

MILTN

MAINE LAND TRUST NETWORK

Infopack 1: Grant Writing Basics for Land Trusts

Included in this packet:

- **Introduction** - *including tips on applying for and writing grants*
- **Resources** - *to help you find and apply for grant funding*
- **Private & Public Funding Sources** - *a list of some popular funding sources to get you started*
- **Sample Proposal Budgets** – *more available at www.mltn.org*

The Maine Land Trust Network seeks to promote voluntary land conservation by building the quality and effectiveness of land trusts and the Maine conservation community through communication, coordination and education. The Network is supported and coordinated by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. You may contact the Network via the Land Trust Program at Maine Coast Heritage Trust.

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Introduction

Grants are an important source of income for non-profit organizations, including land trusts. They can help land trusts by providing money for land acquisition, stewardship, organizational capacity, and a variety of other purposes. Yet, the grant application process, from identifying and researching likely prospects to preparing the required materials, is not always simple and can be time consuming. For this reason, it is important to execute each step of the process carefully and to ensure that you are using your valuable time most effectively.

Before applying for a grant, think about what percent of your organization's income you want to come from grants. Each organization should rely on a balance of income derived from grants and other resources. To put it simply, an organization that depends on grants for 75% of its funding is subject to significant challenges should the grants fall through in any given year. An organization that derives no more than 20% of its funding from grants is far more likely to withstand cuts in grant funding than an organization relying on a larger percentage. The Maine Association of Non-Profits recommends that only 12-15% of your assets come from grants.

Each foundation has a certain purpose and will generally only fund organizations that fulfill their aims. While considering what grants to apply for, make sure that the grants you seek tie directly to your organization's mission, rather than tailoring your program to the guidelines of the foundation. Although grants are crucial to most non-profits, altering your organization's activities in order to obtain grant money is not beneficial in the long run. This common mistake often forces organizations to strain their resources, allocating large amounts of time and money to projects that, in the end, may prevent them from achieving their primary goals.

The following are some tips on how to successfully apply for grants:

- In writing grants and submitting materials, ensure that you research a foundation or grant-making entity thoroughly and follow the guidelines exactly. If a foundation encourages organizations to call and discuss a proposal before applying, it is advisable that you do so. Given the high number of applications submitted for each granting cycle, you don't want to waste a foundation's or your time by applying for unsuitable projects. Do not include materials that are not specifically requested.
- Make sure that applications are well-written. Foundations often express that most of the applications they receive are not organized or concise, which makes them difficult to understand and makes the review process time consuming. Thus, a well-written application will definitely stand out in the eyes of the selection committee.

- Do not assume that everyone knows what your organization does. Explain your mission and how it relates to the foundation's goals concisely.
- To improve your grant application, it is often advisable to call foundation representatives to ask questions about what the foundation looks for and any other advice they can offer. Of course, this depends on the foundation's desires and whether they promote or discourage such contact.
- Quantify your program in some way. Show how you will measure your organization's success and tell the foundation exactly what the grant will pay for if obtained. Foundations want to know that the funding they provide will actually make a difference to your organization and help it achieve its goals, so be specific as to why you need this particular grant. It is important to remember that foundations want to see you succeed and they want their donors' funds to have significant and positive impacts on their specified areas of interest.
- Contact professional grantwriters if additional help is needed.

The above advice is only a small portion of the wealth of information available on foundations and applying for grants. This packet should serve as a helpful starting point in your grant search, but remember that there are many other websites, publications and learning opportunities that will support various aspects of your work.

Resources for Finding and Writing Grants

General Resources

Grantmanship Center

<https://www.tgci.com>

This site offers information on its 200 annual grantmanship training programs, which cover a variety of aspects including researching grants, writing grant proposals, and negotiating with funding sources. The center also offers multiple publications on the topic of obtaining grants as well as current news on grants, information on sources, and funding tips.

Maine Association of Nonprofits

<https://www.nonprofitmaine.org>

Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP) offers its members several benefits that may assist them when seeking grant funding. Organizations with an annual budget of \$500,000 or less that join the Maine Land Trust Network by April 1st receive a free membership in MANP.

- **SkillBuilders:** MANP's Skillbuilder's program offers a variety of training courses in areas including grantwriting, fundraising and development strategies for small nonprofits. Courses may help your organization

identify realistic sources of funding, cultivate and engage funders, actively involve Boards and volunteers in the fundraising process and learn how marketing and public relations can enhance fundraising goals.

- **GrantStation Subscription:** MANP members pay only \$75 for an annual subscription to GrantStation (more than 85% off the regular subscription price). GrantStation is an advanced searchable database of more than 7,000 active funding sources and includes grant opportunities from state, private & federal sources, private and corporate foundations, and association and international funding sources. Information provided includes contact information, eligibility, giving levels, scope and focus, areas of interest, application procedures, etc.
- **Consultant Referral:** If your organization decides to hire a professional to assist with grantwriting, MANP online list of consultants (Yellow Pages) may be useful. Their staff can also help in identifying a consultant to meet your needs.

Maine Philanthropy Center

<https://www.mainephilanthropy.org>

The Maine Philanthropy Center (MPC) builds connections between the nonprofit community and those who provide support to the charitable sector in Maine. MPC offers an extensive reference library, filled with information on local and national foundations and publications of interest to funders. The Center's database of corporate, private and public grantmakers provides continually updated funding information.

Resources for Finding Grants

Directory of Maine Grantmakers

<https://www.mainephilanthropy.org>

This informative compilation lists types of foundations, guidelines on how to begin searching for appropriate grants, and provides details on Maine grantmakers, including address, purpose, limitations, application information, financial data, and sample grants. The directory is offered to Maine Philanthropy Center members in a searchable format through the web. For a hard copy, order through MPC's website or send a check (\$75 for members, \$95 for nonmembers; save \$5 if you pick up at their office) and completed order form, which can be found on the website, to **Maine Philanthropy Center**, USM Glickman Family Library, PO Box 9301, Portland, ME 04104-9301.

Candid

<https://candid.org>

Foundation Center and Guidestar have joined forces to become a new organization – Candid. They still offer a comprehensive database on U.S. grantmakers and their grants (see below for information about the Foundation Directory Online) and operate research, education, and training programs. Their website includes two free services through which grantseekers can look up basic information about U.S. grantmakers: "[Foundation Finder](#)" provides grantmakers' addresses, web sites, and fiscal data. "[990 Finder](#)" directs you to

an organization's IRS returns, which contain information on a foundation's assets, grant paid, trustees, past grant recipients, and application information. Subscribe to receive their electronic RFP Bulletin to learn about new and recurring opportunities.

Foundation Directory Online

<https://fconline.foundationcenter.org>

Developed by the Foundation Center, this online directory lists all US foundations that have assets of at least \$1 million or make grants of \$100,000 or more. The site gives basic information about each including what kinds of activities they support and any restriction on their distributions. Subscription plans are available at many different levels. The Directory is also available free of charge to members of the Maine Philanthropy Center, which offers guided grant research tutorials and research hours.

GrantStation

<https://www.grantstation.com>

Must purchase a membership to join (see note under MANP resources). Offers resources to expand funding, find new sources of funding, enhance grantseeking skills, facts on foundations, deadlines, books, tips on proposal writing, fundraising trends, and more.

Helpful Publications

Chronicle of Philanthropy

<https://www.philanthropy.com>

An online newspaper with the latest news on grants, grant contributions, deadlines, fundraising, marketing and social media, and managing non-profits.

The Conservation Finance Handbook: How Communities are Paying for Parks and Land Conservation. Ernest Cook & Kim Hopper. (2004). A Center for Land and People Book: The Trust for Public Land.

Between 1996 and 2002, the Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance Program helped states and communities design and promote ballot measures that created more than \$25 billion in new park and open space funding. Out of the program's experience comes a handbook that explains the complex process of securing federal, state and private conservation funds.

A Field Guide to Conservation Finance. Story Clark. (2007). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Story Clark shows how small land conservation organizations can achieve conservation goals using both traditional and cutting-edge financial strategies. Clark outlines essential tools for raising money, borrowing money, and reducing the cost of transactions. She covers a range of subjects including transfer fees, voluntary surcharges, seller financing, revolving funds, and Project Related Investment programs (PRIs). A clear, well-written overview of the basics of conservation finance with useful insights and real stories combine to create a book that is an invaluable and accessible guide for land trusts seeking to protect more land.

Land Conservation Financing. Ed McMahon & Mike McQueen. (2003). Washington, DC: Island Press.

In this book the authors offer important new information on state-of-the-art conservation financing, highlighting case studies of model programs from across the country. The authors examine how hundreds of communities have created funding by developing successful campaigns to win land conservation ballot measures. They also explore the new concept of “green infrastructure,” a strategic approach to conservation.

Investing in Nature: Case Studies of Land Conservation in Collaboration with Business. William J. Ginn. (2005). Washington, DC: Island Press.

Drawing on his experience in both business and land conservation at The Nature Conservancy (TNC), William Ginn offers a practical guide to innovative methods and a road map to the most effective way to implement them. From conservation investment banking, to emerging markets for nature's goods and services, to new tax incentives that encourage companies to do the "right" thing, Ginn goes beyond the theories to present real-world applications and strategies. And, just as importantly, he looks at the lessons learned from what has not worked, including his own failed efforts in Papua New Guinea and TNC's controversial compatible development approach in Virginia.

Other Resources

InnoNet

<https://www.innonet.org>

This nonprofit's website is dedicated to assisting with the development of proposals online. The site is secure and also offers good proposal examples and templates.

University of Southern Maine Continuing Education Program

<https://usm.maine.edu/professional-development-programs>

The University of Southern Maine offers many courses for adults, including ones on grantwriting. This site has a link to USM's catalog of continuing education courses.

Private and Public Funding Sources

Private Foundations

There are many online resources for information on private funding programs. We encourage you to begin with one of the websites listed under General Resources (e.g. Maine Philanthropy Center) to narrow your search, and then visit a foundation's website for specific information. Grant guidelines and deadlines are subject to change so check your online resources regularly and always before beginning any application process.

There are a few programs specifically focused on funding Maine land trusts such as the L.L.Bean Maine Land Trust Grant Program, administered by Maine Coast Heritage Trust. L.L.Bean has teamed up with Maine Coast Heritage Trust to provide grant support that will enhance the capacity of Maine's land trusts in support of their land conservation activities and the protection of Maine's outdoor heritage and natural landscapes. Visit <https://www.mltn.org/resources/funding/> for details and application deadline.

In addition, the following grants are awarded to Maine land trusts:

- Maine Community Foundation's Conservation for All Grants (<https://www.mainecef.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/conservation-for-all/>)
- Maine Community Foundation's Maine Land Protection Grants (<https://www.mainecef.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/maine-land-protection/>)
- Maine Farmland Trust's Farmland Protection Grants (<https://www.maineFarmlandTrust.org/farmland-protection-new/assistance-to-local-land-trusts/>)

Another way to narrow your search is to subscribe to Infoline, the e-newsletter of the Maine Land Trust Network. Infoline is published about twice per month and includes Maine conservation news, opportunities for conservation training, and funding announcements. Visit <https://www.mltn.org/about/newsletter/> to sign up.

State Programs

Land and Water Conservation Fund

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/land_water_conservation_fund.html

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964 (LWCF) was established to assist federal, state and local governments in the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation facilities. Administered at the federal level by the National Park Service and at the state level by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, LWCF grants can provide up to 50% of the allowable costs for approved acquisition or development projects for public outdoor recreation.

Land for Maine's Future Program

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/lmf/>

The Land for Maine's Future Program is the State of Maine's primary funding vehicle for conserving land for its natural and recreational value. The Program works to coordinate and finance acquisition of lands for conservation, water access, outdoor recreation, wildlife and fish habitat, working waterfront protection and farmland conservation. Through the use of matching funds, the program encourages partnerships with municipalities; local, regional, and statewide conservation organizations; and state and federal agencies.

Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund

<https://www.maine.gov/ifw/programs-resources/grants/outdoor-heritage-fund.html>

The Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund (MOHF) conserves wildlife and open spaces through the sale of instant, scratch lottery tickets. With proceeds from ticket sales, grants are awarded twice a year, totaling approximately \$700,000 annually. Grant application deadlines are March 1 and September 1 of each year. The seven-member Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund Board chooses projects in four categories that promote conservation of Maine's fish and wildlife habitat, acquisition and management of special places, endangered species, and conservation law enforcement.

Maine Recreational Trails Funding Program

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/grants/recreational_trails_program.shtml

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The RTP provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail uses. The Bureau of Parks and Lands has been designated the state agency to administer the program in Maine. Within the Bureau, the Grants and Community Recreation Program provides day-to-day supervision of RTP matters.

Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program

<http://mnrpc.org/>

MNRCP was created to manage the allocation of funds collected through [Maine's In Lieu Fee Compensation Program](#). This voluntary program provides flexibility for regulators as well as for businesses, agencies and others that are meeting regulatory permit requirements to choose a fee in lieu rather than more time-intensive traditional mitigation options. These so-called In Lieu Fees are collected by the Maine DEP and then transferred to the Natural Resource Conservation Fund administered by The Nature Conservancy.

Farmland Protection

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/farmland_protection/index.shtml

Maine's Farmland Protection Program supports farmers looking to protect currently active and potentially productive farmland as a means to sustaining economically viable agricultural communities.

Federal Programs

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program (US Fish and Wildlife Service)

<https://www.fws.gov/office/gulf-maine-coastal-program>

The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program works cooperatively with federal and state agencies, as well as national, regional and local land trusts, landowners, and other conservation partners, to successfully compete for federal funds. Their staff can provide technical expertise in aligning US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and other funding sources to support conservation work in Maine, with a focus on projects that benefit migratory

birds (especially waterbirds), diadromous fish and federally threatened or endangered species and at risk species. Some of the funding sources they can help with are:

- Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants: Section 6
- Fish Passage Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grants–Large Grants (see note below)
- North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Grants–Small Grants
- Private Stewardship Grant Program
- State Landowner Incentive Program
- Tribal Wildlife Grants and Tribal Landowner Incentive Program
- Maine Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund
- Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Community Grants
- Casco Bay Estuary Partnership Important Habitat Protection Fund
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants (e.g. America the Beautiful Challenge, National Coastal Resilience Fund, New England Forests and Rivers Fund)

NAWCA Large Grants - Maine Coast Heritage Trust's Land Protection Department coordinates the effort to consider submission of two large NAWCA grants per year (February and July) with the State as our focus area. Funds have been awarded to land trusts from inland western Maine to coastal Washington County. USFWS awards funds based on habitat provided by high value wetlands. Planning begins approximately four months before applications are due. For more information, contact Betsy Ham, Director of Land Protection at Maine Coast Heritage Trust, by email at bham@mcht.org.

To learn more about these programs and how USFWS can assist your organization, [contact Chris Meaney](#), Gulf of Maine Coastal Program Project Leader and Field Office Supervisor.

Forest Legacy Program

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/get_involved/advisory_councils/forest_legacy_committee.shtml

Administered by the US Forest Service, the Forest Legacy Program protects “working forests” that protect water quality, provide habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other public benefits. In Maine, the program is coordinated by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry’s Bureau of Parks and Lands with support from the Maine Forest Legacy Committee.

Community Forest Program

<https://www.fs.fed.us/managing-land/private-land/community-forest/program>

The Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (Community Forest Program) of the Forest Service offers an opportunity for communities to acquire and

conserve forests that provide public access and recreational opportunities, protect vital water supplies and wildlife habitat, serve as demonstration sites for private forest landowners, and provide economic benefits from timber and non-timber products. Full fee title acquisition is required. Conservation easements are not eligible. The program pays up to 50% of the project costs and requires a 50% non-federal match.

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