



Power Your Proposal

Strengthen Grant Writing in Rural Communities

July 30, 2026

What is Texas Rural Funders?

The leading membership organization for philanthropy dedicated to rural Texas

Mission

To mobilize the power of philanthropy to strengthen rural Texas

What Does Texas Rural Funders Do?

For Communities

Share resources including monthly newsletter, Grants Hub, webinars, and more

For Funders

Provide a learning network along with tools and information to serve rural communities

A trusted partner and connector for rural communities.



STAY CONNECTED WITH TEXAS RURAL FUNDERS

Sign up for *The Round-Up*, a monthly newsletter
spotlighting all things rural that matter to Texas.



CONNECT WITH US

Find Resources and Tools on
YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn and at
www.texasruralfunders.org



Grants Hub on the Texas Rural Funders Website

Built for

Community leaders

Nonprofits

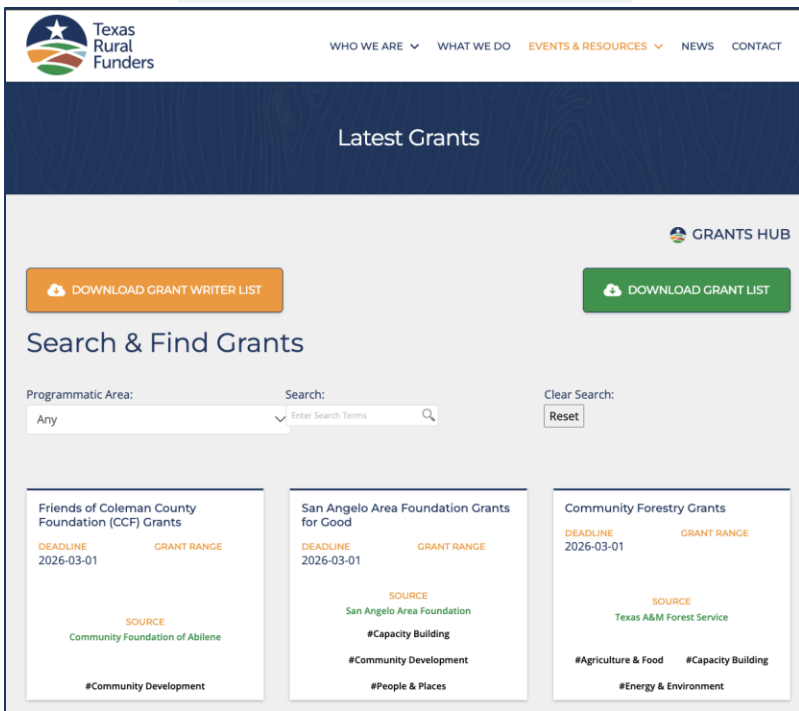
Key features

Free, downloadable database of grant opportunities for rural communities

Roster of vetted grantwriters with subject-matter expertise

[Access the Grants Hub here.](#)





Grants Hub

Rural Innovation & Impact Showcase Competition

DEADLINE
2026-03-27

GRANT RANGE
Up to \$5,000

SOURCE
National Forum to Advance Rural Education

#Capacity Building #Education

#Workforce & Economic Development

The Sewell Fund Learning Partnership Program

DEADLINE
2026-03-31

GRANT RANGE
Up to \$100,000

SOURCE
Grace and Harold Sewell Memorial Fund

#Capacity Building

#Community Development #Education

Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation Responsive Grants

DEADLINE
2026-04-01

GRANT RANGE
Up to \$50,000

SOURCE
Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation

#Capacity Building

#Community Development #Education

U.S. Foundation Grants

DEADLINE
2026-04-02

GRANT RANGE
Up to \$45,000

SOURCE
Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation

#Capacity Building

#Disaster Prevention & Relief #Education

Downtown Revitalization Programs

DEADLINE

GRANT RANGE

Temple Foundation Grants

DEADLINE

GRANT RANGE

Rural Resources on the Texas Rural Funders Website

Built for

Nonprofit and community leaders
Funders

Key features

Resources that highlight success stories and connect users to documents, videos, and orgs dedicated to their success

[Access Rural Resources here.](#)





POWER YOUR PROPOSAL



A Smart Structure for Grant Writing Success
September 2025



Planting Seeds of Prosperity:
How CDFIs Can Transform Rural Texas



September 2024



Creating Infrastructure Pathways in Texas: Water and Broadband

Landscape Analysis and Recommendations

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PREPARED FOR

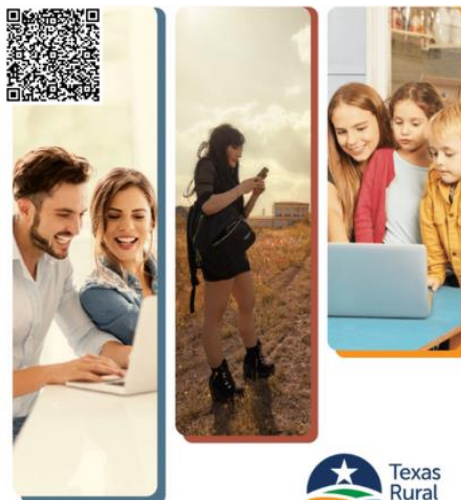


Boosting Broadband with E-Rate
April 2024



Finding Funding for Fiber:
Broadband Financing Options for Rural Texas Communities

September 2023



Get Connected Y'all:
A Guide for Texas Communities on Securing Broadband

May 2022

ctc technology & energy
engineering & business consulting



Broadband Recommendations to
Connect All Texans
Prepared for Texas Rural Funders
December 2022

Columbia Telecommunications Corporation
10613 Concord Street • Kensington, MD 20895 • Tel: 301-933-1488 • Fax: 301-933-3340 • www.ctcnet.us



"It's a 3-legged stool: people need
water, electricity, and broadband":
Broadband Stories from Rural Texas

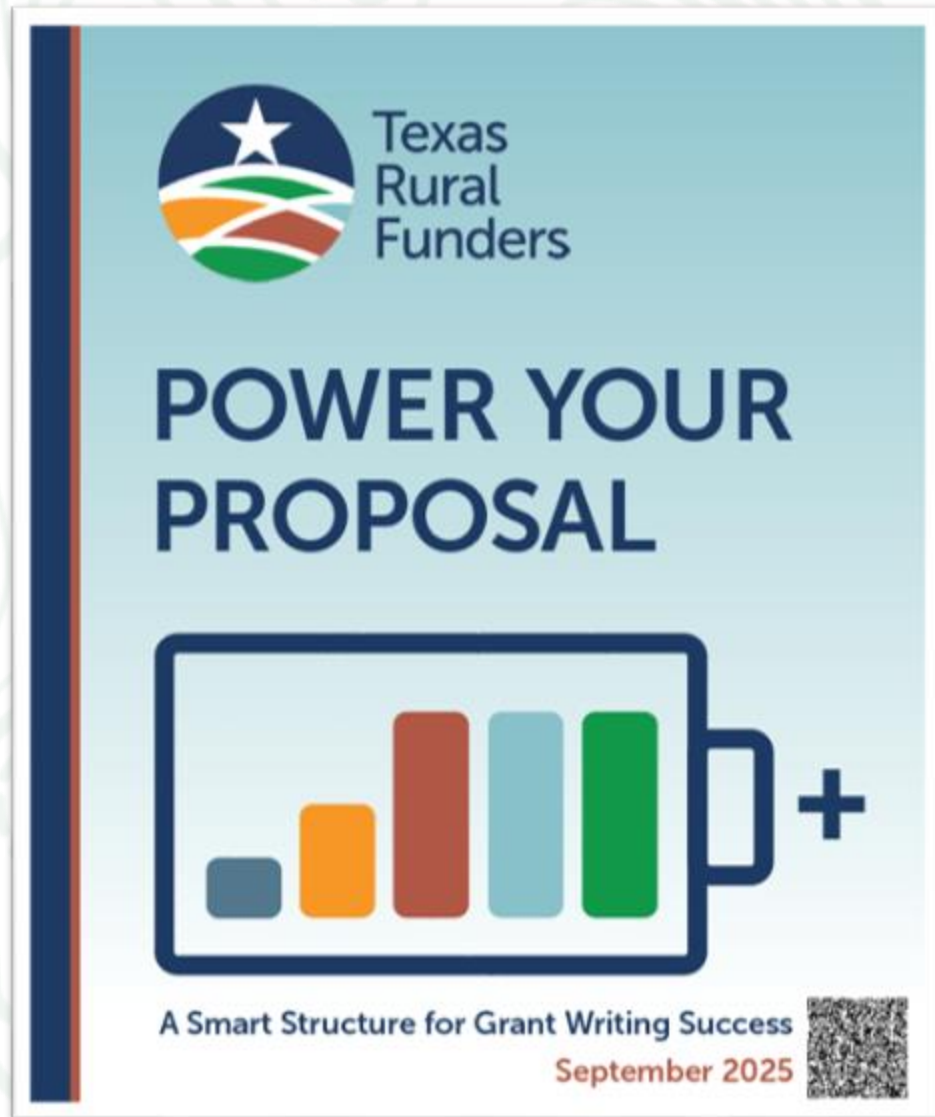
January 2021



Texas
Rural
Funders



NEW RESOURCE FOR RURAL GRANTSEEKERS



Power Your Proposal: A Smart Structure for Grant Writing Success

Built for

Nonprofit staff that are new to grants
Volunteer grant writers

Features

What happens at every step in the grant life cycle – and *what you need to get there*
Easy-to-use resources you can use to put together a strong proposal

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

01

Grants Overview

02

How to Find Appropriate Grants

03

The Grant Lifecycle

04

Preparing for Grantwriting Success: The File Cabinet

05

Common Grant Preparation Questions

06

Advice from Funders

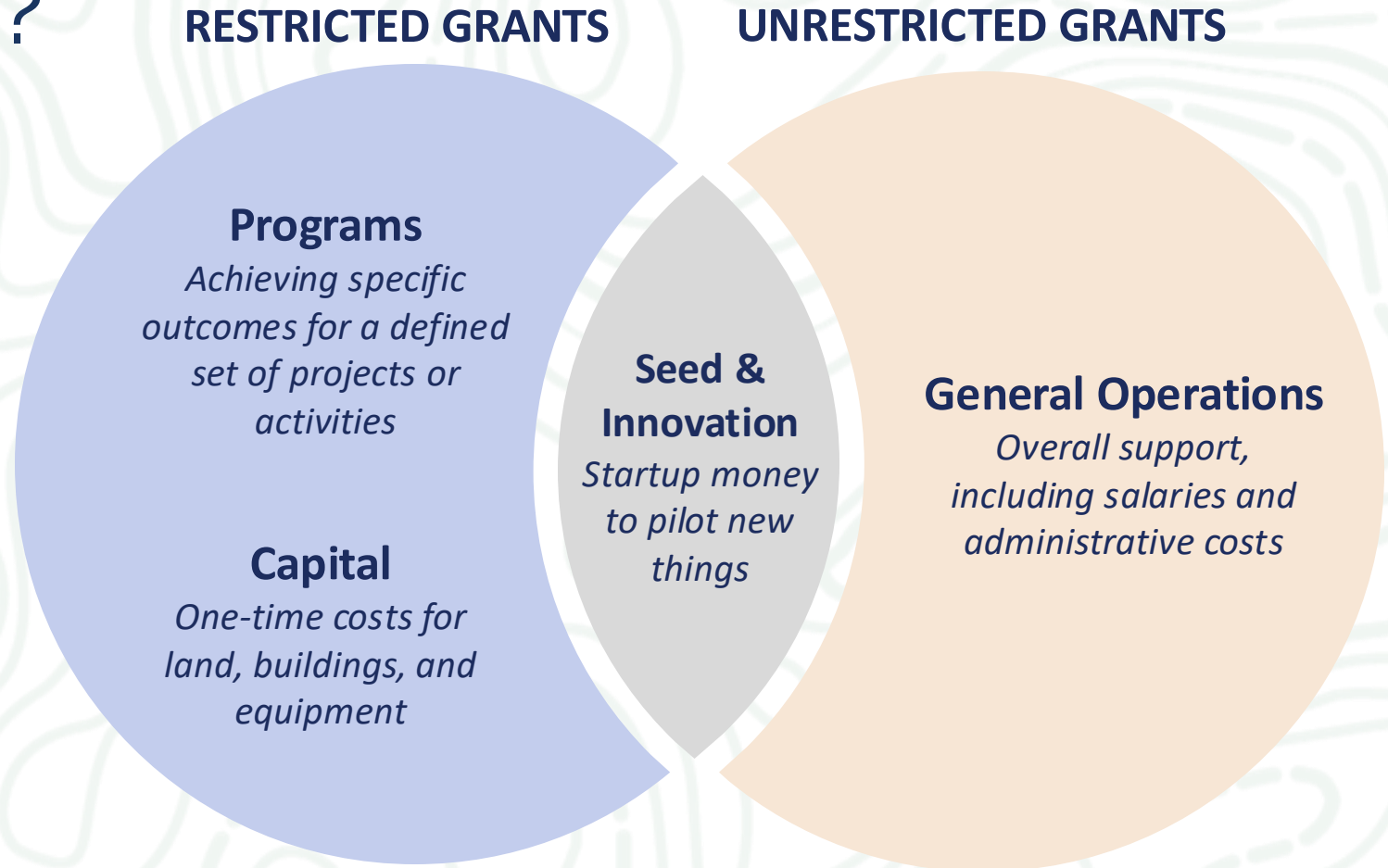
07

Resources

WHAT'S A GRANT?

A **grant** is an award of money given to a non-profit to fund a project or idea.

These can include →



Note: a grant is ***not***...



- A gift
- Payment for goods or services
- Repayable

WHO GIVES GRANTS?

Government



- Federal
- State
- Municipal

Corporate



- Corporate giving programs
- Corporate foundations

Nonprofit



- Private Foundations
- Community Foundations
- Public Charities

FIRST STEPS: WAYS TO START REACHING OUT

Funding starts with familiarity: “cold” applications rarely get funded
Look for low-pressure ways to connect with funders.



Subscribe to the
funder's newsletter



Attend events, training,
and regional convenings



Follow funders on
social media



Introduce yourself during
Q&A sessions or
networking opportunities



Invite funders to see your
services in action



Reach out to the program
officer before starting an
application

FINDING THE RIGHT GRANT

Do your research and reach out to your networks to identify the best grants for your work!
To help yourself get things rolling:



Connect with local foundations for guidance about possible funding partners.

- *They may have direct connections and other resources to help you stand out!*

Look at peer organizations. Ask about their grant portfolio and review annual reports.

- *This may help you find funders supporting may have funding for your cause.*

Ask your board members for their funding ideas.

- *Board members often have fundraising experience or connections to funders.*

FINDING THE RIGHT WORDS

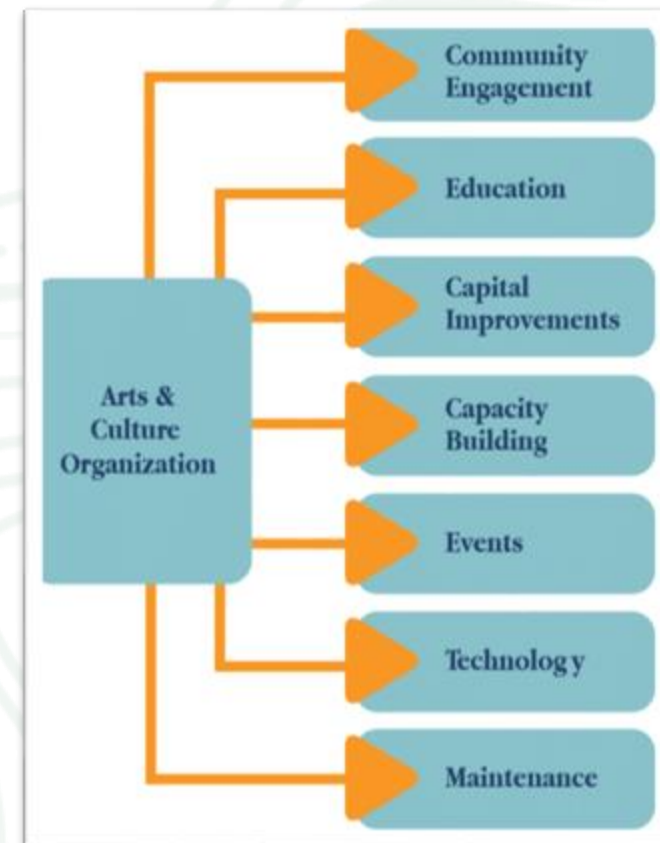
Sharing our work publicly can help us access new support.

How we frame our work can open more doors.



The same project can appeal to different kinds of funders.

Think about the different ways you can describe your needs to align with multiple funder interests.



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FUNDERS

WHO...



is your
point of
contact?

WHAT...



are their
grantmaking
priorities?

WHERE...



do they
make
grants?

WHEN...



are their grant
cycles and
deadlines?

HOW...



- do they receive applications?
- will they evaluate the application?
- much do they give?

LIFECYCLE OF A GRANT

Nonprofits and funders have a role to play at every step of the grant process – from idea to implementation.

Strategies to Avoid Getting Stuck

→ Didn't get the funding?

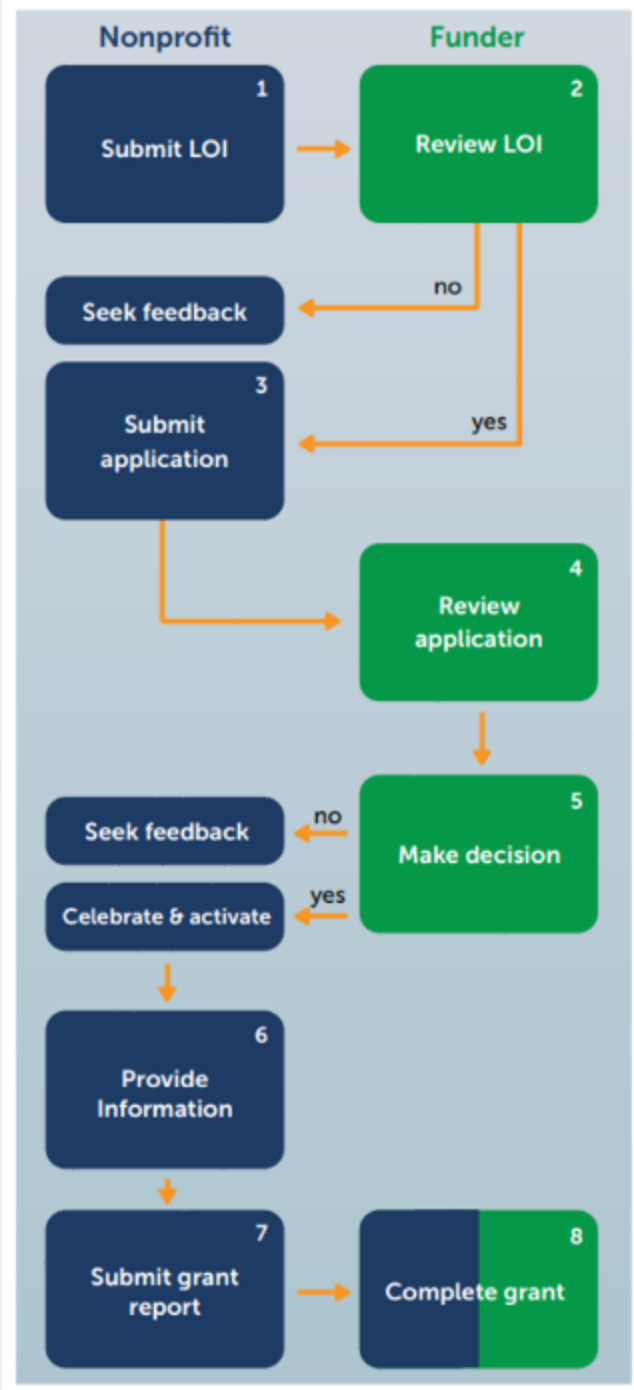
Ask for feedback and join any technical assistance offered.
“No” now doesn't mean “no” forever.

→ What should I do with my grant funds?

Spend the money—all of it—on what you said you would.
Unused funds may have to be returned.

→ Having challenges? Like hiring delays or leadership changes?

Don't wait! Reach out to your funder before problems grow. They can offer guidance, connections, or even help you find new resources.



GET READY: WHAT TO HAVE IN THE FILE CABINET

Grant applications have ***key elements that you can prepare ahead*** to set yourself up for success. Typical parts of a grant proposal include:

- ✓ Mission Statement
- ✓ Articles of Incorporation
- ✓ 501(c)(3) Letter from the IRS
- ✓ Case for Support
- ✓ Strategic Plan
- ✓ Organizational History
- ✓ Most recent financial statements and audit
- ✓ List of Board Members
- ✓ Resumes or biographies for key staff
- ✓ Geographic area served
- ✓ Target population
- ✓ Board agendas and minutes
- ✓ Evaluation plan
- ✓ Program budget and narrative



BE PREPARED: OTHER INFO FUNDERS ASK FOR

Funders Often Request Other Information that Demonstrates a Nonprofit's Ability to Successfully Implement the Grant:

Bylaws & Policies

Organizational Chart

Sustainability Plan

Job Descriptions



List of Project Advisory
Council Members

Letters of Support

Partnership Statements

DON'T FORGET: WORK SMARTER

As you gather info about funders and start to write your grant proposal,
remember these pro tips:

1. Track the Information You Gather About Your Funder and Grant Application.
 - Who you talk with | Deadlines | How much you asked for | When reports are due
2. Copy Application Questions into a Word Doc and Draft Your Answers There.
 - Upload your answers into the grant portal *after* you finish drafting them so you never lose your work!



COMMON GRANT PREPARATION QUESTIONS

What skills does it take to write an effective grant?

Should I apply for a grant that's a stretch for our organization?

We won!
Now what?!

We did the work and spent the money. But how do we report what difference it made?

This grant asks for matching funds? How does that work?

Can grants pay for overhead like building expenses, technology, or other salaries?

Should I be thorough or concise in my grant application?

I made a mistake – I reused a document and included a different funder's name. What should I do?

I missed the application deadline. Should I still submit?



ADVICE FROM FUNDERS (HINT: WE WANT YOU TO SUCCEED)

- We consistently fund the same categories.
- Do your homework.
- Are you addressing an existing need or innovating for future opportunities?
- Please answer my questions within the word limits.
- Your budget tells a story.
- We want to know what you learned and how you achieved your goals.
- No doesn't mean no forever.
- Sometimes what I can help with isn't money.
- Your organization doesn't need to have everything figured out, but you do need a solid plan.
- Relationships matter – even brief encounters can make a difference.



FINDING RESOURCES BEYOND GRANTS

Even with grant funding, you likely need partners to achieve your mission!



- Grants are a crucial tool, but they're not the only resource you have!
- Think about what partners in your community can do to help accomplish your goals.

HOW DO WE START A PARTNERSHIP?



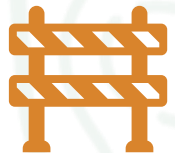
Start small:

What's one thing you can achieve *now* and keep building on?



Identify the added value:

What can you do together that you can't do alone?



Set parameters:

What's in-bounds vs. out-of-bounds?

Source: [Ron Carucci, Forbes "How to Forge Partnerships that Drive Organizational Change"](#)





Texas Rural Funders

MOBILIZING THE POWER OF PHILANTHROPY
to strengthen rural Texas.



Visit our Website



Newsletter Sign Up



Grants Hub

CONTACT US



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session [HERE](#)**

