



Nonprofit Website ~~Redesign~~ Scorecard

2027 EDITION

How to score it

Score the site you have today — not the one on your roadmap. One pass, ten minutes, no deliberating. Rate each of the 10 elements, then total it up.

0 Not addressed No owner, no artifact, no evidence. Nobody could point at where this lives.	1 Partially there Started, inconsistent, or true on a few pages but not as a rule.	2 Fully built in Documented, owned, and observable on the live site right now.
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Then add it up

10 elements + 1 bonus = 22 points



0–8

Strategy comes first

The foundation isn't ready for a redesign decision yet. Fix the thinking before anyone opens a design tool.

9–14

Structural fixes compound

Take your two lowest-scoring elements this quarter. CTA discipline and problem-first messaging move fastest.

15–22

Ahead of the field

You're beating most of the category. The bonus element is how you stay there through 2027.

Do this twice — once alone, once with a colleague, separately. Where your two answers disagree is the real finding.



Before you

1

Audience research before design

WHAT IT IS

Audience definition, donor profiles, and a content audit finished before the first wireframe.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

You can name your three primary audiences, what each came to do, and which page serves them. Every existing page is marked keep, rewrite, or kill.

HOW IT FAILS

“We already know our donors.” Design starts on instinct, and the homepage becomes a committee compromise no audience actually asked for.

30-SECOND TEST

Name the top three tasks visitors come to your site to do. If your leadership team would answer differently from each other, this isn’t done.

2

Built inside a marketing system, not a silo

WHAT IT IS

The site is designed alongside brand, messaging, technology, and a monthly marketing rhythm — not bolted on afterward.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Launch day is a starting line. Email, ads, social, and reporting all point at the new pages, and someone owns the site next month.

HOW IT FAILS

The site ships as a one-off capital project, goes stale inside 90 days, and nobody has budget to touch it until the next full redesign.

30-SECOND TEST

Name the person who will change something on the website next month — and one thing that’s on their list.

3

Leads with the problem, not the mission

WHAT IT IS

The homepage opens with the problem you solve. The mission line is one sentence. Data sources are cited by name.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

A first-time visitor understands the stakes in five seconds, before they’ve learned anything about your organization.

HOW IT FAILS

The fold holds your name, your tagline, and a photo of a building. The visitor learns who you are, but not why to care.

30-SECOND TEST

Cover your logo and read your first screen aloud. Could it belong to any nonprofit in your category?

What earns *its space*

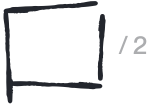


4

One primary CTA per page

WHAT IT IS

Every page type has a single clear primary action. Everything else is styled as secondary.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

On any page you can point at the one thing you want done — and it is the most prominent element on the screen.

HOW IT FAILS

Donate, Subscribe, Volunteer and Learn More all carry equal weight in the nav, the hero and the sidebar. Choice paralysis reads as low intent.

30-SECOND TEST

Open any page and count the buttons of equal visual weight. More than one means that page has no primary CTA.

5

Brand differentiation that's earned, not borrowed

WHAT IT IS

The site says something no other nonprofit in your category could credibly say.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Specific claims tied to evidence: your method, your numbers, your years in the work, your place.

HOW IT FAILS

Borrowed language — “empowering communities,” “creating lasting change.” True of everyone, and therefore of no one.

30-SECOND TEST

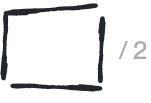
Paste your headline onto a peer organization's homepage. If it still works there, it was never yours.

6

Mobile-first focus and restraint

WHAT IT IS

The information architecture works on a five-inch screen first. Every section earns its space or gets cut.



GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Roughly half your visitors are on a phone, and the phone version is not the compromised one.

HOW IT FAILS

A desktop layout squeezed down: eleven stacked sections, a hero that eats the fold, and a donate flow that needs pinch-zoom.

30-SECOND TEST

Hand a colleague your phone and ask them to give \$25. Time it. Anything over 90 seconds is a finding.

Proof and product

7

Real-people storytelling

WHAT IT IS

Named subjects, real photography, named partners, named outcomes. Zero stock photos.



/ 2

GOOD LOOKS LIKE

A visitor can name one person they met on your site and say what changed for them.

HOW IT FAILS

Smiling models in a field. The moment a visitor clocks stock photography, everything near it gets less believable — including your numbers.

30-SECOND TEST

Count the faces on your homepage that belong to someone your team could call by name today.

8

Donation-as-product, not donation-as-form

WHAT IT IS

The donation experience is designed and measured like a product: conversion rate, recurring uptake and lifetime value all tracked.



/ 2

GOOD LOOKS LIKE

You know this month's form conversion rate and last quarter's — and someone is testing one thing about it right now.

HOW IT FAILS

The form is whatever the platform shipped, on a page nobody has opened in a year, reported only as total dollars raised.

30-SECOND TEST

What percentage of people who reach your donation page finish a gift? If there is no number, this scores 0.

A donation form is a product. Yours has a conversion rate whether anyone is looking at it or not.

ELEMENT 8

The unglamorous *half*



9

Named integration stack

WHAT IT IS

Every platform is mapped before the CMS decision: CRM, donation platform, email, forms, automation.



/ 2

GOOD LOOKS LIKE

One diagram shows where a donor record goes and who owns each system. Data flows one direction, on purpose.

HOW IT FAILS

The site launches, then someone finds the donation platform can't write to the CRM — and monthly exports become permanent.

30-SECOND TEST

Draw where a \$25 online gift lands, system by system, without opening a tab. Every gap is risk.

10

WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility from day one

WHAT IT IS

Compliance built into the design system, not retrofitted at launch. Quarterly audits scheduled after go-live.



/ 2

GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Contrast, keyboard navigation, alt text and form labels live in the components, so new pages inherit them.

HOW IT FAILS

An accessibility pass added the week before launch: an overlay widget, a statement page, and a site keyboard users still can't finish. The exposure stays.

30-SECOND TEST

Tab through your donation form with no mouse and complete a gift. If you can't, a share of your donors can't either.

BONUS

worth 2 points — the difference between 2027 and 2019



AEO-aware content and ongoing maintenance

WHAT IT IS

Schema markup, an /llms.txt or /llm-info page published, FAQ structures in place, a quarterly review cadence, and a migration playbook ready before the next platform shift.

GOOD LOOKS LIKE

Ask an AI assistant about your issue area and your organization comes back described accurately, in your own language.

HOW IT FAILS

Search traffic flattens quietly while answers about you get written from a 2019 press release.

30-SECOND TEST

Ask an AI assistant what your organization does and who it serves. Grade the answer out of 2.

Your scorecard



Write a 0, 1 or 2 beside each element—the same scores you marked as you read—then add them up.

1	Audience research before design	
2	Built inside a marketing system, not a silo	
3	Leads with the problem, not the mission	
4	One primary CTA per page	
5	Brand differentiation that's earned	
6	Mobile-first focus and restraint	
7	Real-people storytelling	
8	Donation-as-product, not donation-as-form	
9	Named integration stack	
10	WCAG 2.1 AA accessibility from day one	
Subtotal — the ten elements		
+	Bonus — AEO-aware content and ongoing maintenance	
Total out of 22		

0–8 strategy comes first

9–14 fix your two lowest

15–22 protect the lead

what your score means



Where to *go next*

0–8

Strategy comes first

The foundation isn't ready for a redesign decision. Start with a diagnostic that finds where clarity, capability and capacity break down — then design against the answer, not the wireframe.

→ [Ask us about a Strategic Altitude diagnostic](#)

9–14

Fix your two lowest

Take the two lowest-scoring elements and address them this quarter. Most organizations feel CTA discipline and problem-first messaging fastest, and both are cheap next to a rebuild.

→ [Start with elements 3 and 4](#)

15–22

Protect the lead

You're ahead of most of the category, which means the risk shifts from building to maintaining. The bonus element is the difference between sites that get found in 2027 and sites that don't.

→ [Go back to the bonus element](#)

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