

Brainerd Foundation Grant Reports

Purpose of grant reports

We depend upon grantee reporting to evaluate progress toward our shared conservation goals. Additionally, grantee reports give the foundation invaluable context for conservation endeavors in our funding region so we can be better grantmakers.

The process of reporting and evaluating often hold negative connotations. At the Brainerd Foundation, we truly see such reporting as an opportunity to learn from our grantees about the successes and challenges we all face. We also view these reports as a potential tool for strategic reflection on what has transpired during the course of the grant term.

Reporting procedures

Report Timing and Submission. For all grants, a progress report is due nine months after the grant date. If this is a multi-year grant, a report is due nine months after the grant date for the first year, and then nine months after the grant date anniversary for all subsequent years of the grant term. Please submit your report via mail or e-mail (info@brainerd.org).

You may be writing this narrative before the end of the grant term or before all of your goals are realized. Again, we simply ask for your candor and an update on the status of your work at the present time. If significant programmatic or financial events transpire after you send your report, we would appreciate an update after the grant term expires.

Report Length. We ask that you *keep your answers brief*. We don't expect long reports and we don't expect you to answer every question. The ones you do answer can be addressed in a few sentences or with bullets. All grant reports should include two parts: a narrative report and a financial report. These are described in greater detail below. If you are reporting on a small Opportunity Fund or Discretionary grant, you may ignore the more detailed narrative reporting requirements described below.

Press Coverage. Many grantees choose to include related news clippings along with a report. We are most interested in the overall advancement of issues and campaigns rather than, for example, the number of times an organization is mentioned in the media. We especially appreciate the willingness of organizations to bring new or untraditional spokespeople to the fore to speak on behalf of conservation issues. We realize this often means suspension of staff or organizational credit.

Photographs. We encourage grantees to share favorite images of the landscapes and wildlife that they work on behalf of, as well as the people who live and work there. If you are interested in seeing your photographs featured on our Web site, please send high-resolution images as an attachment to an e-mail or saved to disk via regular mail. Please describe what each image depicts, how it is related to your work and the name of the photographer.

Financial reports

General Support. For grants applied to an organization's general budget, please submit a recent financial statement for the organization showing revenue and expenses for the fiscal year(s) during which the grant funds were spent.

Project Support. For grants supporting a specific project, the financial portion of the progress report should show revenue and expenses, in U.S. currency, for both the project and the organization in the fiscal year(s) during which the grant funds were spent. It should clearly show the amount granted by the Brainerd Foundation and how these funds were expended. For those

submitting before the end of the grant term, please show how the grant funds have been spent to date.

Narrative Report

In the narrative component, we ask that you reflect on both the dynamics of the funded issue and the effectiveness of your strategy. This reflection should steer you, and us, toward clearer choices for spending time and funds.

The Brainerd Foundation understands that grantees and funders alike improve their work when reflecting honestly upon it. To that end, we pose the following questions which fall into three main outcome areas: strengthening the base of support for conservation, strengthening organizational capacity and effectiveness, and improving conservation policies. Please be candid in your assessment of the current context and progress that has occurred as a result of your efforts.

Please answer only questions relevant to your work. Again, keep your answers brief; bulleted remarks are encouraged.

Overview

- In your application, you were asked how you would like the Brainerd Foundation to measure your success. Please review what you wrote and briefly tell us how you did.

Strengthening the Base of Support for Conservation

Working with decisionmakers

- What issue/s have you been addressing? What have your goals been?
- Who are the decisionmakers?
- What actions, if any, took place to increase support for your issue/s (e.g., parties came to the table, softened rhetoric, changed business practices)?
- What approaches have you found to be most effective in your work with decisionmakers?
- What adjustments are you planning to make in your program to be more effective with decisionmakers in the future?

Working with allied constituencies.

- What have you observed about support among allied constituencies for this issue? Please include documentation (e.g., policy statements, press reports).

Enhancing the credibility of conservation groups among community and policy leaders

The foundation is interested in learning about progress made toward enhancing the credibility of conservation groups among community and policy leaders. Credibility is a broad construct with multiple dimensions, such as competence, trustworthiness, and integrity. The Brainerd Foundation recognizes that the context of community and policy leadership varies from place to place and from time period to time period. There are no right or wrong answers here. Our interest is in better understanding the context in which you do your work.

- Describe any progress made during the grant term that demonstrates how your organization interfaces with community and policy leaders (e.g., leaders' willingness to meet with representatives of your organization, the level of alignment between your agenda and that of key leaders, their interest in pursuing a position of leadership on your issues, and actions leaders have taken to address your issue/s).
- Do you believe your work enhanced your credibility during the grant period?

Strengthening Organizational Capacity and Effectiveness

Issue selection

Please describe the process and people involved in selecting and framing the issue/s for which you advocate.

Identification and engagement of influentials

Who are the influential individuals (those who influence decisionmakers) targeted in your work (for example, ranchers, religious leaders, voters)? Please describe your progress toward winning their support for your issue/s.

Spokespeople for your issue

Who are the most effective spokespeople for your issue/s in your community (e.g., your staff, doctors and nurses, newspaper editors, local fire chief, businesspeople, municipal leaders, sportsmen, farmers and ranchers)?

New tools

Did your organization adopt any new tools, strategies or approaches? (e.g., research, technology, best practices, etc.). If so, did you learn something (positive or negative) that we can share with others?

Financial Status

Has your income increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the time you applied for this grant?

Improving Conservation Policy

Charting the progress of conservation policy (Again, answer only relevant questions.)

- Please describe any progress made in the policy process during the grant term that supports a conservation agenda. Consider any or all of the areas listed below:
 - a. Effective public engagement
 - b. Legislation
 - c. Administrative arena (e.g., adoption, implementation, or enforcement)
 - d. Legal wins
- During the grant term was there a need for your organization to oppose potentially harmful public policies or to defend against rollbacks on good conservation policies? If so, tell us how your organization dealt with these challenges.

Feedback for the Foundation

- How did your organization create time and space for this reporting activity? Was it difficult to set time aside? Do you have suggestions for how we could improve this process?
- How do you believe the Foundation could be a more effective funder? How could we have better assisted your efforts?