

Grant Funding Report

Grant Funding Report: Austin, TX



Innovation Meets Equity in Texas' Capital

Austin, Texas blends tech-driven economic growth with deep-rooted arts, cultural, and social equity movements. Known for its entrepreneurial spirit, progressive policies, and rapidly growing population, Austin's nonprofit sector addresses critical issues such as housing affordability, racial equity, public health, education, and environmental sustainability.

The city's funding landscape includes major corporate philanthropies, local family foundations, municipal initiatives, and statewide funders. Competition is intense due to high nonprofit density, requiring clear demonstration of impact, collaborative partnerships, and alignment with Austin's equity and innovation priorities.



Key Local Grantmakers & Programs

City of Austin Grants (Neighborhood & Community Grants)

- Includes Cultural Arts Funding, Community Initiatives Grants, and Neighborhood Partnership Programs
- Supports arts, culture, public engagement, and neighborhood improvement projects

St. David's Foundation

- One of Central Texas' largest health-focused funders
- Grants to nonprofits advancing health equity, mental health, access to care, healthy aging, and resilience

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

- Funds education, health, and family economic stability programs
- Strong focus on measurable, scalable solutions in Central Texas and beyond

Austin Community Foundation

- Offers Community Grant program plus donor-advised funds
- Priorities include racial equity, economic mobility, housing, health, and community resilience

United Way for Greater Austin

- Funds partners advancing early childhood education, financial stability, and health equity
- Focus on collective impact and long-term community outcomes

The Shield-Ayres Foundation

- Private family foundation funding human services, arts and culture, environment, and education
- Emphasizes local impact and organizational capacity building

Texas Commission on the Arts

- Provides operational and project grants to arts organizations across Austin and Texas
- Prioritizes access, innovation, and cultural preservation

Most Competitive Grants in 2025

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation Grants

Highly selective, focused on data-driven, scalable interventions

St. David's Foundation Grants

Competitive due to large grant sizes and extensive regional demand

City of Austin Cultural Arts Grants

Rigorous application, evaluation, and reporting requirements

Austin Community Foundation Community Grants

Broad eligibility with a focus on equity, making it highly sought after

Macroeconomic Trends Impacting Austin Nonprofits (2025)

Housing Affordability Crisis

Rapid growth and gentrification displacing low-income residents, increasing demand for housing and homeless services

Health Equity & Mental Health

Gaps in access to mental health care and persistent health disparities in marginalized communities

Education & Workforce Development

Emphasis on equitable education access, STEM pipelines, and workforce readiness in a tech-driven economy

Immigrant and Refugee Support

Growing immigrant population requires culturally responsive services, legal aid, and language access

Environmental Resilience

Climate adaptation, water conservation, and urban sustainability are emerging priorities

Best Practices for Competing in Austin's Grant Landscape

Prioritize Equity and Inclusion

Use language that demonstrates cultural competence, equity impact, and shared leadership with communities served

Demonstrate Cross-Sector Collaboration

Funders favor nonprofits working in partnership with public agencies, schools, health systems, and other nonprofits

Combine Local Data with Storytelling

Support your proposals with Austin-specific data plus compelling human narratives of impact

Prepare for Detailed Outcomes Tracking

Major funders require rigorous data collection, evaluation plans, and clear reporting processes

Engage with Funders Early

Attend information sessions, office hours, and community listening sessions hosted by Austin funders

Highlight Systems Change Approaches

Demonstrate how your programs address root causes rather than only symptoms

Steward Relationships Thoughtfully

Regularly update funders on milestones, share success stories, and invite them to events or site visits

Grant Readiness Checklist:

Austin Nonprofits

Organizational Docs

- IRS Determination Letter (501(c)(3))
- Texas Secretary of State registration and franchise tax exemption
- Board list with affiliations
- Audited or reviewed financial statements
- Annual operating and program budgets
- Proof of general liability insurance

Program Materials

- Logic models or theories of change
- Evaluation plans, tools, and sample data reports
- Testimonials, case studies, and success stories
- Austin or Travis County-specific data supporting your mission

Community Engagement

- Letters of support from partners, local officials, or community leaders
- MOUs for collaborative projects
- Community needs assessments or survey data

Grant-Specific Prep

- Template proposals, budgets, and reporting documents
- Systems for grant tracking and compliance management
- Internal review process and grant calendar

Post-Award Capacity

- Financial reporting systems and dashboards
- Data collection and analysis capacity
- Fundraising sustainability and donor stewardship plans

Relationship Building

- Attend Austin funder webinars and nonprofit networking events
- Maintain communication with current/past funders through updates and annual reports
- Publicly recognize funders when appropriate to strengthen partnerships

Strategic Considerations for Austin Nonprofits

Diversify Revenue

Balance grant funding with major gifts, recurring donors, corporate sponsorships, and earned income streams

Invest in Internal Capacity

Skilled grant writers, data analysts, and development staff are critical to remain competitive

Increase Visibility

Publish success stories, leverage media, and showcase programs through social media and local events

Join Coalitions

Collaborative impact models are often favored for large-scale funding opportunities

Conclusion: Readiness Drives Impact

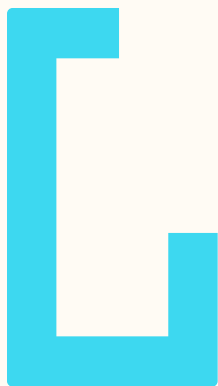
Austin's grant environment is competitive yet abundant for nonprofits that are strategic, equity-focused, and community-rooted. Aligning programs with local priorities, building strong partnerships, and demonstrating measurable outcomes will position your organization for sustainable growth.

Harness offers end-to-end grant support—strategy, writing, and post-award services—for Austin nonprofits ready to scale their impact.



Schedule a free grant readiness assessment:

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