2026 TENNESSEE NONPROFIT CONFERENCE

Building AI-Powered Workflows That Give Your Team Time Back

Russ McBride · The McBride Method

Programs & Services track

THE MCBRIDE METHOD

SCAN FOR THE SESSION SITE

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app

Tools, templates, and prompts you can use tomorrow. Still growing.

While you wait: have the problem you brought ready.



Russ McBride

Founder, The McBride Method

WHO I AM

1 **Teacher**

Nine years teaching high school social studies

2 **Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Inside the system as a nonprofit operator in Tennessee

3 **The McBride Method**

AI and automation for nonprofit teams across the country

Based in Chattanooga. Serving nonprofit teams nationwide.

OUR WORK IN A WORLD WITH AI

ENERGIZED

Less busywork. More room to create.

AI expands what we can do.

ENGAGED

Learn the tools. Help shape their use.

Show how nonprofits put AI to work.

ESSENTIAL

People still need people.

As AI handles more computer work,
human connection matters even more.

WINTER 2026 AI COHORT · CHATTANOOGA

What nonprofit teams put to work

Reports, data analysis and weekly routines.

One recurring task.
Useful context.
A person who checks the result.

BEFORE WE GO FURTHER

Give me the problem you brought.

A page · a tool · a plan · something that should exist and doesn't

WHY WE DO THIS

Less busywork.
New possibilities.
More time for people.

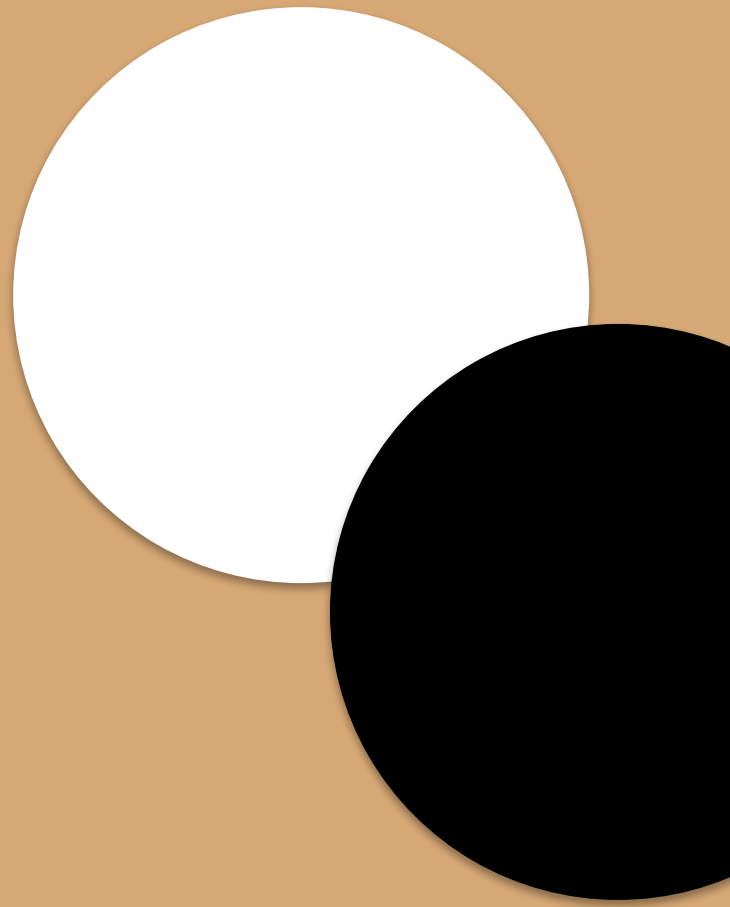
With regular use, 10 to 15 hours back a week may be possible. Start small and measure.

WHERE YOU ACTUALLY ARE

The Five Levels

Most organizations are earlier than the headlines suggest.
Find yourself honestly, then move one rung.

0 1 2 3 4



THE FIVE LEVELS

0

Scattered

0 1 2 3 4

“I think some people are using it. I’m not really sure.”

Individuals use whatever they found. No policy, no shared practice, and no idea what has been pasted where. Extremely common, and nothing to be embarrassed about.

THE NEXT RUNG

Ask out loud who is using what. Adopt a one-page AI policy (template on the site).

THE FIVE LEVELS

1

Thought Partner

0 **1** 2 3 4

“I ask ChatGPT for a draft when I’m stuck.”

Real value, and most people are here. The limit: every task starts from zero. You re-explain your organization every time, quality swings, and nothing gets shared.

THE NEXT RUNG

Write your organization’s context down once.

THE FIVE LEVELS

2

Assistant With Context

AIM HERE FIRST



“It knows who we are, who we serve, and how we talk.”

Research your organization first. Check the sources. Save what you learn with your priorities, preferences and rules. Give AI that context so it can help with your actual work.

THE NEXT RUNG

Aim here first. You will build your context block in this session.

THE FIVE LEVELS

3

Workflows That Run



“The Monday report was in my inbox before I got there.”

Trigger, AI step, action, log. Work happens while you do something else, and a person still approves anything that leaves the building.

THE NEXT RUNG

One of these, working reliably, is an excellent year for a small organization.

THE FIVE LEVELS

4

The Organization Runs On It

0 1 2 3 **4**

“This is just how we work now.”

Several workflows, a written policy, shared standards, and a named person who owns it. This is where the four-day-week stories come from.

THE HONEST NOTE

Real, and the result of years on the other four rungs. Not a shortcut past them.

THE HONEST TARGET

Level 2, plus one Level 3 workflow. That's an excellent year.

You are not behind. You are early, with almost everyone.

SCREEN SHARE

Back to your problem

WATCH FOR

A tool you could describe, even if you could not build it yourself.

EVERY WORKFLOW HAS FOUR PARTS

Trigger. AI step. Action. Log.

01

Trigger

What starts it

A form, a new record, a date, 6 AM Monday

02

AI step

Your prompt, running

Your saved instructions, used each time

03

Action

Where it lands

A draft, a task, a row, a message

04

Log

How you know it ran

And what it did, every time

WHAT TO AUTOMATE FIRST

Start where the work repeats

Recurring

It happens every week

Rules-based

You could write the steps down

High-volume

It happens a lot

Low-judgment

Each one is a small call

Rare, ambiguous, or high-stakes? Keep a person in it.

REAL NUMBERS FROM A PARTNER AGENCY

One BBBS agency, one year after automating enrollment

49%

FASTER

From inquiry to interview. Volunteers get there in about half the time.

+39%

MORE INTERVIEWS

Year over year, with no increase in inquiry volume.

17,000+

TASKS

Reminders and follow-ups staff no longer do by hand.

Start by measuring time saved on one recurring task.

START WITH REVIEW

For your first workflow: AI drafts. A person reviews and sends.

Start with a small test and your organization's approval.

PART TWO · 30 MINUTES

Now let’s use it.

Open the site on your phone or laptop. Build a prompt, save your context, map a workflow, test the steps, and review your AI policy.

1. **Prompt Coach**
2. **Context kit**
3. **Try the tool**
4. **Test the steps**
5. **AI policy**

1 2 3 4 5

OPTIONAL PRACTICE

STOP 1 OF 5 · WHERE TO GO

Prompt Coach

Build a prompt you can test and improve.

FOLLOW ALONG

Scan for Prompt Coach. Describe one task.

SCAN TO FOLLOW ALONG

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app/#step-1

1 2 3 4 5

OPTIONAL PRACTICE

STOP 2 OF 5 · WHERE TO GO

Context kit

Research first. Save the facts. Add your rules. Then ask.

FOLLOW ALONG

Scan for Context kit. Research first, then save your facts and rules.

SCAN TO FOLLOW ALONG

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app/#step-2

1 2 3 4 5

OPTIONAL PRACTICE

STOP 3 OF 5 · WHERE TO GO

Try the tool

Turn the problem you brought into trigger, AI step, action, log.

FOLLOW ALONG

Scan for Workflow Mapper. Describe your task and review the four parts.

SCAN TO FOLLOW ALONG

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app/#step-3

1 2 3 4 5

OPTIONAL PRACTICE

STOP 4 OF 5 · WHERE TO GO

Test your workflow

Check your plan with one made-up example.

FOLLOW ALONG

Scan for Test your workflow. Try the checklist with a made-up example.

SCAN TO FOLLOW ALONG

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app/#step-4

1 2 3 4 5

OPTIONAL PRACTICE

STOP 5 OF 5 · WHERE TO GO

AI policy

Drafts and templates for your team's review.

FOLLOW ALONG

Scan for AI policy. Draft a starting policy or download a template.

SCAN TO FOLLOW ALONG

tn-nonprofit-2026.vercel.app/#step-5

ENERGIZED · ENGAGED · ESSENTIAL

Human connection is why nonprofits belong in this future.

I believe people will want more human connection as AI grows. Nonprofits already do that work.

KEEP GOING

Questions?

Everything from today, plus templates and prompts, lives on the session site.



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