



**Request for Proposals:
Guidelines and Application**
Building Organizational Capacity to
Foster Empathy for Wildlife

At-a-Glance

Purpose

To increase the capacity of zoos and aquariums to develop and deliver effective empathy-based programming.

Eligibility

AZA-accredited organizations in the following states:
Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota,
Washington and Wisconsin

Details

Project Length: Up to 1 Year

Budget Range: Up to \$60,000

Submission Deadline

August 1, 2023

Notification

October 2023

Q&A Webinar

Friday, May 12, 2023

9 am AKT | 10 am PT | 11 am MT | 12 pm CT

[Link to register](#)

Contact

empathy@zoo.org

Link to Apply

wpz.smapply.org

Online portal will begin accepting applications in mid-May.

Overview

Woodland Park Zoo is pleased to announce this fourth round of funding to support AZA-accredited organizations in their efforts to plan, build and/or expand programs aimed at advancing empathy for animals and wildlife. The objective of this grant opportunity is to increase the impacts of effective empathy-based programming by strengthening the capacity of zoos and aquariums to create and sustain programming into the foreseeable future.

Throughout the first three rounds of grants from 2021-23, we were thrilled to fund every ACE for Wildlife Network Partner. Therefore, we welcome proposals from all Network Partners, even if your organization received multiple grants in prior rounds.

This document contains details about this opportunity including eligibility and guidelines, the selection process and grantee expectations. **As with Round Three, this Request for Proposals (RFP) only offers one tier of available funding:**

TIER 2

Grants in Tier 2 are intended to fund short-term (≤ 1 year) projects with a budget of up to **\$60,000** that address more immediate capacity needs and/or pilot new and innovative empathy-based projects. Tier 2 may also be used for short-term proposals that contribute to current knowledge and best practices for fostering empathy for wildlife. Any one-time purchases of critical equipment must be tied to outreach capacity outcomes. Woodland Park Zoo anticipates funding 16-19 projects in this category, dependent on the number and size of the proposals received.

Informational Webinar

Woodland Park Zoo will be hosting a recorded webinar on May 12 (9 am AKT | 10 am PT | 11 am MT | 12 pm CT) to discuss this RFP in more detail and answer questions. [Registration is required](#). This will be recorded and available afterwards along with the updated [FAQ document](#).

Woodland Park Zoo's Commitment and Approach

Empathy is a powerful emotion that drives connection with those around us. It is a capacity that most humans are born with, is developed over time and is reinforced through our interactions with the world. Empathy is also an important driver for positive social change as it motivates us to choose caring action towards animals and nature. Research shows that empathy is an important social emotional skill that serves as a strong indicator for pro-conservation behaviors.

Zoos and aquariums are diverse organizations, each with unique audiences, sites, missions and capacity challenges. We learned in 2020 that empathy-based programming is often negatively (and immediately) impacted by economic crises, even when organizations recognize it as mission-critical. This grant opportunity is intended to support AZA-accredited zoos and aquariums within Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin to build capacity within their organizations so that empathy-based programming is more readily sustainable year to year. We believe that the capacity of any individual organization is made stronger by the success and support of other organizations in our field; thus, Woodland Park Zoo encourages grantees to share tools and lessons learned along the way. For this reason, qualifying organizations are also encouraged to submit grant proposals with collaborators for broader impact within the sector and/or community.

We know that community-level change is most effective when organizations work together to deliver consistent messaging, modeling and mentoring across community sectors.

Woodland Park Zoo recognizes that effective empathy practices do not look the same for every situation or organization, and projects should be tailored to each specific context and audience. We recognize that the organizations eligible for this opportunity may be implementing empathy-based programs across a spectrum of

readiness phases, from early planning to implementation or expansion. This grant opportunity encourages all to apply, regardless of development stage. Applicants know the needs of their organization and audience(s) best.

With all proposals, we hope to get a clear sense of two main questions:

- How does this project leave the organization stronger at the end of the grant?
- How does this project make contributions to the broader sector?

We recognize that, in taking on innovative work, a project may fail, and that significant learning can come from that failure. We are interested in all proposals that applicants advocate will effectively strengthen their organization's capacity or knowledge to foster empathy for wildlife.

Guidelines and Process

Goals

To increase the capacity of zoos and aquariums to develop and deliver effective empathy-based programming.

Eligibility

Applicants must maintain accreditation by the Association for Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) and operate in one of the following seven states: Alaska, Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Washington or Wisconsin.

Application Limits

Grantees who are implementing a Tier 1 and/or Tier 2 project from Rounds 1, 2 and/or 3 are still eligible to apply for a grant during this round. An eligible organization may apply for more than one grant during this round.

When applying for more than one grant, applicants will need to clearly document and demonstrate the ability to complete the activities and objectives for both grants, if funded. **The funds for two grants cannot fund the same scope of work, and accounting and tracking processes must be kept clearly distinct from each other.**

Collaboration

Collaboration between eligible organizations and/or their communities is encouraged. Projects that are a collaboration between two or more eligible organizations may decide if they would like to submit a single proposal (interdependent activities with one budget) or individual proposals for each organization (parallel activities with separate budgets), though this does not guarantee both projects will be funded. All applicant contacts listed on a proposal must be from an eligible organization(s).

Eligible organizations may also collaborate with non-eligible partners, such as school districts, museums, community organizations and/or AZA-accredited organizations outside of the seven-state region. Collaborators who are not eligible to apply directly may be included as subgrantees or contractors in the proposal. For questions about your specific project, please reach out to empathy@zoo.org or [attend an office hours session](#) with the Grants Specialist or Evaluation Specialist.

Why AZA-accredited organizations?

This funding opportunity relies on the high standards for demonstrated animal welfare affirmed by AZA accreditation. Positive animal welfare is a precursor to increasing empathy for animals among our audiences.

Note: Activities relating solely to animal care practices that are not directly connected to empathy-building objectives within an external audience are outside the scope of this funding opportunity.

2023 Timeline



Submission

All proposal materials must be submitted electronically via wpz.smapply.org by **11:59 pm PT on August 1, 2023**. The electronic application portal will begin accepting applications in mid-May. The webinar recording (once available) and FAQ document can be found in the folder [linked here](#).

Review & Selection Process

After submission, proposals will be screened by Woodland Park Zoo's capacity building grants team for adherence to guidelines. If the team has questions about a proposal, they will reach out to the primary and secondary applicant contacts via email within one week of submission.

Once the internal screening is complete, proposals will be assessed and scored by a multidisciplinary panel of reviewers external to Woodland Park Zoo's grants team. Reviewers will score each grant according to the rubric provided below. Funding decisions will be made competitively, based upon the degree to which the proposal meets the program goals and review criteria.

Additional consideration may be given to other factors that weigh into the overall diversity of the granting portfolio of projects selected, such as geography, intended audiences or project type.

Reviewer Feedback: If requested, a summary of the reviewers' feedback will be provided within two months of the decision notification date. We will not provide applicants with rubric scores or rankings.

Application Materials

Woodland Park Zoo uses SurveyMonkey Apply. All applicants will need to create an account to submit their application by visiting wpz.smapply.org. Applicants may invite other collaborators to work on the online application, but each collaborator will need to create their own account. If you encounter errors using the SurveyMonkey Apply platform, please check this [SMA FAQ](#) or reach out to their [customer service](#). If you have questions about the application content, please email empathy@zoo.org.

Application materials submitted via email will not be reviewed.

The online application form will ask you to submit the following information:

Organization Information

1. Organization Legal Name, Organization EIN
(*And Fiscal Agent Legal Name, Organization EIN, if applicable*)
2. Organization Director/CEO/President: Name, Title, Phone, Email Address
(*And Fiscal Agent's Director/CEO/President: Name, Title, Phone, Email Address, if applicable*)
3. Primary Applicant Contact: Name, Title, Phone, Contact Email Address
4. Secondary Applicant Contact: Name, Title, Phone, Contact Email Address

Proposal Information

1. Program / Project Name (100-character limit):
2. Project Dates:
3. Requested Amount: \$_____
4. Project Stage(s): Design, Build, Implement, Reflect (select all that apply) ([Definitions](#))
 - For projects in Implement or Reflect phases, what year did the project launch?
5. Brief Summary of Project Goal (3-5 sentences). Please be specific about what you will accomplish and the impact you expect to have from this project. *Example:* This project will train staff to implement new voluntary husbandry training and protocols within our animal welfare department and work closely with our education department to develop programs for Zoo guests that highlight this work. Additionally, this project will realign existing educational programming, with a focus on voluntary presentations for our animals and empathy frameworks, to intentionally prioritize empathy-related outcomes.
6. Please **attach** each of the items below as separate documents in the SurveyMonkey Apply application. **Each attachment should include your organization's name and the applicable year.**
 - Current fiscal year organization operating budget (*or Fiscal Agent, if applicable*) (.pdf or .xlsx)
 - Audited financial statements for organization (*or Fiscal Agent, if applicable*) (.pdf)
 - If audited financial statements not available, Statement of Income and Expenses
 - If current reports available online, please provide URL:_____
 - **Required for grants including collaboration:** One letter of support per identified partner (.pdf)

Narrative Questions

Overview

Tier 2 grants may include projects with a **request amount of up to \$60,000**, and a **project timeline of up to one year**. Response length is limited to 2,000 characters for each section unless otherwise specified.

Proposal Questions

Introduction & Justification: Provide context for the proposed project. What gap or need does this proposal address? If this proposal builds on existing work, please briefly summarize progress to date.

Relevant Experience & Past Funded Projects: What is your organization's experience working with empathy? Have you been funded by a Capacity Building Grant before, or are you applying for more than one grant during this round of proposals? If yes (to either or both), write a 3-5 sentence description of each relevant project.

Proposed Objectives ([Definitions](#)): Describe up to three objectives your project will address.

Proposed Outcomes ([Definitions](#)) **and Target Audience(s)**: Describe up to three key outcome(s) or change(s) that your project will achieve and with what target audiences. What changes do you expect to see in your target audience(s) as a result of your proposed project?

Proposed Activities: Briefly summarize proposed activities and their alignment to the project objectives and outcomes. What specifically will you do to accomplish the objectives and outcomes you identified and why do you think this approach will be effective?

Project Plan (upload a 1-2 page .pdf attachment): Provide a high-level timeline that outlines an achievable plan to carry out key activities throughout the grant term, including evaluation, learning and sharing activities. You may provide this timeline in any format; however, it must be clear how your activities align to accomplish your objectives. Activities may start on or after **January 1, 2024**, and all activities must be complete by **December 31, 2024**.

Key Personnel: Provide an overview of the key personnel on the project, both grant-funded and supported by the organization. Include names and titles, a short description of their role, relevant experience managing or contributing to similar projects.

Perceived Challenges and Possible Risks: Describe any anticipated challenges or inherent risks that might inform, delay or alter your project during this timeline. Briefly highlight any activities or decisions that are dependent on conditions outside your control and how you are accounting for these in your plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Woodland Park Zoo understands there are multiple ways of knowing if your project is achieving its intended results, and that evaluation efforts should be proportional or right-sized to the scope of the proposed work. Please summarize how you will monitor your project's progress and measure your project's success over the course of the grant. Please include what you want to learn from this work, the type of information you will track over your project's timeline that measures whether you are making progress, and how you plan to reflect on these findings.

Project Deliverables: What tangible work products will your project produce (e.g., written reports, workshop, curriculum, exhibit, evaluation tool)?

Organizational Impact & Sustainability: Please summarize how this will project strengthen your organization's ability to foster empathy for wildlife beyond the grant period. What activities do you expect to be maintained beyond the grant period and/or how do you expect lessons from this project to inform future work?

Learning/Sharing Plan: Describe how this project will contribute knowledge, tools and/or skills to the ACE for Wildlife Network and/or the wider field. What audiences do you believe will be most interested in your results?

Any additional information you wish to share?

Budget Criteria – Tier 2 Applicants

Budget Narrative:

New for Round 4: You will have the option to submit your own project budget template or use the below template provided in the online application.

If you decide to submit your own budget format, please make sure that the same level of information is communicated in your template as is included in the budget template below. Group your line items by Major Expense Category (ex: if you have separate line items for each funded staff member, include a summative "Personnel" line). You will still be inputting your budget narrative in the overarching categories listed below, but you can format the document and break down your costs as you see fit.

For each Major Expense Category, please break down the items and costs included to reach the totals included in your budget spreadsheet. The budget narrative and proposal narrative should work together to explain how costs are essential and support project objectives. For each major expense category, please clearly indicate which costs are included in the request amount and which are in the cost share (if you are including cost share). ([Definitions](#))

Cost Share (optional but encouraged): Including cost share in your budget can provide a more complete picture of the time and budget needed to complete your project, if there are elements not covered by this funding request. We will ask you to report narratively on how the actual time or spending is aligned or different from plans, but we will not ask for this to be reported in budget spreadsheets. If you include cost share, please describe the sources of funding (i.e., separate grant funding, unrestricted operating funds).

Personnel: List the contributors and/or positions from your organization who will be leading the project and funded by this grant, including their job titles and percentage of their time dedicated to the project. Applicants requesting fully grant-funded positions will need to affirm that these positions' primary responsibilities will be dedicated to this grant-funded work.

Outside Services, Contractors: If there are other project partners outside your organization, please list them. For contractors, please summarize the goal of their work and how it will build your internal organizational capacity.

Travel, Conferences, Meetings, Professional Development: List expected activities and their associated costs. We encourage applicants to use grant funds in this category for cross-organizational sharing and travel, professional development, and/or sharing out to audiences beyond the ACE for Wildlife Network.

Materials, Supplies: Please specifically note any key purchases that will have lifetime beyond the grant (like software or hardware), as well as consumables that are used during the lifetime of the grant.

Other or Capital: Please describe costs that do not fit into categories above or are Capital purchases ([Definition](#)).

Indirect Costs: We encourage you to include Indirect Costs in your budget, since we know that administrative support is often crucial to running and completing successful projects.

Sample Budget Spreadsheet:

	Amount Requested	Cost Share (optional)	Total Project Budget
Major Expense Categories (Definitions)	Total	Total	Total
Personnel (Salaries + Fringe)*			
Outside Services, Contractors			
Travel, Conferences, Meetings, Prof. Dev.			
Materials / Supplies			
Other / Capital			

Total Direct Costs			
Indirect Costs (up to 15% of Direct Costs)			
Total Direct + Indirect Costs			

**Please be prepared to enter individual salaries and benefit rates for the grant-funded personnel included in your budget narrative.*

Rubric & Expectations - Tier 2 Applicants

The rubric below provides an outline of the review criteria used to review proposals:

Category	Criteria	Weight
Objectives, Outcomes and Activities	Project design, objectives and activities convey strong intention and probability to build empathy for wildlife with/through the described audience(s).	20%
	Succinctly describes project outcomes that are clear, logical and address gap/need described in proposal.	10%
Organizational Impact	Contributes to organizational capacity to incorporate empathy practices, with impact maintained beyond grant period.	30%
Evaluation and Learning	Describes clear approach to monitor and measure towards project's progress and results.	10%
	Describes approach(es) to meaningfully reflect on project learning, and contribute knowledge, resources and/or skills to relevant audiences, the ACE for Wildlife Network and/or wider field.	10%
Budget or Timeline	Presents a reasonable budget that aligns to and supports the proposed activities.	10%
	Presents a realistic and reasonable timeline that supports proposed objectives.	10%

Grantee Expectations

If selected for this round of funding, grantees will be expected to:

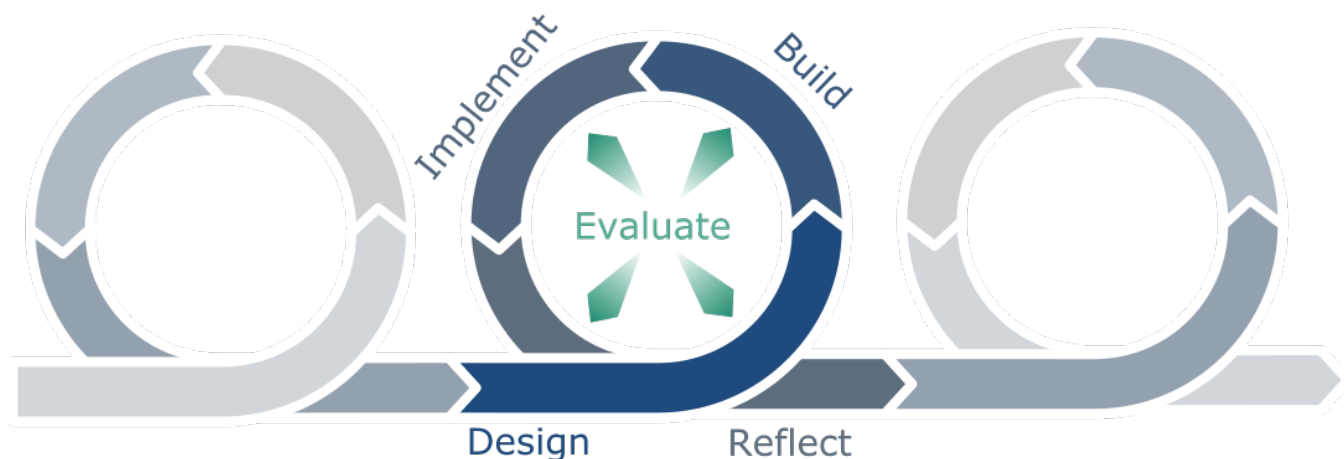
- Proactively communicate any changes that impact your ability to complete objectives or cause budget changes greater than 10% total project budget moving between Major Expense Categories.
- Provide mid-project updates to Woodland Park Zoo.
- Submit final narrative and financial reports. *For cost-share funds, we will ask you to report narratively on how the actual time or spending is aligned or different from plans, but we will not ask for cost share spreadsheet reports.*
- Provide a brief presentation about the project in a webinar to the ACE for Wildlife Network for peer learning.

Definitions

Narrative:

Project Stages

Eligible organizations and projects, regardless of their level of readiness, are valued equally. Recognizing that this cycle is iterative and provides opportunities for peer learning and translation at all stages, for the purpose of this opportunity, we define the program stages as follows:



Design: Early concept and planning stage. This includes stakeholder buy-in, securing resources, information-gathering, defining measurable objectives, and determining intended audience(s). This phase may be informed by reflections on a prior iteration of the program.	Build: Moving from the design stage to assembling the project components. This may include creating tools, coordinating resources, and/or finalizing the operational plans necessary to move into the implement stage.	Implement: Program kicks off and is actively underway.	Reflect: Bringing in both internal and external data (e.g., surveys, focus groups, other useful evaluation tools) to identify strengths, gaps or challenges, opportunities and areas of growth for future iterations of the project.
Evaluate: Assessment of your activities' results towards your learning or outcome goals. Evaluation can occur across all program stages and, depending on the phase you are in, you may ask different types of questions. In the design/build phases you may ask, <i>"What does my audience already know or how do they perceive a topic, what are my audience's needs, assets or interests?"</i> In implement phase you may ask, <i>"Are audiences experiencing our activities as planned, why or why not?"</i> And, in reflection phase you could ask, <i>"Did our project produce or contribute to our intended outcomes or what aspects of our project made the biggest difference in whether the project was successful?"</i>			

Capacity Building

For the purposes of this funding opportunity, "capacity building" refers to activities that enhance the skills, resources, and abilities necessary to increase an organization's readiness to operationalize programming that effectively fosters empathy for wildlife among target audiences. We are interested in learning how an organization develops, utilizes and **strengthens** existing internal resources (e.g., personnel, expertise, partnerships, supplies, facilities, etc.) to achieve its empathy-based goals most effectively.

Strong proposals will clearly communicate how the proposed activities foster empathy in their specified audience, but, equally importantly, will communicate how the project enhances internal resources, skills and capabilities during and after the grant period closes.

Examples might include increasing staff knowledge and skills, defining or refining processes, creating new initiatives or transforming existing initiatives, partnership-building, etc.

Objectives

Objectives are defined as the specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound goals expected to be achieved during the grant term and which can be monitored internally by the applicant. Objectives should give someone new to the project a clear understanding of the main elements and aims of the project.

Example: "I will bake a two-layer chocolate cake for my birthday party next Tuesday."

Example: "During 2022-2023, we will design and deliver a program to fifty 4th grade students at Birch Grove Elementary that focuses on five job types at the zoo (keepers, educators, finance, facilities and security) and the role of internships in building academic and professional pathways to those jobs."

Outcomes

Outcome statements outline the change or difference you expect to see in your target audience(s) as a result of your project. Intended audience(s) can be internal (e.g., volunteers, staff) or external (e.g., program participants, partners). Outcome statements can articulate how your audience will behave differently after your intervention and often describe changes in knowledge, skill, attitudes, interests, behavior, environment or systems. The scope and time scale of outcomes can vary depending on the project. For your proposal, consider what outcomes you hope to achieve by the end of the grant period.

Example: "As a result of eating my chocolate cake, the guests at my birthday party will express that they believe I am an excellent baker."

Example: "As a result of participating in the elementary school class program, 4th grade students will demonstrate increased knowledge of zoo careers."

Budget:

Direct Costs

All itemized costs which can be identified specifically and accounted for with a high degree of accuracy to support the specified project. This includes all costs in Personnel, Travel, Conferences/Meetings, Professional Development, Materials, Supplies, Outside Services and Contractors.

Personnel (Salaries + Fringe)

All wages paid by the grantee organization for employees that are key to accomplishing the objectives by working on the project activities during the grant period for the percent of effort estimated in the budget. Collaborators at other institutions should be included in Outside Resources. The budget should reflect the actual percentage of effort that is anticipated.

Fringe benefits can be included in the calculations, calculated based on total cost of employee benefits as a percent of annual salary. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick or military), FICA, health insurance, matching contributions, pensions, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance.

Travel, Conferences, Meetings, Professional Development

Travel: All costs used for transportation, lodging, meals, ground travel and related items incurred by project personnel and outside consultants employed on the project for project-related travel. Calculations should follow the grantee organization's travel policies. Travel allowances and per diem (or meals provided in lieu of per diem) are allowed but should not exceed federal per diem rates. We encourage consideration of the project's carbon footprint when developing necessary travel plans and consider carbon offsets for travel to be an allowable expense.

Conferences/Meetings: All costs used for planning or participating in conferences or meetings. Examples include: rental of facilities and necessary equipment, translation or recording services and conference registration fees.

Professional Development: Costs paid to support educational or training expenses for project personnel and outside consultants that are essential to the project.

Materials / Supplies

Costs paid for tangible items and consumables, including equipment costing less than \$5,000 per unit, as well as consumable items that can be documented and are essential to the project. Examples include: items necessary to facilitate meeting or conference, hardware or software fees. We encourage applicants to consider sustainability and environmental impact when considering vendors for materials and supplies.

Outside Services, Contractors

Costs paid for professional services of persons contributing to the project who are not employees of the organization. The selection, documentation and payment of contractors should be done in accordance with written policies of the grantee organization; however, it is recommended to seek more than one quote for a scope of work and include consideration of women & minority owned businesses in this process. Examples included: consultant services, speaker fees, honorarium and stipends.

Capital Equipment

Any individual piece of equipment (physical item) with a useful life of more than two years and a total cost of \$5,000 or more that is necessary to support the project. Equipment costing less than \$5,000 is considered a supply item. Calculation of indirect costs as a percentage of total direct costs must **exclude** capital equipment costs. Capital Equipment must be acquired in accordance with grantee organization's procurement process and policy.

Unallowable Costs

Costs of entertainment, amusement, diversion and social activities, and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sporting events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation and gratuities) cannot be included. Additionally, funds cannot be spent on discretionary items, including first-class or business-class travel and alcoholic beverages.

Indirect Costs

May not exceed 15% of Direct Costs (excluding Capital Equipment). Administrative or other expenses not directly allocable to a particular activity or project, but rather related to general organizational operations shared among projects and/or functions. Basic examples include executive oversight, existing facilities costs, accounting, grants management, legal expenses, utilities and technology support. Costs that are administrative in nature, but are specifically allocable to a project, may be considered to be an eligible direct project cost in some circumstances.

Cost Share

A portion of the direct costs of a project that are not paid by Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) but paid instead using other resources within the grantee organization or from other funders. Cost share is a **voluntary** commitment from applicants for this grant program. Grantees may choose to share how they plan to use resources other than the requested amount itself in support of the project outcomes. We will ask you to report narratively on how cost-share spending is aligned or different from plans, but we will not ask for this to be reported on in budget spreadsheets.

Funds from another WPZ grant cannot be counted as cost share for simultaneous or subsequent applications to either tier of this grant program. Please note where proposed activities build on work previously funded by WPZ and ensure that accounting and tracking processes are used to keep project spending distinct.

Requested Amount

Amount requested from the Building Organizational Capacity to Foster Empathy for Wildlife granting program (excludes cost share).

Total Project Budget

Sum of requested amount and cost share amount.