



# Obtaining Funding For Plan Implementation

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## What is it?

**“Where can we get the money to solve our problem?”**

Most resource planning groups start and end with this question.



Resource planning is “program neutral”--meaning the plan identifies ways to manage resources regardless of the sources of funding. However, program neutral planning does not imply that the Planning Committee ignores financial issues. In fact, funding is an integral part of the planning and implementation process. Most alternatives have some cost associated with their implementation. Even producing and distributing the plan document costs money.

## When do we do it?

Once the plan begins to take shape, the Planning Committee, with assistance from technical advisors, starts looking for ways to fund their ideas.

## How do we do it?

Getting the funds to carry out stakeholder ideas involves commitment, energy, and time. But the most important elements of successful funding are already in place: A viable, organized stakeholder coalition, systematic consideration of goals, needs, and alternatives...all documented in a resource management plan. In Illinois, local, state, and federal government programs are available for landowners and communities to protect, enhance and restore natural resources. Non-profit organizations and private industry also provide assistance.

The Planning Committee actively searches for the opportunities to apply for funding. They may need to enlist help from the local SWCD, city, village, or county government. Consider creating a “Grant Writing” team with partners who have experience with grants.

The Illinois Natural Resources Coordinating Council has developed a booklet titled *“Landowners Guide to Natural Resource Management Incentives,”* which describes 19 Cost-Share incentive programs and 10 programs that provide technical assistance. This booklet describes 13 Property Tax Incentive opportunities landowners can use. Contact Illinois Department of Natural Resources for this publication.

### Ways To Get Funding

- Check the INTERNET for opportunities. A good place to start is the Foundation Center at <http://fdncenter.org/>.
- Visit the library for information.
- Contact local agency representatives.
- Contact private conservation groups.

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Two other useful publications are available from USDA's Agricultural Research Service and the National Agricultural Library. Contact the NRCS State Office in Champaign for more information on these publications:

- *"A Guide to Funding Resources,"* Rural Information Center Publication Series, No. 56 (September 1997).
- *"Federal Funding Sources for Rural Areas: Fiscal Year 1999,"* Rural Information Center Publication Series, No. 66 (August 1998).

### Activities That Require Little Money

- Hold tours and educational field days.
- Write news articles.
- Give talks to local civic organizations.
- Attend local meetings to publicize projects.

Following is a summary of financial assistance opportunities for natural resource management, including:

- A list of cost share/incentive programs technical assistance programs and property tax incentives,
- a summary of grant information for urban and rural community conservation projects,
- a list of EPA financial assistance programs.

For assistance with these or other opportunities, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at the USDA Service Center for your County.

## The Next Step

The Planning Committee develops an implementation schedule to include in the resource plan. The implementation schedule lists potential funding sources and assigns responsibility to individuals who will write applications for funding. The Planning Committee--or new "Implementation Committee"-- continues to meet regularly to ensure the plan is implemented.

As funding sources are sought, some projects will begin being implemented. The resource plan continues to be distributed and promoted throughout the planning area. Evaluation of projects and the plan as a whole also begins. Refer to "Evaluating the Resource Plan" for ideas on Step 9 of Phase Three.