

## **Rural Health Services Funding and Grant Writing**

*“How and from whom can we obtain funding for our community-based health improvements?”*

Outside funding, in the form of federal, state or local grants, matching funds, or private foundation gifts, is perceived as the “magic bullet” for solving community health access or infrastructure problems. “Where can we get money?” is often one of the first questions a community group looking for solutions asks.

The reality of outside funding is that it functions as only “a part” of any proposed solution, never as “the” solution. The paper-trail process required to obtain any given set of funds is often not only time-consuming, but downright maddening, and monies received usually have strings attached, in the form of administrative, reporting and/or outcome measurement requirements. Grant-writing itself is a specialized function, complete with its own language, and is frequently best left to grant-writing experts.

That’s the bad news. The good news is, community groups can succeed in receiving outside funding and make it work for their purposes. While there are no easy formulas, it helps if community groups search for funds that will evenly match their need(s) criteria. A common mistake is taking the reverse approach, that is, first finding available funds, and then trying to fit the community needs structure into the confines of that set of grant specifications. Before seeking funds, a community must thoroughly investigate its need(s) and refine its specific goal(s) to meet those needs. Being able to clearly articulate this problem-solution continuum, as a guiding

vision, is a necessary first step in a process that demands patience and persistence.

One of the challenges in the hunt for external monies is gaining experience on how and where to look for information on grants and funds. The main obstacle is wading through the sheer bulk of information available in published directories or online resources. It is helpful for grant-writing novices to begin small, with a bit of steering from experts. Search strategy suggestions are outlined in the following resources section.

Steps to success include: starting early, following grant Request For Proposal (RFP) guidelines exactly, adhering to submission deadlines and seeking outside advice or assistance (having experts review the grant proposal). A community must also establish, in advance, a sound structure for management of the monies (a suitable fiduciary agent), and most of all, devise a clear-cut plan for continuing the project once the funding runs out, which it usually does.

Free (or low-cost) grant-writing guidance for community groups is available at regional, state and national levels. In Texas, communities may contact their regional council of government (COG), the State Grants Team, the Center for Community Support (CCS) at Texas A&M University's Public Policy Research Institute or the Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas (see resource listings below). Nationally, the Rural Information Center (RIC) supplies updates on grant opportu-

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nities and a superb basic health services funding guidebook upon request and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) offers grant information and technical assistance workshops.

### Resources

- **Rural Health Services Funding:** A Resource Guide – A thorough basic guide to the grantsmanship process, complete with information sources, organizations, electronic resources and a glossary. Available online at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/> or in published form, by request (specify Rural Information Center Publication Series, No. 70) from the Rural Information Center, National Agriculture Library, Room 304, Beltsville, MD 20705-2351; Toll-free (800) 633-7701. The Rural Information Center's Publication Rural Health Services Funding: a Resource Guide, is also available in electronic form through <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/healthguide.pdf> or if you would prefer the HTML document please visit the publication page [http://ric.nal.usda.gov/nal\\_display/index.php?info\\_center=5&tax\\_level=1&tax\\_subject=207](http://ric.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=5&tax_level=1&tax_subject=207) for that resource.
- **State Grants Team** – Homepage of the State Grants Team of the Governor's Office of Budget and Planning. A group of experts who offer free reviews and comments on grant proposals, technical assistance and grant sources and grant alert referrals. <http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/stategrants/> or contact the State Grants Team at P.O. Box 12428, Austin, TX 78711; (512) 463-8465; Fax (512) 936-2681. Street address: 1100 San Jacinto, Suite 4.402, Austin, TX 78701.
- **Funding Watch** – Free funding source newsletter published monthly online by Channing Bete Company. Subscribe to "Healthy Communities" and "Funding Opportunities" E-Newsletters. See <http://www.channing-bete.com/funding.html>
- **Council on Foundations** – Example of a nonprofit membership association of grant-making foundations and corporations. Grant and networking information available online. Go to: <http://www.cof.org/home.htm> or contact: Council on Foundations, 2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22202, 800-673-9036.
- **The Foundation Center** – Gateway to philanthropy on the World Wide Web. A general, rather than specifically health-oriented source. Features a digest, grantmaker info, an online library, a Foundation Finder, and a Foundation Center Search (FC Search) available free at more than 200 libraries nationwide. Go to: <http://www.foundationcenter.org/> or contact the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue/16th Street, New York, NY 10003-3076; (800) 424-9836 or (212) 620-4230; Fax (212) 691-1028.
- **The Hogg Foundation** – A Texas foundation known for its support of mental health services, programs and agencies. Sponsors a seminar series, fellowships for its Evaluation Research Program, the Hogg Foundation Visiting Scholar Program, and the Hogg Foundation Library. The Library provides individuals and groups with comprehensive information about grantsmanship, nonprofit management, evaluation, volunteer issues and reference materials related to grants and funding. Library materials are available for use on site only. Contact: The Hogg Foundation, Lake Austin Centre, 4th Floor, 3001 Lake Austin Blvd., Austin, TX 78713; (512) 471-5041, (888) 404-4336, <http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/>

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- **Center for Nonprofit Support** – The Center offers technical assistance, workshops, publications, training and consulting for board members, staff and volunteers of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. Also available, the Directory of Texas Foundations, on-line. Regional nonprofit resource centers are located across the state, and for training or consulting services outside the state of Texas, contact The Alliance at (202) 955-8406. To locate regional offices, go to: <http://www.nprc.org/> <<http://www.nprc.org/site/pp.asp?c=ikl0LdP2G&b=90706>> or write: Nonprofit Resource Center of Texas, P.O. Box 15070, San Antonio, TX 78212-8270; (210) 227-4333.
- **A Circle of Ten, Inc.**-Network for Collaboration –C10, a nonprofit agency, has trained and supported leaders to multiply partnerships impacting economic development since 1996. Rural Collaboration Resource Center C10 connects people with resources through services, training and support to build individual and agency capacity; and through inclusion in regional Initiatives. Go to <http://www.etvv.org/> Contact: A Circle of Ten, Inc., 205 E Commerce, #205, Jacksonville, TX, 75766; (903) 541-0013; Fax (903) 541-0014; E-mail: [circleof10@circleof10.org](mailto:circleof10@circleof10.org)

### Other Resources:

- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance** – A government-wide compendium of Federal programs, projects, services and activities that provide benefits or assistance to the American public (not specifically a health-related tool). It contains financial and non-financial assistance programs ad-

ministered by departments and establishments of the Federal government. Though information is available in hardcopy catalog, machine-readable magnetic tape, diskettes and CD-ROM, for purchase, the easiest way to access the catalog is via an online search. Go to: <https://www.cfda.gov/>. The Federal Service Desk number is 1-866-606-8220. The National Customer Service Center (NCSC) number is (800) 488-3111 (delete - and click on Query the Catalog) (Delete ??? could not verify this address - Information also available from: The Federal Domestic Assistance Catalog Staff (MVS), General Services Administration, 300 7th Street, S.W., Suite 101, Washington, DC 20407; (202) 708-5126)

- **HRSA Funding Opportunities** – The Health Resources and Services Administration publishes a seasonal HRSA Preview, a single source of program and application information related to the Agency's competitive grant reviews. This agency also provides grant technical assistance workshops on a regional basis. Go to: <http://www.hrsa.gov> or call 1-888-333-HRSA for further information.
- **The Federal and Foundation Assistance Monitor** – Published semimonthly, this publication reports on federal and private grant opportunities and gives viewpoints on trends in policy and model programs. Subscription only. (delete - , \$260 per year.) Contact Grants And Funding.net c/o CD Publications, 8204 Fenton St., Silver Spring, MD 20910; Toll-free 1-800-666-6380; (301) 588-6380; Fax: 301-588-6385, <http://www.cdpublications.com>



Texas AHEC East links the resources of academic health partners and others to improve the health of our communities and serves 111 counties through 9 regional operations in the eastern half of Texas. Texas AHEC East is based at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.