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*Bison, Fort Niobrara NWR, Nebraska*

# Fundraising

## Tools to build the organization

- Do not be afraid to ask for money.
- Face the need for fund raising head-on and develop a plan for it.
- For some people, money equals having respect for your group.
- Set sound financial priorities.
- A small amount of start-up money is necessary.
- Create a broad base of members and contributors.

## Funding sources

- Board members
- Basic membership and special member contributions
- Programs and events (fees, donations, raffles)
- “Family/Neighbor” support
- Private donors (from membership, local community)
- Corporations (businesses, banks)
- Foundations
- Government
- Special fund raising drives

# Funding

Raising money is among the more important things your group needs to plan for. However, it need not be something to fear. With good planning, careful attention to building relationships, and showing the public what your group can do for the refuge, your treasury will grow, in time.

Brian O’Neill, of San Francisco’s Golden Gate National Park prefers to call fundraising “friend-raising,” and with good reason. In twenty years as Park Superintendent for Golden Gate, he has nurtured a solid network of friends and as a result has seen millions of dollars donated to the Park. People give to people. Fundraising is all about making new friends who are willing to commit their funds to your organization’s cause. O’Neill understands why people give. Success breeds success. People see great things being done with their contributions — they trust that when they donate, their money will be used wisely.

At first, your budget will be based on membership dues and small donations. In the first five years, most likely your group will accomplish a great deal on a shoestring budget. According to the NWRA’s Friends Survey, most groups five years old and younger operate with a budget of \$5,000 or less, and they report a multitude of accomplishments for their refuges.

Begin with the attitude that you can accomplish a great deal with very little money. Dedicated volunteers can make a big difference with their hands and hearts.

Even as a fledgling operation however, you do need some money. Some of the start up costs will include incorporation and non-profit filing fees, logo design, brochure development, newsletter, printing and mailing expenses.

You’ll need money for projects big and small, and to plan activities to reward your volunteers. An emergency or “rainy day” fund is helpful for unexpected or unplanned needs.

## Ways to begin raising money

- *Determine how much you need and develop a budget for each funding need.*
  - *Have specific goals and deadlines – develop a clarity of need.*
  
- *Determine the sources that you plan to go after and develop a plan and set strategy.*
  - *Seek in-kind donations for goods and services (e.g., computers, grant writing, lawyers, accountants, facilitators).*
  - *Be realistic in your plans (e.g., setting timelines for raising funds, assigning responsibilities).*
  - *Consider making use of grant writers and fund-raisers.*
  
- *Ask for funds*
  - *Board members shouldn't be afraid to ask for money and need to see fundraising as part of their job.*
  - *Get the right people to do the asking. Remember – people give to people.*
  - *Ensure that you are doing the right prospecting or asking*
  - *Get training if you need it.*
  - *Establish a communication link with donors.*
  
- *Be aware of the strings that may be attached to any donation.*
  - *Refuse donations that have strings that your organization can't live with because you'll find other sources of funds.*
  
- *Be sure to say "Please" and "Thank you."*
  - *Provide a donor recognition. Use a personal touch strategy.*

## Words of Wisdom From Other Friends Groups

“

Ask once a year or more often for special needs.

~

Express your thanks within 24 hours.

~

Establish a hierarchy of thank-you's to correspond to the levels of donation.

~

Every visitor to the refuge is a potential prospect.

~

Do not phone.

~

Make sure that you have peers asking peers.

~

Keep learning about asking.

~

Know your donors.

”

## Fundraising Checklist

<p>Set up a budget. As a fledgling group, you will need start up money for things like incorporation and non-profit filing fees, printing costs for a newsletter and brochure and mailing expenses.</p>	
<p>Fundraising is “Friend-raising.” It depends on developing good relationships. Be sure to have peers asking peers.</p>	
<p>Early on your budget will be small, based on membership dues and small donations, but as you build your relationships, your treasury will grow.</p>	
<p>A great deal can be accomplish on a small budget.</p>	
<p>Ask and you will receive. Get the right people to do the asking.</p>	
<p>Set priorities. Develop a fundraising plan. Know how much you need and determine a strategy to get it.</p>	
<p>Always say “Please,” and “Thank You.”</p>	
<p>Always be willing to learn more about fundraising.</p>	

