

Tool: Tracking In-kind Contributions and Volunteer Time

Recognize the Value of Non-cash Contributions

An in-kind contribution is a non-cash input which can be given a cash value. Examples include volunteer time, people's travel expenses to meetings, donated items or materials, and use of meeting space.

Why track in-kind donations?

- Funders often want to know whether your group or project is supported by the community. In-kind tracking demonstrates this, and also provides documentation of a match to the funder's monetary support.
- If you don't track who's giving you time and goods, you might forget to acknowledge their contribution. You wouldn't do that with someone who wrote you a check!
- It is important to know the value of in-kind contributions so you can include them in your budget planning. If the use of a meeting facility, for example, was no longer available, you might have to pay for it.
- In-kind donations are part of building relationships and building organizational sustainability.

In-Kind Tracking Resources

Attached you'll find several samples of tracking systems used by collaborative groups to collect information from people providing in-kind services, as well as to compile that information once it's received.

As one example, the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council (MFWWC) provides their tracking form to board members, partners and project managers. Once the individual reporting forms are completed, the organization's fiscal administrator compiles them on a monthly basis. The fiscal administrator has created an in-kind tracking system within QuickBooks that allows the group to document in-kind match by project or grant, and also makes it easy to report in-kind contributions on their Form 990 to the Internal Revenue Service. Says Executive Director Eve Montanaro, "This information is essential when writing a grant proposal or progress report to a grantor."

However you collect the information, make sure you have an internal system for compiling the information. One of the examples provided is an excel spreadsheet from the Montana Forest Restoration Committee which has built-in formulas so that you can run a total at the bottom of the list. Then you can plug that dollar value directly into your financial reports. The spreadsheet is separated by tabs for each month, but you could separate with tabs for each project, etc.

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Links

Tracking Volunteer Time to Boost Your Bottom Line: A Complete Accounting Guide: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/tracking-volunteer-time-boost-your-bottom-line-complete-accounting->
Independent Sector Guide to the Value of Volunteer Time:
www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html#state