



# Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations

Representing and Advocating for the Nonprofit Sector of Texas

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## Grantwriting Resources

Many nonprofit organizations depend on grants for survival, but the process of getting them can be tedious and time-consuming. TANO has compiled this list of tips and resources to help you get the most out of your grant search.

### Tip 1: Do Your Homework

Research is the critical step in identifying the right funder. Research can also be the most intimidating step in the grantwriting process. Even when you find grant sources, how do you figure out what they want? The following resources can help you cut through the confusion and find a funder that's the perfect fit for your specific proposal.

Participants in the Foundation Center's [Cooperating Collections](#) Program maintain collections of reference materials for use in researching grantmakers and funding opportunities. Many also provide free training on how to use the materials. Only about 1700 of the 70,000 foundations in America have websites, so the directories available through these collections are invaluable.

For a more ready reference, TANO members can purchase the Directory of Texas Foundations for a 20% discount. Contact the [Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas](#) for more information.

[The Foundation Center](#) helps people look for funders by listing more than 2,000 annotated links to grantmaker Web sites. The sections "Finding Funders" and "Learning Lab" are the most useful. They also have an email list called "Philanthropy News Digest" that publicizes news about funding trends and one called "RFP Bulletin" where information about new grants is posted by funders.

[GuideStar](#)'s database of nonprofit organizations can be used to look up information on potential funders, and also look up other organizations that have received grants you're trying to get and see how they compare.

The [Council on Foundations](#) is a nonprofit membership organization for funders. You can use their site to research different "affinity groups," which are lists of funders who give grants in certain issue areas.

### Tip 2: Don't Reinvent the Wheel

Even if you've written grants before, staring at a blank page can be

intimidating. But you don't have to start from scratch! In addition to using previous grants your organization has written, you can get help from other sources that will do some of the thinking for you. While every grant proposal is tailored to a specific funder, these ideas will help you shortcut through the common elements.

Guides to proposal writing can help you think through your grant. The Foundation Center's [Proposal Writing Short Course](#) gives section-by-section advice on how to organize and write your grant proposal. [Non-Profit Guides](#) is another "basic steps" site that can help you move from idea to finished grant application.

The [Grantsmanship Center](#) publishes "Program Planning and Proposal Writing," considered the essential resource for anyone involved in applying for grants. Look for it on their publications list - for only \$4, make sure to order the "extended version." While at the site, subscribe to [The Grantsmanship Center Magazine](#). It's free for staff of nonprofit organizations, and contains articles on a wide range of topics related to grants.

You can also use [GuideStar](#) to look up the organizations that have received grants from your "target" funders, then contact those organizations and request a copy of their successful proposals. Many organizations will be glad to share this information with you.

Innovation Network offers a free program planning and budgeting tool called the [InnoNet.org Workstation](#). It promises a structure to help nonprofits think through the details of a program. Try it out and let us know how it works at [info@tano.org](mailto:info@tano.org)!

### **Tip 3: Get Connected**

Networking with other nonprofit grantwriters can lead to information about grant opportunities as well as opportunities for learning. The [Association of Fundraising Professionals](#) has chapters throughout Texas. Chapters offer speakers and training as well as mentoring and networking opportunities.

The [State Grants Team](#) in the Governor's Office has a "Grant Alert" email list and lists of government and non-government funders by issue area. The State Grants Team also provides grant writing training to state agencies, political subdivisions of the state, and other entities on a cost recovery basis. The Team's proposal writing training workshop is designed to familiarize novice and intermediate-level proposal writers with the various aspects of proposal writing. To schedule a training, or if you have questions, please visit their website or call Ron Ayer at (512) 463-8465.

The [Center for Community Support](#) at Texas A&M provides a variety of information and grantwriting assistance to nonprofit organizations for free when local resources are insufficient for the organization to prepare the grant application.

Finally, check with your local [Texas Nonprofit Management Assistance Network](#) member to find out about training opportunities in fundraising. You can improve your skills and meet other grantwriting professionals to share ideas and information.

### **Further Reading and Resources**

- [Center for Community-Based and Nonprofit Organizations Grant Information Clearinghouse](#)
- [Texas Department of Health Funding Information Center](#)
- [About.com's Help with Grant Proposals](#)
- [Grantwriting Basics: Top 45 Grantwriting Tips and Strategies](#)
- [GrantProposal.com: Aesthetics and Technicalities for Grantwriters](#)

Information provided by TANO based partially on comments by Allison Supancic, librarian of the Regional Foundation Library of the Hogg Foundation.