

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



October 2021

Fundraising for Districts

Fundraising or fund development is an important part of being a board member. Raising funds to operate district programs or support other area programs can be a difficult task. This training will serve as a basic how to for fundraising.

It's important to note that several other past trainings would work well with this one including Jan. 2021 Elevator Pitches; April 2021 How to Have a More Active Conservation District; Sept. 2020 Environmental Grants; and other related trainings.

Before You Start Fundraising:

The most important thing you should do before you begin fundraising for a project, is take stock of what you need. Make sure you determine if your need is operational or project-based. Operating funds are things like your normal business expenses. While you can often include operating funds as an expense for a lot of fundraising endeavors, grants and fundraising events are often better utilized for projects. You can include a portion of your operational expenses in a grant for a project- typically no more than 10%.

The list you put together could be a list of supplies, estimated staff time, estimated travel time if any, and any other fees or resources you might need. A detailed plan is key to success, especially when asking others for money. Your plan should identify the scope of the project, a detailed budget, and what the district can offer as match either as in-kind or cash. In-kind match is match that is generated by donated goods or services.

When developing a plan, it is important to be respectful of staff time. Most conservation districts rely on one staff person. A large project with only one staff person sustaining it can be difficult to manage. Now is a good time to determine how much time board members, community partners, and volunteers are willing to put into the planning and implementation of the project. As a board member it is often vital to the success of a project that you be involved, the more involved board members are the more impactful the conservation district can be.

Don't be intimidated by putting together a funding plan. The document you put together should just be a simple outline of what you need so that you can identify what funding path is most appropriate for your district.

Types of Fund Development:

Selling Goods or Services

Selling goods or services can be an on-going or special effort to raise funds for your district. Typically, funds raised from the sale of goods or services can be used for either operating or project expenses. Be sure that you are following all Kentucky laws and avoiding conflicts of interest when selling any item or service.

Examples of goods and services:

1. Sale of equipment
2. Sale of agricultural supplies like geotextile fabric
3. Offering pesticide or herbicide services for invasive species treatment (license required)

Fundraisers or Special Events

Fundraisers are excellent options to raise money for district operations or special projects. Fundraisers can be done on the districts own or in conjunction with other local organizations or charities. For example, you could partner with your local 4-H club to raise funds for 4-H camp, or you could have fundraising opportunities at your annual meeting. If you don't have a community partner or fiscal sponsor, then you must disclose to the public that any donations are not tax deductible. Again, make sure you're following state laws regarding any permits needed or restrictions present.

Examples of Fundraisers:

1. Special meal or event with local celebrities or politicians
2. Conservation camp or day
3. Hosting a farm tour

Grants

Grants are funds that the district typically needs to apply for either by themselves or with a fiscal sponsor. If a grant states in its purpose that they do not donate to government entities, then it is unlikely that districts can apply to them without a sponsor. Grants also require work; you will need a detailed project outline and budget in order to apply. In addition to a detailed project and budget, you'll also need to show how you'll provide a match. Grants typically are used for projects and not general operating funds. Applying for grants are a great opportunity to partner with other districts, community organizations, schools, or other parties.

Examples of Grants:

1. Environmental grants offered by the Division of Conservation
2. FEMA emergency relief grants
3. Non-point source grants from the EPA

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships can aid in any of the fund development techniques mentioned above. These partnerships can range from fiscal sponsorships to events at local restaurants. Building community partnerships isn't just about fund raising, but friend raising. Having your name out in the community can encourage people to volunteer for your district, recruit new board members, and raise awareness about the various programs that the district hosts or participates in.

Examples of partnerships:

1. Working with schools for field days or other events
2. Hosting a round up your bill event at a local business
3. Participating in local festivals or fairs

