



Creating a Website in 5 Easy Steps

In the digital landscape of today, your website and social media platforms serve as the initial touchpoints for your community to engage with you. By providing up-to-date news and information through your website, you can keep your audience informed and engaged, further showcasing your accomplishments.

By establishing a strong online presence, you can foster meaningful connections and cultivate a sense of community within your audience, including potential donors. A well-designed and effectively built website not only lends credibility to your cause but also instills confidence in potential donors.

Step 1: Know your audience

Consider your target audience and their needs. Take the time to identify who will be visiting your website and why they are seeking your foundation's presence. By gaining this insight, you can tailor your website's content and design to cater specifically to your audience's expectations, whether it's providing event updates, facilitating grant applications, sharing job postings, or offering easy access to contact information. The image below shows some examples of who might be visiting your website and what they will look for.



Volunteers & Donors

- Opportunities to get involved
- Donate button
- Project storytelling
- About Us & Staff



Government & Corporate funders

- Financial disclosure
- News
- Project storytelling



Community Members

- Funding opportunities
- Project storytelling
- About Us & Staff
- Resources

Step 2: Choose your content

Now that you know who will be visiting your website, you can decide what you want to share with them. Ask yourself what you want people to see and know. If you want to create transparency for donors and funders, you may have a space for financials and disclosures. If you are encouraging donations, you will need a donation link. A blog section is a great way to share stories from your community, while optimizing your website for search engines. When choosing your content, also

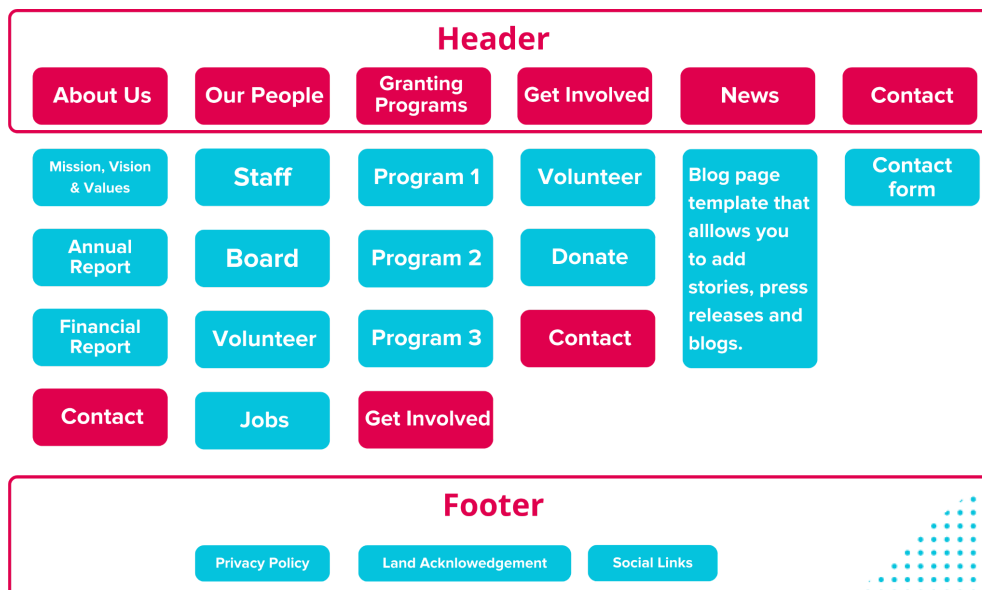


consider what you already have. You may already have a great logo, photos from funding programs, or testimonials from your community that you want to share. Once you've brainstormed your content, you may come up with something like this:



Step 3: Plan your site map

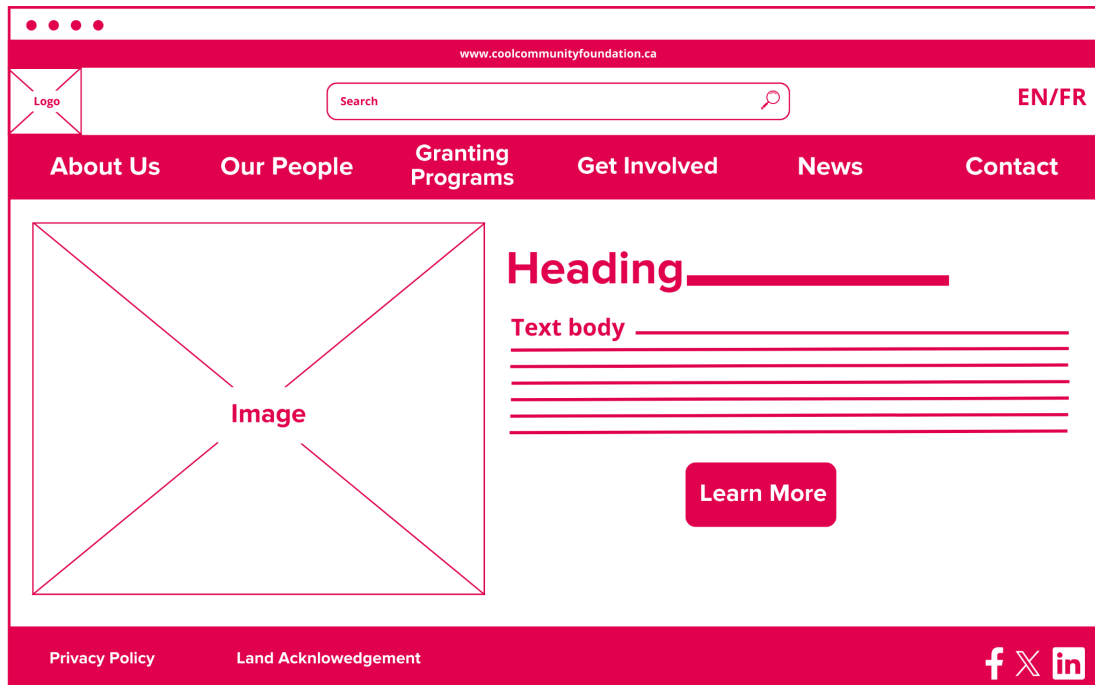
Now that you know what you want to share, create a plan for how to share that information in the simplest way. Remember: clear is kind. Consider the flow and navigation. The most important elements of your website should be the easiest to reach, therefore they should be in the home page or header. Also ensure that you have a safe place to store your website copy, such as a cloud storage service or a local backup so that you can be consistent with content updates. Below is an example of a site map using the brainstorming in Step 2.





Step 4: Visualize

Now that you have a general plan for your website, you can start to imagine what it will look like to your audience. To do this, you will create a wireframe. A wireframe is essentially a layout of all the elements on your website. You can create one using tools such as [Figma](#) or [Lucidchart](#) or simply using a pen and paper. Not only does it help you be strategic with your content and ensure your site is easy to navigate, it is also essential when working with a developer. Below is an example of a wireframe for your home page.



Step 5: Build

Finally, when it comes to the actual building process, there are numerous platforms available that can simplify the task. Platforms like [Squarespace](#) or [WordPress](#) offer user-friendly interfaces and customizable templates that allow you to create your website without extensive technical knowledge. Now that you know your audience, content and flow of information, keep these in mind when selecting a template that is both functional and appealing. You can view Squarespace templates [here](#). Alternatively, if you have the budget, you can enlist the services of a developer who can bring your sitemap and vision to life, ensuring a professionally crafted website that aligns with your organization's unique needs.



Tools

[Squarespace](#) is our recommendation for building, hosting and maintaining your website. It features built-in domain hosting, SEO optimization, and great templates to start you off. Other alternatives include [Wordpress](#) and [Shopify](#).

If using a developer, [Figma](#) is a great tool that can help in planning your site map. It has features such as UI/UX design, user testing, cross-team collaboration and handoff to developers. Other tools you can use in this step are [Lucidchart](#) or a simple pen and paper.

[Canva](#) is a powerful tool that is used by graphic designers of all experience levels. Once you have determined your brand guidelines and gathered assets, you can easily upload these to Canva. Doing so will allow you to conveniently add branding elements to anything you create on Canva.

Remember to register as a non-profit organization and get free access to Canva Pro.