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**"FUNDRAISING
IS THE GENTLE
ART OF
TEACHING
THE JOY OF
GIVING"**

– Hart Rosso

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WATERSHED STEWARDSHIP ACTION KIT



Funding Watershed Conservation Projects

Accomplishing your individual or group watershed conservation goals often requires soliciting resources from outside funders. Raising money is time consuming and requires hard work, but the reward is that you will be able to achieve your goals of conserving your watershed.

First, it is important to have a fundraising plan. Determine the amount of money or types of funding sources that are needed to complete your project or fulfill your group's goals. Develop a budget that shows the amount of money needed for equipment, telephone, office space, printing, postage, office supplies, consultants or contractors, salaries (if paid staff are involved), food, etc. This budget will help you to calculate how much money you need to complete the project and to draft a wish list for in-kind donations.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

No matter how large or small your project, seek in-kind donations. The more materials, printing, tools, refreshments, meeting space, and professional services that are donated, the less money needs to be raised. In-kind gifts also can be used to leverage grant funds. Many funders require matching funds from other donors, including in-kind donors. Remember to ask the donor for a letter that states the value of the in-kind contribution that the organization received.

Let members of your group know about your wish list and talk about which businesses to approach. Group members might have personal connections with businesses. Also, make your in-kind donations known by publishing a wish list in your newsletter or Web site. Call or visit local businesses to request in-kind donations. Many donors will want a written request, so follow up with a letter. Be sure to start this process early and try to target at least three sources for every in-kind item that you need for your project. Finally, give the donor a positive giving experience by thanking them personally and publicly. Encourage your members and partners to patronize businesses that donated the in-kind gifts to your project.

FINDING GRANT-MAKERS

In addition to in-kind donations, you may want to seek grants or donations. The first step in this process is finding potential funders. Government agencies, some nonprofit organizations, foundations, and corporations are all potential sources of grant funds. Most grantors require proof of 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. If your group is not incorporated as a nonprofit with a tax classification assigned by the Internal Revenue Service, you may want to consider incorporating and applying for nonprofit status. However, your group may also find a partner organization with 501(c)(3) status that may be will-

ing to pass grant money through to your group as a subcontractor.

Start locally. Many foundations and corporations contribute only to local organizations. Ask local businesses or corporations that may contribute to your project. Also ask members of your group and their network of friends if they have contacts with any local businesses or other prospects. Next, look for foundations and corporations in your state. Finally, tap regional and national funders.

There are many directories and other resources to help groups identify foundations and corporations for fundraising. Look for a statewide foundation directory at your local library or purchase a copy for your use. You also can ask a larger nonprofit or a local foundation to donate last year's edition of a regional or national directory. There are online resources as well. Many online directories and databases for funders charge a fee, but there are also free resources. You can locate prospects by searching the Internet. Other sources of information about potential funders are the annual reports of other organizations that have similar programs. Read these reports to see which foundations, agencies, and corporations are supporting the work of these organizations and may be interested in your group's work.

It is important to target your solicitations. Sending out dozens of unsolicited proposals to foundations without first reading their guidelines is unlikely to yield results. When researching grant-makers, pay attention to geographic restrictions, types of projects funded, and the size of grants. Obtain the most up-to-date grant guidelines, annual report, and brochures by contacting the foundation directly or visiting its Web site. In addition to grant guidelines, pay close attention the types of projects the foundation, corporation, or agency has previously funded. For example, a foundation may list water quality as an interest, but a review of past grants may show that it gives primarily to university research rather than volunteer monitoring projects. The list of past grantors will also provide information on the range of funding you might request.



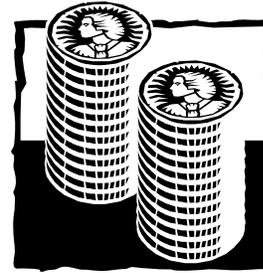
WRITING GRANT PROPOSALS

Before writing a proposal, it is wise to contact the funder to find out whether or not they have grant guidelines, what the deadlines are for submittal, and whether or not your project is within the funder's area of interest. If the grant guidelines specify that the foundation does not accept telephone calls, remember to honor that request.

Start with a thorough outline of the project. Think about why the project is needed and make that clear. It is important to keep asking yourself whether this particular project or program is the best thing you can do to solve the problem you are addressing. Think about the project goals, work plan, time frame, and budget. This information will work well for either a brief letter of inquiry or a full proposal. If submission guidelines are available, make sure you follow them with regard to length, format, and content. Tailor each proposal to the particular funder. Review information on the funder carefully and get a sense of its philosophy and interests. Keep the proposal short, concise, and reader-friendly. Use short, powerful sentences and a logical structure. Proofread the proposal carefully and ask others to review it. Be sure to allow sufficient time to complete the proposal and submit it by the funder's deadline.

After sending the proposal, follow up with the funder. If your project is approved, send a thank-you letter immediately. If your project is not funded, you may want to call and inquire why the funds were denied.

Remember that people give money to people. Developing relationships with grant-makers is very important. A good way to establish relationships with funders is to meet them in person. Send a letter requesting a meeting with the funder and follow up with a phone call. Also, invite the funder to observe your group in action by attending your next event.



RESOURCES

Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection. This comprehensive listing of federal funding available for watershed projects includes detailed information on each funding source and links for more information. Call (800) 490-9198 or (513) 489-8695 or visit www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/wacademy/.

The Chronicle of Philanthropy. This publication's Web site features a free, searchable database for all the grants listed in its issues during the past several years. Visit www.philanthropy.com.

Environmental Finance Center. Features an online, searchable database for watershed restoration funding including federal, state, private, and other funding sources for the Pacific Northwest. Also has free software that helps users estimate the costs of their projects and determine funding needs. Visit sspa.boisestate.edu/efc/Tools&Services/Plan2Fund/plan2fund.htm or call (866) 627-9847.

The Foundation Center. Offers free links to grant-maker Web sites, including private and public foundations, corporations, and community foundations. This site also includes a short course that teaches the basic elements of writing a good proposal. A comprehensive online directory of funders is available for a fee, or you can visit one of their libraries and research all of their information for free. Call (800) 424-9836 or visit www.fdncenter.org.

Grants.gov. This site allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grant-making agencies. Visit www.grants.gov.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This private, nonprofit organization provides matching grants for on-the-ground conservation projects through a combination of private and public sources of funding. Visit www.nfwf.org.

River Network. This group's Web site includes fact-sheets on foundation research, grant writing, and raising funds through boards, the Internet, bequests, workplace giving, and in-kind donations. Its Directory of Funding Resources lists more than 300 private, corporate, and federal funding sources for river and watershed groups. The directory is available as a hard copy for a fee. Call (800) 423-6747 or visit www.rivernetnetwork.org.

For a comprehensive listing of funding resources, visit the Izaak Walton League's online resource listing at www.iwla.org/sos/resources.