

Foundation History

Greater Texas Foundation is celebrating its 25th anniversary as a grantmaking organization, but it has a long history of serving Texas students.

From **1980 until 2001**, Greater Texas Foundation and its predecessor entities were dedicated to the exclusive purpose of providing financial assistance to Texas students seeking a higher education by encouraging financial institutions to participate in the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and providing information to schools and students regarding this program. It accomplished this mission primarily by raising funds in the tax-exempt financial markets and then acquiring student loans originated by lenders participating in its programs.

In 2001, the foundation made an election under federal tax law that permitted it to expand its charitable purpose in return for surrendering its ability to issue tax-exempt debt. To effect this election, the foundation was required to transfer its student loan related assets and liabilities to a for-profit corporation. The foundation did so by transferring these assets and liability to LoanSTAR Funding Group, Inc. in exchange for 100% of its capital stock. For the succeeding four and a half years the foundation continued to participate in the FFELP program through its investment in the LoanSTAR Funding Group while using its retained funds to broaden the scope of its efforts to remove barriers to educational opportunities for Texas students. It did so by making grants to a variety of nonprofit entities and institutions of higher education for scholarship and for other purposes.

In 2005, the foundation sold all its stock in LoanSTAR Funding Group. Soon after the sale, the foundation board began an intense study of how to best achieve its mission with the greater resources made available to it by the sale of its assets while continuing to fund its historical projects.



This study led it to believe that for Texas and Texans to compete in the contemporary economy, a greater mastery of math, science, engineering and other technological fields was necessary. The foundation concluded that Texas, like America as a whole, had begun to especially fall behind in those areas of education. It was the foundation's plan to pursue its interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) without losing its traditional focus of facilitating the financing of a higher education by means of scholarship and grants and participating in the FFELP program.

From 2005 to 2008, Greater Texas Foundation grew substantially in terms of personnel, IT infrastructure, and general capacity. In 2007, the foundation welcomed seven new employees, including its first executive director and its first grants manager. Additionally, the foundation introduced a Web-interface grants database, which allows the entire grant process to be handled electronically, and a completely redesigned and user-friendly Website.

The growth and overall increase in internal capacity of the previous years provided an opportunity for staff and directors to think more strategically about the initiatives and programs the foundation supported. To have an even greater impact on the tough and persistent challenges facing education in Texas, in 2009 the foundation engaged FSG Social Impact Advisors in a six-month process to examine its mission, vision, funding principles and internal operations, and to develop a strategic plan for the five-year period from 2010 to 2014. Importantly, this process resulted in revisions to the foundation's vision and mission to broaden the organization's focus from STEM education to postsecondary preparation, access, persistence, and completion. The new strategic plan also specified that the foundation would place particular emphasis on supporting underserved and disadvantaged populations.

In 2014, after five years of executing the strategy set forth in 2009, GTF undertook a comprehensive review of its work. Throughout this process the foundation maintained its focus on postsecondary preparation, access, persistence, and success in Texas – but also explored how it might increase its positive impact in a quickly-changing postsecondary landscape.

GTF's resulting strategy included an appreciation for regional-level work and a focus on specific high-leverage issues. It also specified the organization's responsibility to use multiple roles to achieve greater impact. The issue-driven activities identified included focusing on the secondary to postsecondary transition, transfer, mathematics, and rural needs. GTF specifically identified research, convenings, communications, and policy as tools for the organization to bolster impact across the state.

In 2016, the foundation transitioned from a public charity to a private foundation.

Over time, building upon and learning from previous strategic plans, the foundation became increasingly targeted in its approaches. The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan focused on generating actionable goals to guide the foundation's grantmaking while also setting up an evaluation framework to measure GTF's progress. The four issue areas of students supports, transfer, rural collaborations, and mathematics remained a focus in this new strategy with the addition of supporting innovative approaches as a priority. The goals set for these issue areas would all be met through grantmaking, capacity-building, regional collective action, knowledge building, research, and partnerships.

The foundation's current **2025-2029 strategic plan** continues to honor and build from the foundation's history. GTF remains committed to addressing the unmet needs of Texas learners, but now with long-term goals focused on supporting both engaged learners as well as disconnected learners.

The current plan includes four grantmaking areas: creating more efficient pathways, providing and increasing adoption of student supports, facilitating rural collaborations, and continuing GTF's direct aid legacy. The strategic plan has an expanded focus on supporting systems-level change, scaling evidence-based practices, and supporting innovation. You can learn more about the foundation's current strategic plan **[here](#)**.

Greater Texas Foundation continues to pursue solutions to the critical issues that affect Texas students through its roles as grantmaker, partner, convener, capacity builder, supporter of research, and communicator of knowledge. Through this work, GTF seeks to empower more students to achieve their postsecondary educational goals.

Throughout its history, the foundation has launched signature programs through its grantmaking, including:

GTF Scholars, a scholarship program for graduates of Texas Early College High Schools (2012-present)

Texas Emergency Aid Roadmap, an emergency aid program for Texas community colleges in partnership with Reos Partners (2021-present)

GTF Fellows, a program supporting research of Texas faculty at Texas institutions (2013-2020)

Former Directors*:

Name	Elected
Col. Bob Logan	1980
Dr. Charles Wootan	1984
Mr. Leanard Williams	1984
Dr. Truitt Ingram	1986
Dr. James Carroll	1986
Mr. Charles Hart	1980
Ms. Mayge Henry	1982
Dr. O.M. Holt	1980
Dr. John Koldus	1980
Mr. George Kunze	1982
Dr. Jerry Lytle	1986
Mr. Samuel Nigh	1980
Mr. Perry Pope	1980
Mr. W.T. Reidel	1980
Mr. Ronald Sasse	1982
Mr. Roy Simmons	1980
Dr. Malon Southerland	1983
Dr. Wesley Summers	1984
Mr. Rod Pittman	1989
Col. Donald Engelage	1994
Dr. John Moss - Chairman Emeritus	1989
Dr. Samuel Gillespie	1984
Dr. Donald Thompson	2014

*This list includes previous GTF directors as well as individuals who served on the boards of GTF's predecessor entities.