

YEAR-END NONPROFIT CHECKLIST

Your December To-Do List So Nothing Falls Through the Cracks

ABOUT THIS CHECKLIST

The end of the year is the most critical time for nonprofit compliance, donor relations, and planning. This checklist ensures you close out 2025 strong and set yourself up for success in 2026. Many of these tasks will put you ahead of the rush of the New Year. Don't stress if these tasks push into January. The sooner you tackle these tasks, the sooner you will be ready for 2026!

How to use this:

- Print it out or save it digitally
 - Check off items as you complete them
 - Delegate tasks to board/staff where appropriate
 - If you need help with any of these, contact me at info@madrinaconsulting.com
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FINANCIAL & COMPLIANCE

Form 990 is due to the IRS on the 15th day of the 5th month after the end of your fiscal year.

For calendar year nonprofits (fiscal year = Jan 1-Dec 31): Form 990 due May 15, 2026

Form 990 due date: _____

By December 15, 2025:

- ☐ **Schedule a meeting with your CPA/bookkeeper** to prep Form 990
 - *Need: Year-to-date financial statements, donation records, program expenses*
- ☐ **Reconcile all bank and credit card accounts** through November 30
- ☐ **Review outstanding invoices/bills** and pay before year-end (if beneficial for taxes)
- ☐ **Process all pending reimbursements** to staff/volunteers

- ☐ **Review restricted vs. unrestricted funds** and ensure proper allocation

By December 20, 2025:

- ☐ **Run year-end financial reports:**
 - Statement of Activities (Income Statement)
 - Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)
 - Budget vs. Actual comparison
- ☐ **Calculate total donations received** in 2025 (you'll need this for reporting)
- ☐ **Verify all donations have been adequately recorded** and receipted
- ☐ **Check your state charitable registration status** (renew if needed)

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Submit any outstanding grant reports** (check your grant calendar!)
- ☐ **Confirm insurance policies are current** (General Liability, D&O, Workers Comp)
 - *Renewal date coming up? Don't let it lapse.*
- ☐ **Review and update your conflict of interest disclosures** from board members

By January 15, 2026:

- ☐ **Process last-minute donations**
- ☐ **Close your books for 2025** (final reconciliation of all accounts)
- ☐ **Send 1099-NEC forms to contractors** who received \$600+ in 2025
 - *Deadline: January 31, 2026*
- ☐ **File 1099s with the IRS** (postmarked by January 31, 2026)

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Finalize 2025 year-end financials** with your bookkeeper/CPA
- ☐ **Begin gathering documents for Form 990 preparation**

- Program descriptions
 - Board meeting minutes
 - Compensation details for officers/key employees
 - Major grants and contracts
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DONOR RELATIONS & FUNDRAISING

By December 10, 2025:

- ☐ **Send year-end appeal** to your donor list
 - *Email, letter, or social media—just ASK before December ends*
- ☐ **Create a "tax-deductible donation" reminder post** for social media
 - *"Donate by Dec 31 for 2025 tax deduction!"*
- ☐ **Personal outreach to top 10 donors** (call, text, or handwritten note)

By December 20, 2025:

- ☐ **Send thank-you notes/emails to ALL 2025 donors**
 - *Even if they gave \$10. Every donor matters.*
- ☐ **Acknowledge volunteer contributions** (public shout-out or personal thank you)
- ☐ **Update donor database** with all 2025 gifts and contact info changes

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Process any pending donations** so they're recorded in 2025
- ☐ **Send tax receipts for any December donations** within 48 hours
- ☐ **Create "2025 Year in Review"** impact summary for donors
 - *Keep it short: What you did, who you served, what changed.*

By January 15, 2026:

- ☐ **Send consolidated tax receipt letters** to all 2025 donors
 - *Shows total giving for the year—donors need this for their taxes*

- ☐ **Segment your donor list** for targeted 2026 appeals
 - First-time donors, recurring donors, lapsed donors, major donors

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Plan Q1 2026 donor cultivation activities**
 - Coffee chats with major donors?
 - Donor appreciation event?
 - Monthly giving campaign?
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GOVERNANCE & BOARD

By December 15, 2025:

- ☐ **Schedule your final 2025 board meeting** (or confirm it's on the calendar)
- ☐ **Prepare board meeting packet:**
 - Financial statements
 - Program updates
 - 2026 budget draft (if ready)
 - Committee reports

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Hold year-end board meeting** covering:
 - ☐ Approve 2025 financials
 - ☐ Review accomplishments and challenges
 - ☐ Discuss 2026 priorities
 - ☐ Confirm board member renewals/recruiting needs
- ☐ **Document meeting minutes** and store securely
- ☐ **Update board roster** (terms, contact info, committee assignments)
- ☐ **Send a "thank you for serving" message** to board members

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Schedule first quarter 2026 board meeting** (February or March)
 - ☐ **Recruit new board members** if you have vacancies
 - ☐ **Send board calendar for 2026** with all meeting dates
 - ☐ **Board orientation** for any new members joining in 2026
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PROGRAMS & IMPACT

By December 20, 2025:

- ☐ **Collect program data and stories from 2025:**
 - How many people served?
 - What changed for them?
 - Testimonials or quotes?
 - Photos (with permission)?
- ☐ **Review program effectiveness:** What worked? What didn't?
- ☐ **Identify 2-3 program priorities for 2026**

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Complete any required program reports** for funders
- ☐ **Update your website** with 2025 impact highlights
- ☐ **Create a simple one-page "Year in Review"** to share externally

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Finalize 2026 program calendar** (dates, deliverables, milestones)
 - ☐ **Update program budgets** based on actual 2025 spending
 - ☐ **Plan staff/volunteer training needs** for new programs or improvements
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ADMINISTRATIVE & OPERATIONS

By December 15, 2025:

- ☐ **Review and update your nonprofit's key documents:**
 - Bylaws (any changes needed?)
 - Policies (financial, conflict of interest, whistleblower, etc.)
 - Job descriptions (current staff/roles)
- ☐ **Back up all critical files** (financial records, donor data, contracts)
- ☐ **Review contracts and subscriptions** (software, insurance, services)
 - *Cancel anything you're not using*

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Update your EIN verification** if you changed banks or systems
- ☐ **Confirm registered agent information is current** (state filing)
- ☐ **Archive 2025 records** (digital and physical)
- ☐ **Prepare W-9s to send to contractors in January** (if needed)

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Review and renew any state licenses or registrations** (charitable solicitation, etc.)
- ☐ **Update your organizational chart** if staff/roles have changed
- ☐ **Schedule technology audits** (cybersecurity, data backups, software updates)
- ☐ **Review and update the employee handbook** if you have staff



2026 PLANNING

By December 31, 2025:

- ☐ **Draft 2026 budget** (even if it's rough—you can refine in January)
- ☐ **Identify top 3-5 strategic priorities for 2026:**

- Fundraising goals?
 - Program expansion?
 - Board development?
 - Systems/infrastructure?
- ☐ **Create 2026 fundraising calendar** (grants, appeals, events)
 - ☐ **Schedule Q1 board meeting** for January or February
 - ☐ **Set personal/professional development goals** as ED/leader
 - *What do YOU need to learn or improve in 2026?*

By January 15, 2026:

- ☐ **Finalize 2026 budget** and get board approval if needed
- ☐ **Create 2026 grant calendar** with all deadlines
- ☐ **Identify capacity-building needs** (training, consulting, systems)

By January 31, 2026:

- ☐ **Write 2026 strategic plan summary** (even if it's just 1-2 pages)
- ☐ **Set quarterly goals and milestones** for tracking progress
- ☐ **Schedule quarterly planning check-ins** with staff/board throughout 2026

BONUS: SELF-CARE FOR LEADERS

You've worked hard all year. Don't forget to:

- ☐ **Take time off between Dec 24-Jan 1** (even if it's just a few days)
 - ☐ **Celebrate wins with your team, board, or yourself**
 - ☐ **Reflect on what you're proud of from 2025**
 - ☐ **Let go of what didn't work** (no guilt—just lessons learned)
 - ☐ **Rest.** You can't lead well if you are feeling burned out.
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FEELING OVERWHELMED?

You don't have to do this alone.

If you're looking at this checklist thinking *"I don't have time for all of this"* or *"I don't even know how to do half of these things"*—that's exactly what I'm here for.

I'm offering **quick-turn project support through December 20** for nonprofits that need help wrapping up 2025 or getting ready for 2026.

I can help you:

- Prep your Form 990 info for your CPA
- Write your year-end donor appeal
- Clean up your financial records
- Draft your 2026 budget
- Create board meeting materials
- Get your compliance documents in order
- Basically, anything on this list that's stressing you out

Want help? Reply to the email you got this from, or book a [Problem-Busting Call](#), and let's figure out what you need most.

Want more free resources? Check out madrinaconsulting.com/resources

Created by:

Selina, Your Business Madrina ✨

madrinaconsulting.com | info@madrinaconsulting.com

Supporting nonprofit leaders who are changing the world—one checklist at a time. 