GENERAL

Candid Learning's Newest Free Offerings for Nonprofits

05.01.24 | Linda J. Rosenthal, JD

For nonprofits, it's a daily struggle to secure the financial support to keep the lights on, much less carry out their charitable missions.

In some respects, this quest devolves into a zero-sum game. Money raised by, or granted to, Organization X may mean that there is less available for Organizations Y and Z. See, for instance: *Understanding the Competitive Environment of Nonprofit Organizations: A Resource-Advantage Theory Approach* (2014) Professors Omer Topaloglu & Robert E. McDonald, *digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu;* and *Who Are Your Nonprofit's Competitors?* (June 15, 2023) Alyssa Conrardy, *Prosper Strategies*.

That's certainly an important and timely topic to explore and discuss, but it's for another day.

Instead, today we highlight an *entirely different* form of necessary assistance: that is, *information* support. Happily, it's available in abundance to charitable organizations and their funders: now, much of it is free of charge and accessible by any and all takers – in a moment's notice with the click of a mouse. This intellectual wealth, fueled by the internet and modern technology, cannot be underestimated.

We've written about some of the major sources including – most notably – the Treasury Department/IRS that has been publishing, on a rolling basis, important tracts of information on the law of tax-exempt organizations. See, for instance: *New Treasure Trove of EO Guidance* (April 25, 2023).

Candid: A Mission of Information

Among the significant non-government creators of all manner of invaluable information support is the entity that was formed by the merger in 2019 of the Foundation Center and GuideStar. Now called Candid, its mission is firmly rooted in the traditions of the predecessors which for almost 90 years had "helped the world by giving people the information they needed to do good."

Previously, we've written about Candid Learning, a special service formed to carry on this educational function. It offers an impressive roster of free or low-cost training and educational material including "live and on-demand trainings, webinars, and other resources designed to improve " its visitors' fundraising, overall sustainability, grantmaking, and transparency."

About three years ago, we described one such educational program rolled out in 2020 called "Knowledge base." See *More Free Learning Resources for Nonprofits* (May 19, 2021). It has its own dedicated website section, presented in a question-and-answer format.

The catalyst, according to Candid's Director of Research, Grace Sato, was the simple fact that their team of experts "… get asked all types of questions," many of them "over and over again." See *Answering your questions: What you need to know before you give* (October 8, 2020), *Candid Blog*.

An example of a common repeat question that Knowledge base answers via a link is: "How are nonprofits funded? Similarly, see: Where can I find information about government grants? Another example is: What is cause-related marketing?

Borrowing E-books

Now, we turn to a later roll out by Candid Learning. It's called "Borrow e-books," described on the website as the "social sector's e-book library, selected by Candid's librarians and researchers."

More accurately, it includes audiobooks and e-books along with many full-length books of the type otherwise available for a hefty price on Amazon.

But these items are free of charge, on loan for a couple of weeks, and downloadable immediately through a Kindle app or extension. The individual selections are presented in a way similar to an Amazon listing, including the all-important sample.

Signing up is simple: Create a free account with a small amount of non-intrusive information, get a user number, and off you go.

"Borrow e-books" includes an impressive array of selections from a broad range of topic categories including: Advocacy & Activism; Collaboration; Corporate Giving; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Finance & Accounting; Fundraising; Grants & Proposal Writing; Human Resources: Individual Giving; Individuals Doing Good; Innovation; Marketing & Communications; and NGOs & International Development: Nonprofit Boards; Nonprofit Management; Philanthropy; Self-Help & Personal Growth; and Starting A Nonprofit.

For instance, here are a few representative titles:

- Robert Rosenthal: Volunteer Engagement 2.0
- Evan Wildstein: The Nonprofiteer's Fundraising Field Guide

- David O. Renz, et al, eds.: The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership & Management
- Jeremy T. Miner & Kelly C. Ball-Stahl: Models of Proposal Planning & Writing
- Ellen Liberatori: Guide to Getting Arts Grants
- Tatyana Moatan, Ph.D.: Surviving in a Toxic Nonprofit Workplace
- Jeffrey M. Berry & David F. Adams: A Voice for Nonprofits
- Donald Summers: Scaling Altruism
- Jennifer Mize Smith & Michael W. Kramer: Case Studies of Nonprofit Organizations & Volunteers
- Bruce R. Hopkins: Starting & Managing a Nonprofit Organization: A Legal Guide (7th ed.)
- Richard LeBlanc: The Handbook of Board Governance: A Comprehensive Guide for Public, Private, and Not-For-Profit Board Members

Conclusion

Other categories under the "Resources" tab on the Candid Learning homepage are: Candid insights, Sample documents, Nonprofit startup resources; and The Foundation Directory.

But there are big plans in the works for a "next generation platform" for the benefit of both organizations and funders. See *Candid's next generation platform* (March 20, 2024) John Gonzalez & Tracy Waksler, *Candid Blog.* There, they describe it as "asingle destination to distribute data and insights, providing a comprehensive view of the social sector using the data we collect and analyze."

The Candid Learning team will integrate "machine learning, personalized user experience, advanced visualizations, and AI-driven tools and recommendations to create, synthesize, and share the insights that answer key questionsabout the social sector." In that March 20th blog post, the authors invited users to visit the beta version in development.

Just this morning, the Candid Learning experts stepped up the call for participation by eventual users of its next-generation platform in development. See *Are we building the Candid tools you need?* (May 1, 2024) Renee Westmoreland, *Candid Blog.* She explains: "To understand how Candid products can best serve our users, we need to know what problems those users are trying to solve."

[**Note: 5/2/24**]: See an interesting article from Candid's Vice President of Influence, Aleda Gagarin: *Critics Said Our Data Platform Exacerbated the Nonprofit World's Inequities. They Were Right* (April 30, 2024) *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*]

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