



K2's Building Your Nonprofit Tech Stack On A Budget

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Learning Objectives



Identify critical technologies needed in nonprofit organizations

Determine which core productivity platform(s) should be used

Analyze the impact remote work situations might have on the
technology platforms chosen

Determine what type of technology risks represent the greatest
threat to your organization

Major Topics



Hardware, software,
and services that
might be suitable
for nonprofits

Negotiating with
vendors for better
deals and service

Creating a
technology plan

Where does the
Cloud belong in
your technology
plan

Comparing the
major technology
platforms



FIRST, WHAT IS A TECH STACK?

Defining “Tech Stack”



- In the simplest of terms, your organization’s tech stack represents all the technology in use
- Therefore, the tech stack necessarily includes the following:
 - Desktops, laptops, and servers
 - Communications, including cell phones
 - Software, including subscriptions
 - Peripheral devices, such as printers and scanners
 - Security and privacy tools

What Is a Tech Stack?



In other words, your tech stack is the collection of software, tools, and platforms your organization uses to operate, communicate, fundraise, and measure impact



What Is a Tech Stack?



Key tech stack objectives include

- Affordable or free for nonprofits
- Easy to learn and adopt
- Integrated so tools talk to each other
- Scalable as your organization grows
- Secure to protect donor data



Specifics In NFP Tech Stacks



Constituent Relationship Management (CRM)

Fundraising platforms

Volunteer management

Financial management, particularly fund accounting

These needs are in addition to traditional needs, such as spreadsheets, collaboration, and privacy and security capabilities

So, What Are The Challenges?



- The need for specialized tools
 - Donor relationship management, volunteer coordination, grant tracking, and program delivery
- Multiple, disconnected systems
- Oftentimes, tight budgets
- Staff resistance to change
- Shadow IT
- Data privacy and security issues

Two Realities To Face



1. According to Philanthropy.com, **5% of all NFPs report the presence of “shadow IT”**
 - What’s the risk?
2. **Nonprofits lose one-third of their IT budget to waste, according to SusanFinch.com, including unused software licenses, redundant systems, and inefficient processes**
 - 38% of the budget for desktop software,
 - 34% for data center software, and
 - 33% for SaaS applications

Cloud vs. On-Premise vs. Blended



- Which strategy is best for my organization? And why?
 1. Traditional on-premise, complete with on-site server, and local area networks
 2. Pure cloud environment that relies on Cloud-based options
 3. Blended environment
- This is perhaps the most important consideration you will make with your tech stack!

The Advantage Of Cloud-First



- NFPs that adopt a Cloud-first strategy position their team for a flexible working environment that scales easily to meet the growth needs of the organization
- Further, the Cloud-first strategy readily support today's work-from-anywhere environments
- On the other hand, these environments may not be as flexible as an on-premise infrastructure
- This is a ***major*** decision, and it potentially affects everything else in your tech stack

Reducing Costs – A Major Concern



Nonprofits face unique barriers to adopting technology — but the cost of inaction is even higher

59%
of nonprofits say they lack adequate technology

\$18K+
average annual savings from activating nonprofit discounts

5+
disconnected systems in a typical nonprofit

Sources: NTEN State of Nonprofit Technology Report; TruAdvantage Nonprofit IT Study, 2025

Core Tech Stack Categories For NFPs




CRM & Donor Management


Fundraising & Payments


Communication & Marketing


Project Management


Accounting & Finance


Website & Design

Obtaining Core Tools On A Budget



- Microsoft 365 **Business Basic** is free for NFPs with up to 300 users
- **MS 365 E3** is available to NFPs for **\$9** per user, per month
- **MS 365 E5** is available to NFPs for **\$22.80** per user, per month
- Also, **Copilot** is **\$25.50** per user, per month for NFPs
<https://nonprofit.microsoft.com/en-us/getting-started>

Zoho For Nonprofits



- An alternative to Microsoft 365 is **Zoho For Nonprofits**
- Zoho provides a ready, robust platform that covers virtually every need of small to midsize NFPs
- For qualifying NFPs, **credits are available that will cover up to 50% of your subscription costs**
- For more information, visit <https://zoho.com/nonprofits>

Adobe Acrobat For Nonprofits



- Qualifying 501(c)(3) organizations can obtain access to Adobe Acrobat Pro for **\$15 per year**, a 94% discount from Adobe's regular pricing
- NFPs can also access Adobe Creative Cloud and Adobe Express at discounted pricing
- For full details, visit the following site:
 - <https://helpx.adobe.com/enterprise/using/non-profit.html>

QuickBooks Online For NFPs



- QuickBooks Online Plus (up to five users) is available for **\$80 per year**, instead of \$115 per month
- Likewise, **QuickBooks Online Advanced** (up to 25 users) is available for **\$170 per year**
- Can QBO really work for NFPs? Verify its capabilities relative to your organization's or your client's first
- However, many smaller NFPs will find QBO sufficient for handling basic to intermediate needs...moreover, there is a robust third-party ecosystem of integrated, add-on applications



CRM & Donor Management

Salesforce NPSP

Free for up to 10 users via Power of Us program. Full CRM with donor tracking, campaigns, and reporting.

Bloomerang

Donor retention focus with engagement tracking. Lite tier free for under 250 records.

Zeffy

100% free CRM and fundraising platform with donor segmentation, email tracking, and no hidden fees.

Little Green Light

Affordable cloud-based donor management designed specifically for small nonprofits.



Fundraising & Payment Processing

Zeffy

100% Free

Completely free fundraising with donation forms, peer-to-peer campaigns, ticketing, and membership management. No platform fees.

Givebutter

Free + tips

Free tier with fundraising pages, events, auctions, and donor management. Donors can optionally cover tip.

Donorbox

Free / \$150+/mo

Optimized recurring donation forms with multi-currency support. Free plan available with basic features.

Stripe for Nonprofits

2.2% + \$0.30

Discounted payment processing rates for verified nonprofits. Integrates with most fundraising platforms.



Communication & Marketing

Google Workspace

Free

Free for nonprofits via Google for Nonprofits. Includes Gmail, Drive, Docs, Meet, and Calendar with your custom domain.

Mailchimp

Free / 15% discount

Free tier for up to 500 contacts with email campaigns, basic automations, and landing pages.

Canva for Nonprofits

Free (Pro)

Full Canva Pro access free for nonprofits. Create social media graphics, presentations, and branded materials.

Slack

Free / 85% off Pro

Free plan with unlimited messaging. Pro plan 85% off for nonprofits through TechSoup.



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Project Management & Collaboration

Asana

Free for up to 10 users with unlimited tasks, projects, and basic integrations. 50% nonprofit discount on premium plans.

Trello

Visual Kanban boards free for unlimited users. Great for program tracking and volunteer coordination.

Monday.com

Free for nonprofits via TechSoup with up to 10 seats. Includes project tracking, dashboards, and automations.

Microsoft 365

Free for nonprofits. Includes Teams, SharePoint, OneDrive, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint for your entire organization.



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Accounting & Finance

QuickBooks Online

Discounts for qualified nonprofits. Industry standard with fund accounting, grant tracking, and donor reporting integrations.

Wave

Completely free accounting software with invoicing, receipt scanning, and financial reporting. No user limits.

Xero

25% nonprofit discount with multi-currency support. Excellent for organizations with international operations.

FreshBooks

Simplified invoicing and expense tracking with a nonprofit discount. Best for small organizations.



Website & Design

WordPress

Free open-source CMS powering 40%+ of websites. Thousands of free themes and plugins for nonprofits.

Wix

Drag-and-drop website builder. Free plan available; nonprofit discounts on premium plans for custom domains.

Canva

Free Pro access for nonprofits. Design social graphics, flyers, reports, and presentations with brand kits.

Squarespace

Professional templates with donation blocks and email campaigns. Nonprofit discount via TechSoup.

Integrate Workflows When Possible



- Map your workflows
 - Document how your data should flow before committing to tools
- Choose a central hub
 - Pick one system of record as the single source of truth
- Use native integrations whenever possible
 - Prefer tools that connect directly — Salesforce + Mailchimp, QuickBooks + Stripe, and others
- Automate with tools like Zapier
 - Free for up to 100 tasks per month

Budget Allocation Guidelines



Priority	Category	% of Budget	Strategy
1	CRM / Donor Management	25-30%	Invest here first — it drives revenue
2	Fundraising Platform	15-20%	Free options exist — evaluate carefully
3	Communication & Email	15-20%	Leverage Google and/or Microsoft first
4	Website & Design	10-15%	Use Canva Pro (free) + WordPress
5	Accounting & PM Tools	10-15%	Many free options — start lean
—	Training & Support	10%	Budget for onboarding — tools fail without adoption

Common Mistakes To Avoid



Buying Before Planning

Map your needs and workflows first. Too many nonprofits buy tools that don't fit their actual processes.

Ignoring Integration

Siloed tools create duplicate data entry. Always check if a new tool connects to your existing stack.

Skipping Training

Even the best software fails without adoption. Budget 10% of your tech spend on training and onboarding.

Over-Investing Too Early

Start with free tiers and scale up. You don't need enterprise features until you've outgrown the basics.

Neglecting Data Security

Donor data is sensitive. Use MFA, encrypt data, and comply with privacy regulations from day one.

Going It Alone

Join NTEN, local tech meetups, or peer networks. Other nonprofits have solved your exact problem.

Tech Trends To Monitor & Consider



Automate donor communications, grant writing drafts, and data entry with affordable AI tools



CRM platforms now consolidate fundraising, marketing, and program data into one view



Digital wallets, text-to-give, and mobile-optimized donation forms are now essential



Donors expect data protection. Free tools like Microsoft Defender for Nonprofits are available

A Summary Roadmap



Evaluate current tools

Consider the efficacy of free and discounted tools

Verify integration options

Analyze privacy and security features

Train your team members

Continually evaluate and re-evaluate

Thanks For Joining Me Today!



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