

# Rural Philanthropy Day

November 4, 2022  
Schulenburg, TX

## Making the Most of the Funder Roundtables

One of the most popular aspects of Rural Philanthropy Day, the Funder Roundtables, will occur Friday afternoon. During that portion of the conference, representatives from funding organizations and nonprofit organizations like yours will have an opportunity to meet face to face to discuss whether there are possible matches between the funder's giving or grant priorities, and your nonprofit's needs.

## How the Roundtables Work

- On Friday afternoon, lunch will be served at On Pointe Studios in Schulenburg starting at 12:00 pm. A panel of experts representing a variety of funding types will be led in a forum during lunch until 1:30 pm.
- After lunch, nonprofits will be asked to relocate to a waiting area while funders split up at separate tables throughout the ballroom. Most funders are sending one person; some are sending two. Each table will have a sign on it identifying the funders at that table. There will be a map available telling you where each funder is sitting.
- Beginning at 2:00 pm, nonprofit representatives will fan out and sit at the tables of funders they want to visit. (More on this below.) There will be four "rotations" over the course of the afternoon. Each rotation is about 30 min long in total: 27 mins for the table discussions, and 3 minutes to regroup for the next rotation. If your agency is bringing two people, you might consider splitting up so you meet with more funders.
- Each table of funders might run their rotation a little differently. But the basic approach is that the funders will ask each of the nonprofits at the table for their "pitch": that is to explain, in about three minutes, what the nonprofit does, and whether it has any specific grant needs right now. The funders will also have three minutes each to give feedback, including an explanation about their grants process and priorities.
- In their responses to the nonprofits' pitch, the funders may also say that (1) there is a fit between the funder's priorities and your nonprofit's needs, (2) there might be a fit but the funder needs more information, or (3) there is not a fit either because your nonprofit or your specific need doesn't match up well with the funder's giving priorities.
- If a funder explains there is not a fit, don't be offended. It is not personal. Thank the funder for listening and let the conversation move on to the next person.
- If a funder explains there is a fit, that is not an obligation or commitment from the funder to award a grant to your organization. It is simply the funder saying that it is worth your time to submit an application.
- When the next rotation starts, the funder stays at the table, and you will move on to the next table in the rotation.

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## How to Prepare for the Roundtables

- Spend some time with the other leaders of your organization thinking about your highest priorities for outside funding. What do you really need? For example, is it operating support you can use for any purpose? Capital support to fix, build, or buy something? Whatever your needs are, decide which ones are the most important. Come prepared with up to three suggestions.
- Research the funders who will be participating in Rural Philanthropy Day. There are multiple sources of this information.
  - A directory of participating funders can be found at <https://fayettecommunityfoundation.networkforgood.com/events/42302-rural-philanthropy-day>
    - For many funders, the organization's name on this web page is a hot link to the funder's website. Go to the section of their website that describes their grant process.
    - For some organizations, there is a profile that describes what they fund within their website.
    - For some, there are list of current and past grantees and funded programs.
    - Keep checking the the Rural Philanthropy Day website for updates until the time of the event.
- As you read the profiles, look for matches in the following areas:
  - Geography- Does this funder provide funding to benefit residents of your county? Some of the participating funders work statewide, and others are limited to specific counties.
  - Type of Support- Does this funder support all kinds of needs, or just one or a few, and how does that support compare to what your organization needs? For example, if a funder's guidelines say that it only provides capital support, then you should not talk to that funder about unrestricted operating dollars for your organization.
  - Focus Areas- What charitable giving areas is the funder interested in? For example, if the funder is interested only in animal welfare, then you should not approach that funder about funding childcare center. But if the funder's expressed interest is broad, like "education", then it might be worth exploring with the funder during the Roundtables whether that interest includes childhood education.
- Relax and have fun!!

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