

How to Apply for Funding for Beaver Advocacy

National Beaver Working Group on Funding

May 1, 2023

So your beaver advocacy organization would like to apply to foundations or other funders in order to fund your beaver advocacy! First, let's make sure you have the organizational capacity!

- Make sure your 501(c)(3) status is in order.
- Make sure your finances are in order. Your banking should be in order, you should know what your fiscal year dates are. You should have a final financial statement for the previous fiscal year, preferably audited. You should have a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. You should have filled out the IRS Form 990 or Form 990-EZ; this document will list the agency's yearly revenue, expenses, and balance sheet for the previous year.
- Develop two budgets for the upcoming fiscal year, one that reflects current spending commitments and an aspirational one that reflects your "wish list."
- Take a look at your website. Is it up to date and does it reflect your current mission statement and programming?
- Measure the outcomes of your programming. How many people are impacted by your current programming? What is their demographic makeup? How do you measure your current programming?
 - Process measurement measures the number of people served (or maybe the number of miles of watershed or the number of beaver conflicts that you resolve).
 - Outcomes measurement measures the outcomes of your programming. This could look like, "Participants in our programming understand the ecosystem services that beavers provide."
 - Are you administering pre- and post-program survey instruments? Or collecting feedback via a group discussion?
 - Think about how you would measure outcomes for your proposed project or programming and what those outcomes might be.
- Gather other information you will need for grant writing. This includes:
 - Federal Employer Identification Number.
 - A DUNS number. <https://www.dnb.com/duns-number.html>.
 - Current board member list: names, city/state, short bio for each.
 - SAM certification: <https://sam.gov/content/home>; you have to register your entity and it can be time consuming.
 - A sam.gov Unique Entity ID
 - Current certificate of good standing from your state's Secretary of State.
 - Current bylaws and articles of incorporation.
 - IRS determination letter.
 - Proof of liability insurance (possibly).
- Maybe you are not writing the grant on behalf of your own organization. Maybe you are writing it on behalf of a local watershed group, municipality, drainage district, or park district who possess the qualifications required by the grant. Building relationships with these types of organizations can help you accomplish your goals.

OK, now you are almost ready to start grant writing.

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- Conceptualize your proposed beaver advocacy project. Possible projects include:
 - Conflict resolution (i.e., flow devices or tree wrapping).
 - Education (i.e., curriculum development, guided tours of beaver wetlands, signage, beaver festival).
 - Beaver restoration projects (i.e., riparian restoration, BDAs, relocation programs; you'll need to figure out what regulations you need to follow).
- Consider your funding sources. This could be city, state, and federal grants; private foundation grants; stormwater management commissions. **The NBWG on Funding can help you identify potential funding sources.**
- Draft several "pitch" letters for the projects for which you seek funding. You'll want to include:
 - Your mission statement.
 - How your mission aligns with the funder's priorities.
 - Current program descriptions with outcomes and how they are measured.
 - Description of the proposed project.
 - How flow devices work.
 - Research on the ecosystem services that beavers provide.
 - The cost-benefit analysis--flow devices save money over the mid-term.
 - Site analysis.
 - Any watershed plans or state wildlife action plans that support riparian restoration or habitat development
 - A budget for the proposed project.
 - A project schedule
 - Possibly photos or illustrations
 - **The NBWG on Funding can help you put together these pieces of narrative.**
- Research similar programs and find out who those donors are

You've identified a potential funder and it is time to sit down and write the application.

- Read the application and FAQs carefully.
 - You want to provide answers to each question even if you feel like you already answered it elsewhere in the application.
 - Sometimes a funder will include the scoring rubric. Make sure your answers will gain you the maximum points possible for each section.
- Customize your application so that it specifically addresses the environmental conditions of your state or region. Don't focus on how beavers can help combat wildfires if you don't live in an area that experiences wildfires. What are your region's issues? Water quality? Loss of habitat and biodiversity? Flooding?
 - What listed state or federal endangered species in your region would benefit from more beaver wetlands?
 - What harbor is being filled up with sediment because your watershed's streambanks are eroding due to a lack of beavers and fast-moving water?

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- Are you looking for funding to pay for work that is currently being performed by volunteers? Make sure you quantify those hours and the in-kind value.
- Identify your program participants and any differentiators. Build inclusion into your grant by, for example, asking for funding for Spanish language educational materials or for making the programs accessible to people with disabilities. Funders also like programs that take place in Environmental Justice areas (i.e., low income)
- Collect letters of support from organizational partners or entities who would be positively impacted by the project.:
- Is there a match? Sometimes the match can consist of in-kind services. Other times you can seek out other grants to contribute to the match. **We can help you brainstorm how to meet a match.**

Your application is written. **The NBWG on Funding can review completed applications and make editing and content suggestions.**