



Friends in High Places: Navigating Friends Group Partnerships

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 2:00 p.m. CT.

While you wait:

1. Download PDFs of the slides and handout under the “Handouts” tab of your control bar.
2. Confirm that your speakers are turned on and your audio is working by doing a sound check in the “Audio” tab of the control bar. Having problems? Exit and restart the webinar or switch to “phone call” for a phone number and access code to hear the audio through your telephone.

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On our webpage:

- Webinars
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- Can You Weather the Storm? Tips on Budgeting, KPIs, and Reviewing Financial Statements
 - Tuesday, December 15, 10:00 a.m. CT

Upcoming Free Webinars from Other Orgs

www.thc.texas.gov/museumconnections

- *Managing Museum Risks During a Pandemic*, Dec. 9, 10:00 a.m. CT, Texas Association of Museums
- *Are Your Donors Receptive to a Capital Campaign?*, Dec. 9, 12:00 p.m. CT, Mission Advancement
- *Health and Safety in Disasters*, Dec. 9, 1:00 p.m. CT, American Institute for Conservation
- *Fair Pay in a Time of Crisis: Fighting for Wage Equity and Transparency in Museums*, Dec. 9, 6:00 p.m. CT, Cultural Connections
- *Community*, Dec. 10, 11:00 a.m. CT, Maryland Center for History and Culture
- *New Communications Strategies*, Dec. 11, 3:30 p.m. CT, Houston Museum Education Roundtable
- *The Art of Modified Gatherings: Optimizing Online Events*, Dec. 16, 1:00 p.m. CT, Lyrasis

Angela Reed





Friends in High Places: Navigating Friends Group Partnerships

Historic Sites Division, THC
Community Partnerships Program

December 8, 2020



Welcome!

Angela Reed

**Historic Sites
Community Partnerships Coordinator
Texas Historical Commission**

What we will discuss:

- Friends groups – what they are, what they aren't
- Establishing a Friends Group,
- Establishing **BEST PRACTICES** for a Friends Group



POLL 1

Who's in the Room?



- ☐ Board Member of a Friends Group
- ☐ General Member of a Friends Group
- ☐ Thinking of Starting a Friends Group
- ☐ Staff of an org. with or without a FG
- ☐ Other (enter your answer in chat)

POLL 2

Who's in the Room?

I represent a:

- ☐ historic site
- ☐ natural area/park
- ☐ museum
- ☐ library
- ☐ other (please enter in chat)



What is a Friends Group?

A Friends Group or supporting nonprofit *exists* to provide assistance to another organization (usually a public-owned entity) through fundraising, volunteer, and advocacy support

The friends group mission statement is almost always intertwined with the mission statement of their partner organization.

“The mission of the Friends of X is to support, promote and provide resources to X.”

Friends in High Places: Navigating Friends Group Partnerships



Creates a community of people dedicated to restoring, improving and maintaining the pool and surrounding grounds through organizing, advocacy, volunteer work, education and fun.



Partners with the Texas Historical Commission to share the legacy of Tejano Patriot José Antonio Navarro and to preserve and enhance his original 19th century home, a National Historic Landmark.

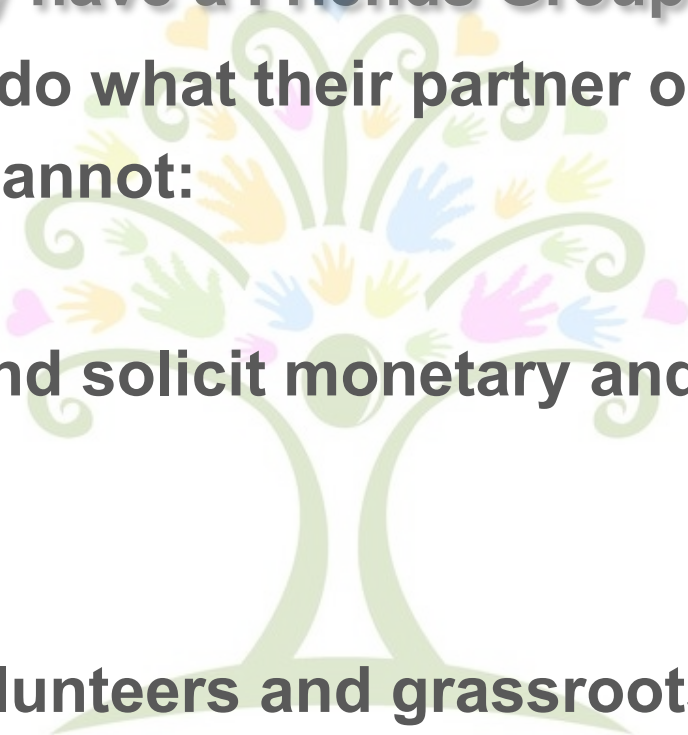


Our mission is to preserve and protect the historical materials in the collections...to increase public awareness of the American experience through relevant exhibitions...to advance the LBJ Library's standing as a center for intellectual activity and community leadership while meeting the challenges of a changing world.

Why have a Friends Group?

Friends Groups do what their partner organizations, as public entities, cannot:

- **Fundraise and solicit monetary and in-kind donations**
- **Advocate**
- **Promote**
- **Organize volunteers and grassroots support**



Friends Groups: Getting Started

❖ **Form a steering committee**

❖ **Talk to leadership of the partner organization**

- What does the organization need?
- What can your proposed group provide?
- Is your intention to provide a supporting role?
- Determine how you will communicate
- Document all the above



Friends Groups: Getting Started

❖ Organize a board

- Determine your mission, vision, goals
- Draw up the required documents
 - Bylaws or policies
 - MOU with the partner organization
 - Secretary of State, IRS filing

❖ Form a membership group and/or volunteer group



What Friends Groups Do, and Do Not

The Friends Group administers and maintains its 501c3 status

- A Friends Group is responsible for **following IRS and Secretary of State laws** and guidelines like any other nonprofit.
- A Friends Group board is **responsible for its own governance, donated funds, advocacy, and membership**. They may expect *some* administrative support from its partner organization's staff, but not the majority of their work-time.

What Friends Groups Do, and Do Not

The partner organization's staff is responsible to their organization's industry standards, the regulations and leadership of their organization.

- Friends Group works closely with staff of the organization they support,-- staff members are **partners** but **are not accountable** to the board (not to be confused with staff that the nonprofit board may hire).
- Friends Groups **must be aware** of their **partner organization's standards** and reflect those standards in their programs and projects.

What Friends Groups Do, and Do Not

Friends Group board members are *volunteers*.

Friends Group members **donate** their time, talent and treasure.

Friends Group work is

- **Mission-driven**: they believe in the organization's vision.
- **Voluntary**: they're there because they want to be!
- **Meaningful**: they want to know that what they do is important.



POLL 3

**Has This Ever Happened to You?
(check all that apply)**

- ☐ FG started fundraising for a project staff couldn't complete.
- ☐ Mission Creep: FG embarked on projects unrelated to their partner org.
- ☐ The Friends Group felt uninspired, "like an ATM."
- ☐ Staff of the partner org. felt "in the dark," disconnected from FG activities.
- ☐ All of the above

GOVERNANCE: Your Board, Bylaws and Policies

the *WHO* in your organization:

board members, officers, committees, advisory boards, executive director, members, staff and volunteers.

the *HOW* in your organization:

bylaws, policies, job descriptions, and formal agreements.

Ensures that your organization is administered with transparency, accountability, inclusivity.... And that board members abide by their three primary legal duties:

Duty of Care: prudent use of assets

Duty of Loyalty: activities and motives are mission-aligned; no conflict of interests

Duty of Obedience: law-abiding (IRS, bylaws, policies, best practices)



Ingredients to a Successful Friends Group Partnership: CLEAR COMMUNICATION & GOOD GOVERNANCE

- Acknowledge that there will be inherent differences, and similarities, between volunteer boards and paid staff.
- Make expectations clear and revisit them from time.
- Find ways for board and staff to inspirationally and meaningfully serve.
- Remember why you're in the room – your mission is the same!
- Actively share goals, hopes and dreams for the organization.



How to “Bake-In” Communication & Governance

Mutual Respect

Communication



Transparency

- **Orientation** – what are the industry standards? Board policies and member roles? What are our goals? Is it time to **review and revise**?
- **Job Descriptions** – who does what, answers to whom.
- Ensure plans, needs, updates are communicated by having **regular meetings** with staff, board.
- Staff as **ex-officio member(s)** of the board
- Joint **strategic plans** together (5-year, 3-year, 1-year plans, or some other)
- **Memorandum of Agreement** or agreed-upon policies with your partner organization.



**Remember
you're all in the room for the
same reason:**

your common mission

FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS are here
because they *want* to be here – they are
mission-driven.

STAFF of your partner organization should
be engaged as a *team member* with the
Friends Group.



QUESTIONS?

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