

The KPI Starter Kit

8 metrics every nonprofit should be tracking — and most aren't

Bradley Wendling · Founder, Wendling Nonprofit Consulting · wendlingconsulting.com

If you can't measure it, you can't manage it — and you certainly can't report it to a funder. Most nonprofits track outputs (how many meals served) but miss the operational KPIs that predict whether the mission is sustainable. These 8 metrics change that.

THE 8 OPERATIONAL KPIs — Fill in your current baseline, then set a 90-day target

KPI	What to Measure	Why It Matters	Data Source	Baseline / Target
Program Reach	# of unduplicated clients served per month	Are you growing, flat, or declining?	Program reports / CRM	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Site Consistency Score	% of sites meeting program delivery standards monthly	Quality control across locations — are all sites running the same program?	Site monitoring logs	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Staff Turnover Rate	% of staff who left in the last 12 months	High turnover is a structural signal, not just an HR problem.	HR records	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Compliance Completion Rate	% of required compliance tasks completed on time	Tracks audit readiness in real time — not just at audit time.	Compliance calendar	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Budget Variance	Monthly actual spend vs. budgeted spend (+/- %)	Early warning system for financial problems before they become crises.	Financial reports	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Volunteer Retention Rate	% of volunteers who returned month-over-month	Volunteer churn is expensive and a sign of weak onboarding or poor experience.	Volunteer sign-in logs	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Funder Report On-Time Rate	% of funder reports submitted by deadline	Late reports damage relationships and can trigger grant clawbacks.	Grant calendar	Baseline: _____ Target: _____
Partner Network Activity	# of active partner interactions per month	Inactive partnerships are not partnerships — they're names on a list.	Partner database / CRM	Baseline: _____ Target: _____

BUILDING YOUR DASHBOARD — 3 STEPS

Step 1	Assign an owner	Every KPI needs one person responsible for collecting and reporting the data. Without an owner, it won't get tracked.
Step 2	Set a reporting cadence	Monthly for most KPIs. Weekly for any KPI currently in a danger zone. Quarterly review of the KPI list itself.
Step 3	Present to board quarterly	A dashboard your board never sees is a dashboard that won't get resourced. Quarterly summary in every board packet.

Most EDs can tell you how many people they served last month. Few can tell you their staff turnover rate, compliance completion rate, or budget variance. The first number tells you what happened. The other three tell you what's coming.

Ready to close the gaps?

Wendling Nonprofit Consulting — fractional COO services starting at \$3,000/month.
wendlingconsulting.com · calendly.com/bradwendling