

AI Usage Policy for Staff

PURPOSE

At The Winston-Salem Foundation, we believe in using technology to deepen – not replace – human connection, creativity, and community impact. This policy is designed to guide our staff in the responsible, ethical, and mission-aligned use of generative AI tools. As we explore the possibilities of AI, we remain committed to equity, transparency, and care in how we work with one another and with our community. We see AI not as a shortcut, but as a tool to help us curate ideas, streamline tasks, and amplify our collective wisdom.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and contractors who use AI tools in the course of their work at the Foundation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Mission Alignment

AI tools must be used in ways that support the Foundation's mission, values, and strategic priorities.

Human Oversight

AI-generated outputs must be reviewed by staff before use in decision-making, communications, or public-facing materials. AI should augment – not replace – human judgment.

Equity and Inclusion

AI use must actively avoid perpetuating bias or discrimination. Staff must be vigilant about how AI tools may reinforce systemic inequities, particularly those related to race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Curation, Not Creation

We view AI as a tool for curation—helping us organize, refine, and brainstorm—not for creating final products or making decisions. Staff should use AI to assist with tasks, not to replace their own judgment, creativity, or voice.

APPROVED USES OF AI

If you're using AI in accordance with the following guidelines, we encourage you to experiment with AI tools in your day-to-day work. Think of AI tools like Microsoft Copilot as assistants — they're here to help you brainstorm, prep, and streamline—not take over.

Examples of approved uses:

- Drafting and editing internal documents, emails, and reports
- Brainstorming ideas for programs, campaigns, or communications
- Summarizing meeting notes or transcripts*
- Automating repetitive tasks (e.g., scheduling, data entry)
- Analyzing large datasets for trends or insights
- Creating outlines or bullet points from complex content

As you experiment and find uses that are helpful or exciting, share them with your coworkers! We're all learning together, and your discoveries might help someone else.

* When using AI for meetings, please start recording once personal conversations have been completed and the business of the meeting begins. Disclose that the meeting is being recorded and that an AI tool may be used for summary purposes, then allow attendees to opt-in/out.

PROHIBITED USES OF AI

Staff must not use AI tools to:

- Input personally identifiable information (PII), confidential donor data, or proprietary organizational information into public or unvetted platforms
- Make final decisions about grants, hiring, or performance evaluations
- Generate content that could be interpreted as discriminatory, misleading, or harmful
- Circumvent established approval processes or ethical review protocols
- Generate or create photos, images, or videos for external use

TOOL VETTING AND ACCESS

Only AI tools vetted and approved by Information Technology may be used. Staff must consult with IT before adopting new tools. If you're considering a tool other than Microsoft Copilot, check in with IT first to help determine if Copilot can meet your needs or guide you to a safe alternative.

Free, open-source platforms (e.g., ChatGPT free tier) may pose security risks and should be avoided unless specifically approved.

RACIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

AI use must reflect the Foundation's racial equity commitments:

- Staff must assess whether AI-generated outputs reflect diverse perspectives and avoid cultural erasure or stereotyping.
- When using AI to analyze community data, staff must consider how race and systemic inequities shape the data and its interpretation.
- AI tools must not be used to replace community voice or lived experience in decision-making processes.

TRAINING AND CO-LEARNING

The Foundation will provide ongoing training on responsible AI use. Staff are encouraged to share learnings, challenges, and innovations through internal channels such as Power Users meetings and all staff meetings.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND REVIEW

We trust our team to use AI tools thoughtfully and to follow this policy in ways that reflect our shared values. If something feels unclear or off, reach out—we want to navigate this space together with care and curiosity. Intentional violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, in alignment with our broader organizational standards and practices.

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as AI technologies and regulations evolve. Any changes will be brought to the Foundation's Budget and Personnel Subcommittee for review and approval.

QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT

For questions or to request tool approval, contact Patrick Meehan, Senior Director, Technology Strategy.