



Impact Report Starter Template

The structure funders actually read, and the discipline that makes them believe it

Last verified August 1, 2026

The two rules that make an impact report credible

First, separate what you measured from what you judge. A measured result is a number you can trace to a record. A judgment is your professional read on what it means. Both belong in the report, and they must never be blended. Second, name at least one thing that did not work. A report with no weaknesses reads as marketing, and experienced funders discount everything else in it.

The structure

Section	What goes in it
Letter from your executive director	One page. What happened this year, what you are proud of, and one thing you are working to fix. Written as a person, not an institution.
The year in numbers	A single table of your headline results, each labeled measured or judgment, with the basis stated.
How to read this report	A short note explaining that you separate measured results from judgment, and that nothing is estimated or rounded up.
Program sections	One per program. What you did, what it produced, and what the numbers mean. Include the gap you are naming.
A participant story	One story, told with permission, identified by code rather than by name. One story lands harder than five.
Financial summary	Revenue by source, and the share of spending that went to programs.
Looking ahead	Three or four specific commitments for next year, including how you will address the weakness you named.

Labeling that keeps you credible

Write this	Not this
71 percent were employed at 90 days. Measured, from program records, n equals 148.	Over 70 percent found work.
Judgment: we believe the pre release start explains much of this difference. We have not run a controlled comparison.	Our pre release model reduces recidivism by 60 percent.
Participant P-2291, shared with permission	Maria, 34, from the east side
We do not yet have 12 month	Early results are extremely promising.

Write this	Not this
data for this cohort.	

Draft your headline numbers

Measure, result, and basis (measured or judgment)

Name the gap

Write the one result you are least happy with, and what you are doing about it. This section earns you more credibility than any success in the report.

The gap, and the response

Before you send it

- Every number traces to a record you could produce if asked
- No participant is identified by name anywhere in the document
- Percentages are accompanied by the denominator
- At least one weakness is named honestly
- Nothing is estimated and presented as measured

Luminary Impact produces impact reports for funded human services nonprofits, in your brand and your voice.

Luminary Impact · lilxhub.com · support@lilxhub.com · Free to use and share