



**TEXAS WATER FOUNDATION**

**An update to our Strategic Plan adopted in 2018**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE**

**December 2021**

# Texas Water Foundation

## Strategic Plan Goals Update

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, Texas Water Foundation (TWF) developed and adopted a [new strategic plan](#), which identified seven programmatic and operational goals for the organization. Three years after the adoption of that plan, TWF initiated an assessment of our progress, and developed this strategic plan goals update as an opportunity to refine and specify our programmatic and operational focus.

### PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

This section summarizes how the Texas Water Foundation (TWF) is focusing its programmatic work over the next two years (2022-2024) to support the goals identified in its current Strategic Plan.

#### Goal A. Create champions of sustainable water management in positions of power

Texas Water Foundation (TWF) believes that “Texas runs on water” and that effective water resource management and policy are needed to ensure the long-term health and strength of the Texas communities, economy, and environment. While we cannot expect all leaders and decision makers to become water experts, we believe it is essential for public and private sector leaders to appreciate the value of water and to have basic fluency with water issues to support well-informed decision making around water resource stewardship. We also work to cultivate public and private sector leaders to help elevate and champion water issues and to build a culture of water stewardship among public and private sector leaders. Translation and curation. To this end, TWF is currently focusing on building appreciation of and fluency on water issues and policy options among three types of decision makers: state-level elected officials, county and local government leaders, and corporate leaders. These efforts focus on convening strategies and the translation, curation, and communication of thoughtful policy information to decision-makers. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2022-2024 include:

- A.1 *Cultivate champions for effective water resource management and policy in the Texas legislature and strengthen understanding of key water policy issues and options among legislators.*
- A.2 *Increase fluency on water issues and policy options among county and local government officials and cultivate champions who can accelerate awareness raising among local government leaders across Texas.*



A.3 *Cultivate champions for effective water resource stewardship and policy among Texas corporate leaders.*



## Goal B. Equip advocates to support sustainable water management

Texas benefits from the strength and diversity of organizations that care about ensuring the state's sustainable water future. The field includes groups that are focused on environmental protection, wildlife conservation, water resource management, economic development, social equity, and more. These organizations not only bring important, diverse perspectives to water management conversations but also possess important skills in advancing water policy and educating a wide range of constituencies from public and private sector leaders to the public to the public.

However, the diverse field of advocacy organizations working on water issues can be fragmented. Some organizations have limited opportunities to talk with one another and to share and vet information, research, and ideas. In addition, there are many more organizations that may not focus on water issues or have water expertise, but that are impacted by and care about water issues and how they affect the social, economic, health, or environmental issues they work on. We see various opportunities to convene diverse organizations who work on or care about water issues to connect and strengthen their work to support sustainable water management. We also see that well-convened forums can help organizations get beyond positional advocacy stances to enable field-level visibility and alignment around shared needs and policy options. TWF is focusing on building and supporting the infrastructure to enable better

coordination and collaboration across diverse advocacy organizations. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2021-2022 include:

- B.1 *Support regular convenings of key groups of organizations focused on water issues to share information, evidence, and ideas and to identify shared priorities and opportunities.*
- B.2 *Work to connect diverse organizations, resources, and opportunities across water advocacy organizations by actively participating in key groups, forums, and initiatives.*
- B.3 *Develop informational resources and “evidence” to equip advocates to advance well-informed policy options and to fill key data and information gaps.*



## Goal C. Create an educated public that understands the importance of their water

TWF is continuing in its tradition of working to educate Texans about the importance of water to social, public health, and economic well-being in our state. By raising the visibility of water and appreciation for abundant, safe, and clean water resources among diverse public constituencies, TWF can help build public support for sustainable water management and help Texans understand how their actions can contribute to a sustainable water future.

To accomplish this, TWF has undertaken an initiative to establish the first statewide water campaign, [Texas Runs on Water](#). To address the nuance of Texas’ water challenges, TWF’s vision is to establish a statewide umbrella brand that is localized by individual regions, communities, or partners. To do so, TWF is developing a branded campaign platform, tools, and resources that can be used and leveraged by key



partners, such as water utilities, cities, or nonprofits, to support regionally tailored public communications around specific water issues that maintain statewide visibility and narrative coherence. TWF has conducted survey and focus group research to develop the preliminary campaign structure and is moving into implementation and longer-term business planning phases. A key focus of early years of the campaign is to build broadscale brand recognition and loyalty that can be leveraged in future years for more direct engagement efforts. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2021-2022 include:

- C.1 *Continue to develop, grow, and maintain the core [Texas Runs on Water](#) campaign platform infrastructure, staffing, and resources.*
- C.2 *Pilot the Texas Runs on Water campaign in the selected target markets and use experiences to evolve the campaign and business model to support improved and expanded campaign deployment.*
- C.3 *Support development, maintenance, and expanded reach of other TWF public communications activities, tools, and resources.*



## Goal D. Build the next generation of leaders in Texas water management

The Texas water workforce is facing several systemic changes. Workforce trends in a post pandemic world are challenging essential workforce retention, and simultaneously, Texas water leadership is seeing generational turnover in the form of retirements. Many promising and diverse mid-career professionals are working in the field, but few organizations are investing in succession planning or diversity and inclusion practices. To address this need, TWF designed and launched the [Texas Water Leaders program](#)

to support leadership skill development, mentorship, and leadership opportunities. The first annual cohort of twenty mid-career water professionals participated in the program in 2020, and the second cohort of twenty professionals graduated in November, 2021. The program has met TWF's initial targets for tuition and scholarships, although work lies ahead to ensure the program's operational sustainability. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2022-2023 include:

- D.1 *Continue to refine the program and attract a diverse pool of applicants.*
- D.2 *Develop plans for an alumni program component to keep participants from past annual Water Leader cohorts connected, engaged, and supported.*
- D.3 *Develop stable and sustainable sponsorship for the Texas Water Leaders program to cover full operational expenses and to expand scholarship opportunities needed to enable diverse participation.*

## OPERATIONAL GOALS

This section summarizes key operational goals and objectives that TWF will focus on over the next two years (2022-2023) to support the goals identified in its Strategic Plan.



### Goal E. Expand and diversify funding for TWF

Texas Water Foundation needs to expand and diversify its revenue to meet program development and growth targets and to ensure the sustainability of its operations. Adequate funding will be needed to sustain key programs and staffing. The revenue and sponsorship model for the *Texas Runs on Water* campaign will need to be developed and refined, and key events like the annual Rainmaker Dinner Award will need to grow funding targets. TWF will need to evolve its fundraising approach to reflect realistic expectations for philanthropic grant funding and fee-for-service revenues, while cultivating new funding sources such as corporate giving and sponsorship. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2021-2022 include:

- E.1 Diversify philanthropic partners beyond Texas water funders:
- E.2 *Cultivate corporate donations and sponsorships to support the Texas Water Leaders program and broader TWF operational expenses.*
- E.2 *Engage the Texas Water Foundation Board of Directors more actively in efforts to expand and diversify funding and revenue streams.*
- E.3 *Develop the business model for the Texas Runs on Water campaign to ensure its financial sustainability while also enabling scaling and protection of brand integrity.*
- E.4 *Conduct a fundraising specific marketing/brand analysis to improve engagement with individual, corporate, and business targets:*

## Goal F. Develop and grow TWF staff to support sustainable operations

Texas Water Foundation needs sufficient staff capacity to sustain and grow its programs. Achieving the Foundation's mission requires a strong team as well as funding for day-to-day operations. In addition to operational and development staff, Texas Water Foundation needs to staff its programs in order for programmatic output and funding opportunities to grow. Key objectives and initiatives supporting this goal for 2022-2023 include:

- F.1 Add key staff members in order to support the programs and initiatives of the Foundation.
- F.2 Consider reestablishing a physical office, or alternate office model for staff.
- F.3 Update website functions and TWF's brand guide.