



# The Before and After of Grantmaking: Fundraising and Engagement

The Teen Grantmaking Initiative (TGI) is a program of the Center for Arab-American Philanthropy (CAAP), which is itself a program of ACCESS, a nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of a just society for Arab-Americans. TGI was founded in 2011 to give the Arab-American youth of metro Detroit a new opportunity to give back to their community. Many young Arab-Americans already participate in community service, but TGI uniquely puts decision-making power into their hands through grantmaking.



A TYPICAL  
FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR  
TGI CAN RAISE UP TO  
**\$2,000**

Unlike many youth philanthropy programs in Michigan, TGI doesn't have an endowment to fund its grantmaking. Therefore, fundraising is a major part of its program. What started out of necessity turned into an opportunity for youth to experience and learn from every aspect of the grantmaking process.

Annually, TGI conducts several fundraisers, such as bake sales and an ice skating fundraiser. For its largest fundraiser, TGI works with ACCESS to host an annual

garage sale, which typically raises \$1,500-\$2,000. Members solicit in-kind donations from ACCESS staff and community members, which are then sold in a garage sale that takes place each May. Chelsea Liddy, the CAAP philanthropy coordinator and TGI advisor, explains "TGI members staff the event on the day, and are responsible for negotiating prices for items, organizing items, and loading items into people's cars."

"While TGI does do some smaller event-style fundraisers, as well as the garage sale, our chief focus is on individual donor development," says Chelsea. Teams of two or three TGI members hold meetings with donors who are capable of donating at least \$250 to the grantmaking fund. Fatima Rizvi, a junior at Fordson High School and current member of TGI, says, "If we get to crunch time and we're short of our goal, we usually turn to business owners and request that they donate amounts of \$500-\$1,000. They often will donate the full amount."

By taking the lead in both event-based fundraising and deeper donor cultivation, "we really feel like we are making a difference and that we're increasing community engagement," shares Fatima.



The intensive TGI program involvement doesn't stop at fundraising. Participants also conduct a biennial community needs assessment, and then target organizations for funding that focus on issues that surfaced as needs. "We create and distribute a survey to students at some local schools to understand what our peers see as important issues that our community faces."

 Tip: Discover needs in your community by surveying friends in your class.

Since the last needs assessment in 2013, TGI has focused its grantmaking on domestic violence and drug abuse in the metro Detroit area. For example, a grant of \$1,000 was made to an organization called Arts and Scraps, which educates children ages 6-11 on the dangers of drug and tobacco abuse through arts and crafts. This grant was used to supply art kits to 1,600 area youth.

"We selected them because we believe they're positively influencing our community's future leaders by educating them in a fun way about these potential dangers," says Fatima. Fatima is particularly proud of this grant because TGI partnered with Arts and Scraps beyond just the grant check by creating an anti-smoking film, which they could share with kids in the community and which won an award for social media usage.

From the findings of the needs assessments to the creation of engagement materials, TGI's grantmaking process sustains a focus on a particular community need, which allows these grantmakers to achieve a truly holistic impact.

Shares Fatima, "TGI helps us gain self-awareness and develop self-confidence. It's empowering to act as fundraisers, communicators with donors and grantee organizations, and collaborators within the TGI team."



FOUNDATION  
CENTER

©2016 Foundation Center.

This work is made  
available under the

terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-  
NonCommercial 4.0 Unported License,  
[creativecommons.org/licenses/by0nc/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by0nc/4.0).



---

**GRANTCRAFT**, a service of Foundation Center, harnesses the practical wisdom of funders worldwide to improve the practice of philanthropy. Visit [grantcraft.org](https://grantcraft.org) to access our free resource library.

This case study was written by Kylie Musolf and developed for Foundation Center's Youth Giving project. Photo provided courtesy of the Teen Grantmaking Initiative (TGI). Visit [youthgiving.org](https://youthgiving.org) to view other free resources related to engaging young people in grantmaking.

---