




Top Online Financial Management Resources for Youth Organizing Groups

In 2013 and 2014, Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) partnered with Community Resource Exchange (CRE) to develop and launch the Financial Management Technical Assistance Program (FMTAP) for ten youth organizing groups from around the country. The goal: to help these critical organizations develop a deeper understanding of their own financial health and the best practices around nonprofit financial management. CRE provided a full range of services towards this end: from financial assessment to large-group training to one-on-one implementation support.


All of the participating organizations proved to be effective stewards of their organizations' financial resources, and most, if not all, were managing these resources with limited staff capacity. As a result the CRE project team discovered how important it was for these organizations to have available more financial management tools – tools to help these organizations manage cash flow, develop thoughtful budgets, and provide accurate reports to key stakeholders.

These tools, we noticed, would be most helpful to youth organizing groups if they were easy to access and straightforward to use. With this in mind CRE identified the best financial management resources available online, and FCYO has made these resources (described below) available not only to the ten organizations that participated in FMTAP but to the youth organizing community overall.

As with all things in the digital universe, there are many excellent online resources available to help youth organizing groups manage and organize their organization's finances effectively. But, before you punch in some variation of "nonprofit financial management" into your favorite search engine, go first to these well-done, resource-rich sites. And look for this symbol  for top resources you can use right away.


Strongnonprofits.org

Created by Fiscal Management Associates (FMA), a financial services consulting and outsourcing firm based in New York City, in conjunction with The Wallace Foundation, this site is far and away the most comprehensive resource on the topic. Strongnonprofits.org boasts more than 60 free financial management tools and templates as well as helpful case studies and "how-to" guides on a range of subjects. The tools are generally easy to use and are explained in ways that non-finance staff can understand. While there is content specifically geared towards Out-of-School-Time organizations, this site is a tremendous resource for any nonprofit. If you have the time to explore this site, it is as close to a "one-stop" destination as you will find.

As an example, we especially appreciated the cash flow template and instructional video found [here](#). 


[National Council of Nonprofits](#)

The Council has a one-page list of financial management resources – perfect if you do not have the time to comb through the offerings on Strongnonprofits.org. The page links to resources on the Council's site as well to resources on other sites (including some mentioned here). Examples of resources include sample financial management policies and procedures and articles on financial governance for board members.

If you are an executive director of a youth organizing group, you will appreciate this [article](#)  about financial leadership – courtesy of CompassPoint Nonprofit Services of San Francisco.


[Nonprofit Accounting Basics](#)

For those wanting a deeper dive on accounting practices, check out the resources on Nonprofit Accounting Basics. The site lives up to its name, offering some useful guidance on a range of accounting and bookkeeping topics. The site also has articles and “how-to” guides on a range of other areas, including internal controls, budgeting, and financial reporting, as well as a handful of webinars available for viewing.

If you find yourself confused and/or worried about your organization's financial audit, check out this [webinar](#)  on the Nonprofit Accounting Basics site.

[Blue Avocado](#)

The Finance & Strategy column by Blue Avocado is itself a good resource and compelling read. Many of the columns link to other articles, guides, and templates on the Blue Avocado site. There is no singular list of resources on the site (at least that we could find), so that makes it challenging to tap into all of the site's tools in an expedient manner. But this blog is well written, interesting, and nicely illuminates the overlap between finance, planning, and fundraising.

Do you have a board member who is mystified by nonprofit overhead costs? This [article](#)  sheds some light on this confusing topic.

[Nonprofit Finance 101](#)

The “Nonprofit Finance 101” page on the site of Nonprofit Facilities Fund (NFF) has a comprehensive set of resources, including higher-level articles on nonprofit finance (covering a range of topics such as investing and financing) and a set of tools at the bottom of the page under “Managing Your Organization.” For small-to-medium-size organizations this latter section provides more value.

Among other helpful resources, there's an excellent glossary of financial terms found [here](#).



[501 Commons](#)

501 Commons, a Seattle-based nonprofit consulting organization, has a useful page with some summary thoughts on sound financial management practices and links to resources on its own site and other web sites (including those listed above). If Strongnonprofits.org is too overwhelming, you might start here. We especially liked the financial red flags checklist found [here](#).



[Funders Collaborative on Youth Organizing](#)

In our work with the ten organizations as part of the FMTAP initiative, we recommended that participating organizations to consider using a financial dashboard, but we couldn't find a template we liked. With FCYO's encouragement we built our own dashboard template. The template and accompanying instructional guide can be here on FCYO's website.