

# Chapter 9

## Ongoing Organizational and Project Funding

Once you have an organization up and running, you will need ongoing funding to support the organization's operation and specific programs and projects. Volumes have been written on budgeting and fundraising for non-profits. You'll see some of these referenced at the end of this chapter or in Appendix A – Resources. But suffice it to say that you will need to spend some time figuring out what it costs to keep your organization going and how you're going to generate the needed funds and other support for operations and special projects.

Typically you'll need to develop one overall budget that covers your annual operating expenses and general unrestricted income, such as membership dues, grants through the County or some other regional body, special event income, and others. If you have specific projects for which you are seeking funding, such as watershed assessment studies, development of a watershed management plan, or specific restoration projects, you'll need to develop separate project budgets, which should include costs related to:

- \$ your labor (or that of your executive director or watershed coordinator) in overseeing the project;

- \$ any contracted labor, such as wildlife or fisheries biologists, recreation planners, or other technical specialists;

- \$ supplies needed to support the project, including both general office supplies and any specialty items needed for the project, such as structural elements, testing equipment, computer programs, etc.;

- \$ any overhead costs, such as a percentage of your office space, utilities, and phone charges specific to the project;

- \$ travel expenses incurred as part of the project;

- \$ printing or other production costs.

### ***Membership Dues***

Various methods exist for funding ongoing operations and projects. Some watershed councils collect dues from their member

groups. Membership dues vary from group to group. The Chagrin Watershed Partners in northeastern Ohio, composed initially of municipalities, counties and district parks, used a formula based on assessed value per municipality to generate a dues structure. So the communities within the river corridor pay almost double the dues of the upland communities. Membership for Chagrin Watershed Partners ranges from \$500 for small communities along the perimeter with little land actually in the watershed, to \$8,000 for larger, river-based communities. Park districts and counties pay a flat fee of \$3,000.

The Huron River Watershed Council follows a similar path, using a flat fee of \$30 for individuals and a set formula for computing membership dues for government members. Towns and municipalities, for instance, contribute \$.08 per capita, based on the 1990 census. Counties contribute \$.04 per capita for residents living within the watershed boundaries, plus \$1.50 per square mile of land within the watershed.

Other groups, such as the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance, require a membership fee of \$100 for each member, regardless of what kind of organization it is. Only members that are current in their dues are eligible to vote on the Board.

But many groups don't ask for direct financial support from their members, figuring that the members are already giving enough through their committed participation. These groups rely more on government funding, private foundation funding, special event revenue, general donations, and in-kind contributions.

***Types of In-Kind Contributions***

**Time:**  
 Board members  
 Volunteers  
 Advisors  
 Loaned executives  
 Consultants

**Talent:**  
 Marketing  
 Accounting  
 Data processing  
 Computer applications  
 Audio-visual  
 Graphics  
 Public relations  
 Planning  
 Technical expertise

**Goods:**  
 Office furniture  
 Office equipment  
 Office space/facilities  
 Postage/mailing  
 Copying

## Grants

There are a variety of avenues to pursue for grant funding, including: government-sponsored funding programs for watershed restoration and other projects in California; philanthropic and community foundations with interests in your geographic area or your general mission; corporations and businesses with an environmental focus, such as REI or Patagonia; and local banks or other community-dependent service providers, such as Bank of America, which offer community support programs in the communities where they have offices.

Researching potential funding sources is a whole separate discipline. You can check your local library, community foundations, nonprofit support centers or other places for directories of grant sources. One of the best foundation fundraising resources is the Foundation Center. The Foundation Center is an independent nonprofit informational clearinghouse designed to foster public understanding of the foundation field. It has five main libraries located throughout the U.S., one of which is in San Francisco (Tel: 415-397-0902).

The Foundation Center also works through other cooperating libraries or nonprofit information centers in more remote locations to provide some of the services available at the main library centers. You can find the cooperating library or center nearest you by calling 1-800-424-9836 or by checking the list available on the Foundation Center's website at: <http://fdncenter.org>. There is one such cooperating center, called the Non Profit Resource Center, at the Sacramento Public Library main branch, 828 I Street, in downtown Sacramento. You can reach them by phone at 916-264-2772 for more information on programs and services.

River Network in Portland, Oregon, is another great source of funding information. River Network is a national organization supporting river and watershed advocates at the local, state, and regional levels. It makes amazing amounts of important information available to its partners, including:

- √ an annual directory of funding sources for grassroots river and watershed groups
- √ how-to references for grantwriting and other activities

NOTE: Many foundations and corporations will only give grant money to 501c3 non-profit organizations. But if you choose not to pursue non-profit status right away (or at all...), you can often access this funding by working with another group that is a non-profit. The other group doesn't even have to be involved in your specific project. It can simply agree to serve as your "fiscal sponsor" for purposes of a specific grant. You then explain this relationship and agreement in your grant proposal.



- √ information on training courses for grantwriting and other fundraising activities

- √ quarterly “River Fundraising Alerts” with helpful information on different aspects of fundraising along with a list of upcoming deadlines for funders with an interest in river and watershed efforts.

For more information on River Network and its partnership program, you can call 503-241-3506 or visit River Network’s website at: <http://www.rivernetwork.org>.

And, let’s not forget research on the Internet. The Internet has all kinds of information to help locate suitable funding sources, including individual websites of various funders, keyword searches to develop a list of funders with an interest in watershed issues, websites of different fundraising support organizations like the Foundation Center, for-fee database search services, and more. River Network has many helpful hints for how to use the Internet as a tool for identifying funding prospects.

**Funding Proposals**

Most funding sources, whether public or private, will require you to submit a funding proposal. The requirements regarding content and presentation will vary, depending on the individual granting agency. But in general, you will want to include some version of the following elements in your proposal:

**Project or Executive Summary** – usually a 1- to 2-page synopsis of the project including brief statements of the vision, goals, action plan, costs, participants or supporters of your project, evaluation methods, and qualifications of your group to carry out the proposal.

**Needs or Problem Statement** – identifies the problem(s) addressed by your proposal and provides some background information or history on the problem and how it came to be.

**Project Description** – outlining in more detail the specific goals and objectives and the actions or steps you plan to take for accomplishing the goals and objectives, your philosophical approach to the problem, location/boundaries of your project area, benefits derived from the project, etc. This is also a good place to

include a timeline showing how the specific actions fit together, as well as a monitoring plan for how you will monitor the results of your project.

**Evaluation Plan** – describing how you plan to determine the relative success of your project over time.

**Budget** – indicating the income you expect to generate, through this and other grant proposals, in-kind contributions, donations, events, etc., and the expenses you expect to incur in conducting the project, including some portion of your organization’s overhead and staffing to oversee the project’s completion.

**Proponent Qualifications** – outlining why your group is qualified to carry out the project as described. This section should include information on the watershed council members, copies of any formal documents such as a memorandum of understanding, letters of support, copies of your tax-exempt status confirmation from the IRS, if you are a 501c3, and a bit of history on the formation and life of the group to date.

Different funders may ask for additional information or for this basic information in a different format. ***The key is: give them what they ask for!*** If they ask for the same piece of information in five different places within the proposal, give them that information five different times, exactly where they want it. Don’t assume that having it appear in one place is enough.

As a reminder, to find out about private foundation, corporate and government funding programs, you can:

- contact other major river advocacy or environmental groups for information and assistance;
- do research of your own at places like the Foundation Center, which have many foundation and corporate giving directories and files on individual funding opportunities;
- or join an umbrella support group, like Sierra Nevada Alliance, River Network or others, that offer fundraising training, assistance and information to their member organizations.

Regardless of where you start, you will want to be sure to diversify your funding base over time. It is dangerous to rely on just one or two funding sources, such as government or foundation

Different funders may ask for additional information or for this basic information in a different format. ***The key is: give them what they ask for!*** If they ask for the same piece of information in five different places within the proposal, give them that information five different times, exactly where they want it. Don’t assume that having it appear in one place is enough.

grants, to support the full work of your organization. Again, River Network and other support-type organizations provide a wealth of information on fundraising strategies and techniques. It would behoove any new watershed organization to hook up with a larger support group, not only for fundraising information but also for organizational development, technical and program assistance.

You may also want to call the various state and federal agencies to get your organization's name on their general mailing list for new funding opportunities, technical information and other communications. The agency members of your group can help you identify whom to call and what lists to subscribe to. Once again, the Internet may be a good source of information on agency programs and contacts.



## CHAPTER 9 - KEY CONTACTS/REFERENCE/RESOURCES

***Environmental Partnerships: A Field Guide for Nonprofit Organizations and Community Interests***, published by Harcourt Brace & Company, Orlando, FL, for the Management Institute for Environment and Business. 1995.

**Starting Up: A Handbook for New River and Watershed Organizations.** Published by River Network, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787. Tel: 503-241-9256. Fax: 503-241-9256. Website: <http://www.rivernetwork.org>. 1996

**Partnership Handbook**, compiled by Ann Moote for the University of Arizona's Water Resources Research Center. College of Agriculture, University of Arizona, 350 N. Campbell Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85719. Can be downloaded from the Internet at: <http://ag.arizona.edu/PARTNERS/>

***Directory of Funding Sources for Grassroots River and Watershed Conservation Groups.*** Compiled by Alison Cook for River Network, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787. Tel: 503-241-3506. Fax: 503-241-9256. Website: <http://rivernetwork.org>

***River Fundraising Alert.*** quarterly publication from River Network to help river and watershed organizations support themselves financially. River Network, PO Box 8787, Portland, OR 97207-8787. Tel: 503-241-3506. Fax: 503-241-9256. Website: <http://rivernetwork.org>.

Kim Klein. ***Fundraising for Social Change.*** Chardon Press: Berkeley, CA. Third Edition, 1994. PO Box 11607, Berkeley, CA 94712. Tel: 510-704-8714. Fax: 510-649-7913.

***Grassroots Fundraising Journal.*** bi-monthly magazine published by Chardon Press: Berkeley, CA. PO Box 11607, Berkeley, CA 94712. Tel: 510-704-8714. Fax: 510-649-7913.

Foundation Center, 79 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076. Tel: 212-620-4230. Fax: 212-807-3677. Call to find out location of associate center nearest you.

Support Centers of America (National Headquarters), 706 Mission St., 5th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103. Tel: 415-974-5100. Provides training and management assistance to nonprofits.

Local or regional offices of various state and federal agencies such as US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Fish & Game, US Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, etc. (addresses and phone numbers can be found in the blue government pages of your Pacific Bell "Smart Yellow Pages" phone book.

National Parks Service Recreation Grants Division, 202-343-3700 or Recreation Resources Assistance Program, 202-343-3780.

U.S Environmental Protection Agency Website:  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).