizations. Consider what the tech nonprofit needs and what you are equipped to give.

┌ Inspiration Gut Check

There are hundreds of tech nonprofits. All of them could use your help. Ask yourself - are you are wowed by the passion and commitment of the entrepreneur? Do you think their idea will improve the lives of, not just thousands, but millions - even billions? Are you willing to hustle up resources to help get their vision to scale? If the answer is yes, you've met your match.

We're onto something good

You've met and matched. Now, what? There are levels of engagement with tech nonprofits. Find one that fits your bandwidth.



Micro-mentor

Quick hit advice.



Advisor

Ongoing advice on a product roadmap, business strategy, management issues, etc.



Board Member

Set strategy for the organization. Deep commitment and involvement.

Before you get on board

You're awesome. The founders can see that. They may want you to join their board. Before you say yes, understand the requirements.

Time

10 – 50 hours annually

Boards typically meet multiple times per year. Often there is committee work and events outside of board meetings.

Terms

1 – 5 years of service

Trustees commit to serve for a certain number of years. Set expectations from the beginning.

Financial Commitment

Give or get donations

Most boards expect trustees to give to the organizations they serve. Make sure you discuss the financial commitment to board service.

Affiliation

Publicly represent the organization

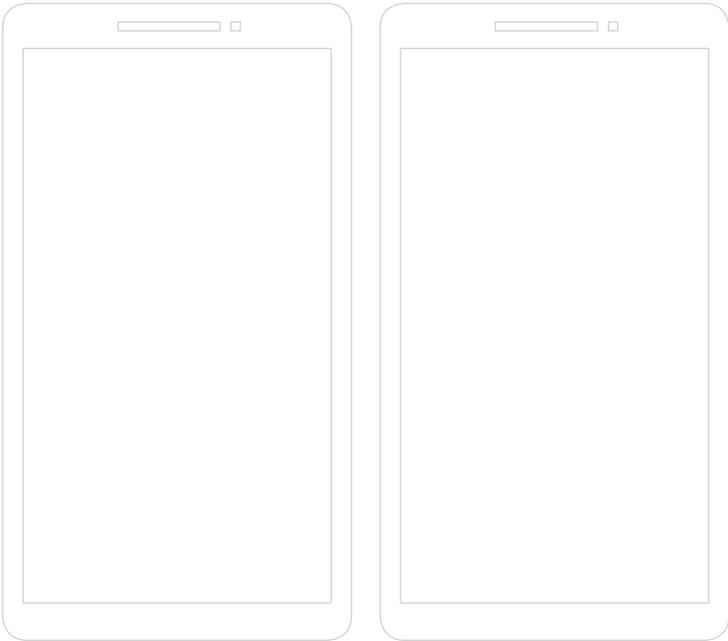
Trustees are public stewards of nonprofits. The organization may expect you to represent their work in public, and your association will be listed on the organization's tax documentation, website, and annual report.

Liability Commitment

Fiduciary responsibility

Boards are obligated to cover liabilities if the organization defaults.

Notes



APP IDEAS

Notes

	Year 1	Year 2
Revenue		
Expenses		
Total		
Number of People Served		
ROI - RETURN ON IMPACT		

Need a little more guidance?

Reach out to us at info@ffwd.org

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