Fueling Mission-Driven Work: Fiscal Sponsorship at Tides

Starting an innovative social impact initiative, scaling your organization more efficiently, piloting new approaches, acting collectively, working globally: as a social changemaker, you have big goals. Yet the process of creating and managing an independent nonprofit organization can be expensive, timeconsuming, and complex.

Through the fiscal sponsorship model, Tides offers a platform that gives social change leaders and funders access to expertise, processes, and systems needed to accelerate their work and focus on what matters most: impact, not infrastructure.

How Partnering With Tides Can Accelerate Your Impact

You and your lean team are tackling complex social challenges, and every minute and dollar matters. As a Tides fiscally sponsored project partner, you benefit from access to legal, human resources, financial and grant management, and capacity building consulting expertise with scalable systems and services to meet your needs at every step. And since fiscally sponsored projects at Tides operate under our 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, you can accept tax-deductible charitable contributions immediately.

As one of the nation's oldest and largest fiscal sponsors, Tides has supported the work of hundreds of fiscally sponsored partners across the country for over 45 years. Tides chooses to partner with charitable initiatives that align with our mission of creating a world of shared prosperity and social justice. Our size and experience enable us to provide our partners with infrastructure and expertise so you can focus on doing the work of strategic planning, fundraising, and program execution, devoting just a fraction of your staff time to administrative tasks that you would otherwise have to do on your own.

What is Fiscal Sponsorship?

Fiscal sponsorship allows a charitable or educational project to share a common administrative platform with a larger organization, thus increasing efficiency. The project does not require its own legal entity or tax exempt status from the IRS. The Tides Center provides its partners with immediate tax exempt status; core infrastructure systems and services; and access to finance and human resource expertise. Therefore, social change leaders are not required to develop these resources and can focus on leadership, fundraising, and programmatic activities.

> We are still a small organization, but Tides allows us to focus on what we are good at. We don't lose sleep over HR or benefits or financial audits, or stress about contracts with our tech vendors or over-spending our budget. I can focus on expanding our work and meeting with funders about it.
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A Comprehensive Suite of Services

Each fiscally sponsored project at Tides is supported by a designated team of nonprofit experts to support your organization and work, including:

- Knowledgeable support from nonprofit and philanthropy experts who share your values
- Financial management to track and monitor all revenues and expenditures, with monthly financial reports and annual auditing
- Human resources (HR) management to provide full-cycle support to hire, retain, and develop employees, and synchronize key HR functions
- Payroll processing services and filing the necessary compliance returns and reports
- Benefits administration with access to top carriers and values-aligned benefit options
- Grants management to administer all grant agreements and reporting
- Risk management to keep pace with constantly changing regulations and liability issues involving people, property, and income

Please see Tides Fiscal Sponsorship Services page for more details.

Tides Fiscal Sponsorship Services

Partner Services

Operations Managment

- A highly knowledgeable advisor who serves as a main point of contact, providing customized care to each project
- A service team that includes a Human Resources manager and accountant
- Direct access to staff of professionals with years of experience in financial management, human resources, payroll, risk management, grants administration, and nonprofit management
- Secure 24/7 access to the Tides Community Portal, a Salesforce platform for submitting, tracking, and managing most operational requests, as well as receiving useful references, training presentations, and more
- Orientation to Tides processes, procedures, and policies during onboarding
- A Project Handbook, includingTides processes, procedures, policies, and guidance
- Coordination with funders, vendors, partners, and contractors, as necessary, for incoming or outgoing operational requests

Strategic Advising, Learning and Networking Opportunities

- Advisors provide support in operations management and organizational development
- Grant proposal review for consistency with policies and legal limitations, grant support documentation, and compliance assurance with grant agreement terms and reporting requirements
- Trainings and webinars on relevant nonprofit management topics administration, and nonprofit management topics
- Support for transition to independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, transferring to new entity, or closing down program

Finance

Accounting & Bookkeeping

- Manage banking relationship and account reconciliation
- Handle receipt of checks, wires, ACH, securities, funds received via donation platforms, and in-kind donations
- Record funds in financial accounting system, based on grant funding conditions
- Integrate with selected online donation platforms and online donation compliance
- Provide acknowledgment letter to donors
- Record and disburse funds according to vendor contracts and expense reimbursements
- Weekly check run, ACH, and wire payments
- Expedite payment processing upon request
- End-of-month automatic payments for leases
- Manage card purchase
- Vendor management and 1099 reporting
- Fixed asset reporting
- Conduct annual budgeting process
- Access to Amazon Business Prime

Finance, cont.

Financial Reporting & Compliance

- 24/7 Access to Netsuite, Tides Center's financial platform
- Reporting and recordkeeping of finances by grant
- Comparative financial statements, including statement of financial position, statement of activities, trend reports and general ledger detail
- Jurisdictional reports: Secretaries of State, IRS-990 and county property tax filings, and state unclaimed property
- Department of Commerce requirements
- Special audits for government grants (not covered under standard fees)
- Consolidated Tides entities annual financial audits
- Interest tracking when required by funder, at additional cost
- Sales tax filing by Tides entity

Financial Management Consulting

- Advising and developing budget and re-forecasting, as needed
- Advising on cash flow and cash projections
- Advising on revenue and expense allocation
- Preparing projects to transition from Tides to new independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit

Financial Administration for Incoming Foundation and Government Grants

- Review grant applications and proposals for consistency with policies and legal limitations
- Work with projects to assure compliance with grant agreements and budgets
- Budget monitoring to actual expenditures
- Coordinate and support government audits, tests, and visits
- Provide single audit compliance and compliance with OMB circulars
- Provide financial reporting and billing for reimbursable grants

Human Resources

HR Advisory Services

- Access to strategic human resources advising and insights to make informed decisions more efficiently
- Advisory on job descriptions, FLSA compliance, and workforce planning
- Guidance and counseling related to performance management
- Expertise on sensitive employee relations issues as well as conflict resolution strategies
- Investigation and litigation support
- Ongoing monitoring of new and changing HR regulations nationwide
- Employee Handbook with comprehensive policies and procedures
- Trainings to meet state and federal requirements (i.e., harassment training)
- Day-to-day support for all employees to address HR-related questions

Human Resources, cont.

HR Operations Management

- Streamlined payroll, benefits, and HR administration through an integrated human resources information system (ADP)
- Online 24/7 self-service for both managers and employees, including reporting capabilities
- Mobile app for quick access to the essentials while on-the-go
- New hire processing, including job offer letters, I-9 verifications, background checks (if applicable), and onboarding documents
- Employee data management, including salary adjustments and status changes
- Employee separations, including paperwork, final pay arrangements, and exit interviews
- Maintenance of electronic employee personnel records
- Employment verifications
- Regulatory compliance reporting including EEO-1 and other federal, state, and local regulations

Benefits

- Comprehensive and competitive benefits package including medical, dental, vision, life, disability, flex savings, commuter, employee assistance program, and 403(b) retirement plan
- Online benefits enrollment, including new hire enrollment, annual open enrollment, and qualifying events
- Management of workers compensation claims
- Leaves of absence management and administration
- COBRA administration

Payroll

- Payroll processing, including input, audit, and transmission of payroll
- Payroll tax filing and reporting
- Direct deposit and online pay stubs
- Web and mobile-based timesheets to manage data entry and approvals
- Vacation and sick time accrual management
- Maintenance of historical earnings and deduction information
- Cost allocation to allow salaries to be allocated by funding sources and departments
- General ledger interface and reporting
- Compliance and reporting
- Check reconciliation

Payroll Tax Deposits & Filings

- Deposits, including federal, state, and local taxes for each pay period
- Quarterly returns and annual reconciliation returns
- W-2 processing and distribution
- Payroll amendments
- Quarterly wage and tax registers

Legal, Risk, and Liability Management

- Comprehensive liability insurance, e.g., employment practices, directors and officers, general liability
- Insurance claim administration
- Policies and procedures development, based on experience of similar organizations
- Access to in-house legal counsel
- Referral to specialized legal counsel, as necessary, e.g., copyrights and trademarks, litigation matters, at additional cost
- Compliance assistance with applicable laws and regulations related to nonprofit operations, e.g., fundraising, etc.
- Assistance with dispute resolution
- Access to template contracts
- Access to template governance documents
- Assistance with review and negotiation of contracts, including contract termination
- Management of government reporting requirements and state registrations
- Guidance on lobbying regulations and compliance
- Tracking of all lobbying-related expenses and management of necessary reporting
- Best practices recommendations, based on extensive experience with nonprofit management
- Review of incoming grant agreements

Grantmaking

- Full service domestic and international grantmaking and access to guidance
- Grant report monitoring and collection
- Grant out review and due diligence of charitable and non-charitable grantees

Fees & Requirements

Fees

- Tides assesses a fee of 9% of your annual contributions/revenue received. After the first year of activity, fees are reduced to 6% on revenue over $1 million in the same calendar year
- Government funding: A 15% fee (instead of 9%) is assessed on funding from government sources (local, state, national, and multilateral) due to substantial reporting and audit requirements
- Other transaction fees apply as needed

Requirements

- Budget: Tides is committed to partnering with projects of all sizes.
- Staffing: At least one full-time employee is required, typically serving as project director. *Staff must be based in the U.S.**

**We evaluate internationally based consultants on a case-by-case basis.*