

How these documents compare to what else is available

There is no shortage of free AI policy templates for law firms. Before you spend money on one, it is worth understanding exactly what those free templates contain — and what they leave for your firm to build.

THE STARTING POINT

A policy is not the same thing as a record

Courts are actively sanctioning attorneys over unverified AI-generated content, and the penalties have escalated well beyond the early cases. State bar associations continue to issue guidance. ABA Formal Opinion 512 and Model Rules 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 5.1, and 5.3 already establish what is expected of a lawyer using these tools.

What protects a firm is not avoiding AI. It is being able to demonstrate, in writing and after the fact, that the firm governed its use of AI responsibly. That distinction matters more than it first appears. **A template downloaded and saved to a shared drive produces no record. A completed, adopted, firm-specific governance document does.**

Our documents are built to produce that record. This guide explains how they differ from the alternatives, function by function, so you can make an informed decision rather than a price comparison.

What firms typically find when they search

Every alternative we reviewed falls into one of four categories. Each is useful for something. None of them is a complete, law-firm-specific governance document you can adopt as-is.

Free templates from legal technology vendors

Typically free · lead generation

Short policy templates and sample clauses published by practice management platforms, legal AI vendors, and bar associations as content marketing.

WHAT'S MISSING

Usually one fragment — a single clause, a single checklist, a single log. No accountability assignment, no escalation path, no documentation requirement.

Generic enterprise AI governance templates

Free to roughly \$30

Well-constructed AI governance charters, risk frameworks, and data processing agreements built around ISO 42001, the NIST AI Risk Management Framework, and the EU AI Act.

WHAT'S MISSING

They were not written for law firms. No ABA Model Rules, no Formal Opinion 512, no attorney supervision framework, no client confidentiality construct.

Bundled legal governance packets

Roughly \$500 to \$6,000

Multi-artifact packets aimed at malpractice carrier renewal, sold as an all-or-nothing set of policies, checklists, logs, and notices.

WHAT'S MISSING

You cannot buy the one document you actually need. Several components are forms rather than governing standards, and scope varies considerably across the set.

Consulting-gated deliverables

\$10,000+ engagements

Governance memoranda, evidence packs, and decision records produced by AI advisory firms as part of a full consulting relationship.

WHAT'S MISSING

The document is not available on its own. Much of the published material describes the framework in detail and then stops short of the language you would actually use.

Fourteen things a governance document has to do

These are not stylistic preferences. Each one is something the document must actually do when a malpractice carrier, a bar committee, or opposing counsel asks how your firm governs AI. You can verify every row below against any alternative you are considering.

Function	Defensible AI™	Free vendor templates	Generic enterprise templates	Bundled legal packets	Consulting deliverables
Written for law firm operations	●	●	—	●	●
Maps to specific ABA Model Rules	●	●	—	●	●
Incorporates Formal Opinion 512	●	●	—	●	●
Complete document, not a fragment	●	—	●	●	—
Assigns duties to named roles	●	—	●	●	●
Defines when obligations trigger	●	—	●	●	●
Rating tiers that drive different actions	●	—	●	—	●
Escalation and approval path	●	—	●	—	●
Bright-line prohibitions	●	—	●	●	—
Produces a record for third-party review	●	—	—	●	●
Recurring review and monitoring cycle	●	—	●	●	●
Connects to other documents in a system	●	—	—	●	●
Updated as guidance evolves	●	—	—	●	●
Available as an individual purchase	●	●	●	—	—

● Fully addressed ● Partial or inconsistent — Not addressed

The specific difference in each document

Rather than claim our documents are generally better, here is the single most consequential provision in each one that we did not find in any alternative.

ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY MODULE

AI Acceptable Use Policy

A complete firm-wide policy covering permitted and prohibited uses, attorney supervision, vendor evaluation, client confidentiality, incident reporting, and recordkeeping.

\$597

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

Prohibitions are split into two classes: absolute rules that admit no exception, and context-specific rules waivable only with written sign-off from both the AI Governance Officer and the supervising partner. Alternatives use a single flat list. Ours encodes which rules are negotiable and who has authority to negotiate them.

ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY MODULE

AI Client Disclosure Procedures

Defines when and how the firm discloses AI use to clients, with engagement letter language, disclosure triggers, and a pre-filing tribunal checklist.

\$297

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

A continuing mid-matter disclosure duty. Every alternative treats AI disclosure as a one-time event at engagement. AI use almost always expands after the engagement letter is signed — which is precisely where Rule 1.4 exposure accumulates.

ETHICS & PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY MODULE

Human Oversight & AI Verification Standards

Mandatory attorney verification requirements for citations, factual assertions, and legal analysis, with matter-file documentation duties.

\$297

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

An explicit prohibition on delegating verification to non-attorney staff. This is the most commonly violated control in practice and the one that converts a hallucination into a Rule 5.3 supervision failure. We did not find it stated in any alternative document.

AI Professional Responsibility Risk Memorandum

A privileged memorandum template documenting the firm's rule-by-rule professional responsibility analysis, risk exposure, and remediation commitments.

\$797

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

No standalone alternative exists in this category at any price. The only substitute is outside ethics counsel drafting the analysis from scratch at hourly rates. This template provides the analytical structure so your designated attorney can complete it directly.

AI Governance Charter

Establishes the AI Governance Committee's authority, composition, decision rights, and reporting obligations under Rule 5.1.

\$497

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

Committee composition built on rotating practice-group representation. Generic charters staff committees by corporate function. Ours reflects how a law firm actually distributes knowledge and secures partner buy-in. Best suited to firms of ten or more attorneys with multiple practice groups.

AI Risk Assessment Procedures

A repeatable process for evaluating AI tool risk across confidentiality, professional responsibility, and operational dimensions.

\$397

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

A four-tier rating that determines who holds approval authority at each level. Alternatives tell you what to ask a vendor. Only this document specifies what happens based on the answer — including a category of risk that no one at the firm may approve.

AI Vendor Due Diligence & Approval Procedures

A five-step vendor evaluation and approval workflow with required contractual protections and an approved vendor registry.

\$447

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

Ethics Counsel review as a separate mandatory gate, distinct from the security assessment. Alternatives treat vendor evaluation as a technology exercise. Whether a vendor's data practices are compatible with Rule 1.6 is not a question a technology lead is qualified to answer.

AI Data Protection & Confidentiality Procedures

Three-tier data classification, an anonymization standard, prohibited submissions, and a breach response sequence.

\$447

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

An absolute prohibited-submission list requiring no judgment to apply. Every alternative asks an attorney to make a confidentiality assessment in the moment. Removing that assessment for the highest-risk categories is the only control design that reliably holds under deadline pressure.

AI Incident Response Plan

Three-category incident severity model with defined response windows, containment procedures, and notification triggers.

\$547

INDIVIDUAL
PURCHASE

THE DIFFERENCE

A mandatory post-incident review that feeds back into policy revision. The public record already includes firms sanctioned a second time after announcing policy updates following a first incident. Having a policy did not prevent the repeat. A closed review loop is what does.

What you are actually comparing

Finished versus unfinished

A free engagement letter clause is a small fraction of a disclosure procedure. Getting from that clause to something usable means someone at your firm determines the triggers, writes the mid-matter protocol, builds the tribunal checklist, and validates all of it against Rule 1.4. The free template is not less expensive. It is unpriced.

Cost against exposure

AI-related sanctions have moved from four-figure fines to penalties exceeding six figures in individual matters, alongside bar suspensions. Measured against a single adverse order — or against one malpractice renewal conversation that goes badly — the cost of documentation is not the variable that matters.

You are buying the record

The value is not the text of the document. It is the artifact in your file when a carrier asks at renewal, when a bar committee opens an inquiry, or when opposing counsel asks how the filing was prepared. That is what a completed governance document produces and an unused template does not.

COMPLETE MODULE BUNDLES	BUNDLE	YOU SAVE
Ethics & Professional Responsibility — four documents	\$1,497	\$491
AI Governance Framework — two documents	\$697	\$197
Technology & Vendor Security — three documents	\$997	\$444

Every document is delivered as an editable Word file, ready to customize with your firm's name, designated governance officer, and effective date. All purchases include twelve months of update access as ABA guidance, state bar rules, and court standing orders continue to develop.

Not sure which documents your firm needs?

Start with the single document addressing your most urgent gap, or take a complete module. If your firm needs a full evaluation of where it actually stands — current AI use, exposure, and readiness across roughly 125 governance controls — ask us about the Phase O™ Assessment.

Peter Keane · Founding Principal, KeaneAdvisors.AI
peter.keane@keaneadvisors.ai · (843) 941-4575
keaneadvisors.ai/contact