

About the Funder Roundtables

The funder roundtables are a unique event for nonprofit organizations seeking funding, where they can meet with potential funders in a speed-dating style. Our goal is to connect you with local, regional, and statewide funders to gain awareness of your organization and programs.

This opportunity lets organizations present their program or project within a set time limit. The nonprofit's introduction could spark interest from the funder. This interaction may lead to further discussions between your organization and the funder.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE ROUNDTABLES

The SPUR conference is a two-day event. The first day features educational sessions. Following breakfast on the second day, the roundtables will begin.

At 9:45 a.m., the different funders will split up and sit at separate tables in the room. Community Foundation of Abilene (or "CFA") representatives will welcome and provide reminders about the process.

Each foundation or grantmaking organization will be designated a table, clearly marked with a sign to identify the funder. Most funders are sending one person; some are sending two.

Beginning at 10 a.m., nonprofit representatives will fan out and sit at their first funder roundtable. There will be five "rotations" throughout the morning (that is, opportunities to meet with up to five different funders). Each rotation is about 25 minutes in total: 20 minutes for the table discussion and five minutes to regroup for the next rotation.

If your favorite funder's table is full at first, don't despair. You will have another chance. If your agency is bringing two people, you might consider splitting up to meet with more funders.

If you already have a relationship with a funder, we encourage you not to use this time to catch up during the funders' roundtable. There will be other opportunities to network with those funders.

During each round, there will be up to six nonprofit representatives per funder table. Each nonprofit will have no more than three minutes to make its pitch, sharing the organization's mission, vision, and key programming with the funder.

In response to each brief pitch, the funder will say either that (1) there is a fit between the funder's priorities and your nonprofit's needs, ("green light"), (2) there might be a fit but the funder needs more information ("yellow light"), 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 ("red light").

- If a funder gives you a "red light," 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 gives a "green light," 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 apply.

The format is designed to be concise and conversational, allowing nonprofits to introduce their work and explore potential alignment with the funder.

When the next rotation starts, the funder stays at the table, and you will move on to the tables of other funders that interest you.

Please note that each funder may choose to structure their table interactions differently. Some may ask more specific questions than the ones mentioned in our [demonstration](#) video.

There might be a rotation when you are not seated at a table with a funder. We encourage you to use this time to network with other nonprofits or visit the Help Desk.

PREREQUISITE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ROUNDTABLES

The Funders Roundtables are open to actively operating, established nonprofits and organizations with a defined charitable project.

All participants must have registered for the SPUR conference in advance and must have attended the first day of education sessions.

If special circumstances or exceptions are needed, please contact Meagan Harris at mharris@cfabilene.org.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE ROUNDTABLES

Before you arrive at the SPUR conference, you need to start preparing your pitch for the funder roundtables session.

Spend some time with the other leaders of your organization to discuss your highest priorities for external funding. What do you 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, identify the most important ones. Come prepared with up to three suggestions. If you don't understand the difference between "operating support," "capital support," and similar terms, look at the [glossary here](#).

We understand that all nonprofit leaders are passionate about their projects – this isn't to convince, but to share information and raise awareness about your organization.

Storytelling opening session

At the 2025 SPUR conference, the [opening session](#) on Thursday is on storytelling. Learning how to tell your story quickly and efficiently can create a positive impression. The session will equip organizations with strategies and tactics for building their pitch to present at the funder roundtables on Friday. Focus on mission, vision, programming, and ways a funder can partner with your organization.

Help desk

If you feel you need help crafting your pitch, we will have individuals available to guide you in building your selling points at the SPUR Help Desk. Experts from CFA, [Dini Spheris](#), [MindPop](#), and SPUR conference speakers will be volunteering at the Help Desk. See the [agenda](#) for the Help Desk hours.

You can also reference this [handout](#) from the National Council of Nonprofits for "The 5 Parts of the Perfect Pitch."

Funder profiles

The SPUR website has a page that lists the participating funders: spurwct.org/funders.

- Each funder has a link redirecting users to the funder's eligibility and grant information online.
- Please continue to check the SPUR website or Constant Contact emails for updates on the funder profile PDFs, which should be available by July 31.
- If you have time, you can also research the funder through additional web-based sources. For suggestions on sources, visit the King Foundation's [website](#).

This will enable you to research how they distribute grants, including deadlines, funding areas, and geographic service areas.

Note: If, when researching, you find that your organization is not eligible with funder(s), do not sit at those tables during a rotation.

NEXT STEPS AFTER THE ROUNDTABLES

You did it! So, what happens after the roundtables? What if a funder says they would love to connect after the event?

- If they tell you how to follow up, do so.
- If not, please contact the representative and ask to schedule a visit (by phone, in-person, or via Zoom) to discuss your project further.

If the funding relationship does not cultivate, we encourage you to reach out to Meagan Harris.

The CFA also offers educational opportunities, as well as the rural grantmaking initiative through the Windham Fund or other resources that could benefit your organization.