



Key characteristics of

# Healthy Organizations

Episode 4: Budgets & Workplans

# ABOUT RIVER NETWORK

River Network grows and strengthens a transformational national network of water, justice, and river advocates.

*We envision a powerful and inclusive movement that ensures abundant clean water for all people and nature to thrive. We believe that joy and hope for our planet flows through our rivers.*

Meet the network and search our Water Protectors Map on our website!  
**[rivernetwork.org](https://rivernetwork.org)** ←



# IN PARTNERSHIP

This work is produced by River Network with collaborative support from the Hudson River Watershed Alliance.

The production of these resources has been funded in part by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



Hudson River  
Watershed Alliance



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation

Hudson River  
Estuary Program

## ☐ FINANCE / BUDGET

Whether your group/organization is grant-funded, relying on individual donations, or accepting business sponsorships, it's important to understand your revenue and expenses. This will allow you to anticipate an accurate budget and understand what resources you need in the future. Even organizations hosting one or two events per year can benefit from a basic budget!

- *How are you tracking income and expenses (and who is responsible for this?)*
- *How are others involved in the organization made aware of spending / income?*
- *Where can you access your organizational budget?*
- *Does your budget reflect the goals laid out in your workplan/roadmap?*

## ☐ WORKPLAN (ROADMAP)

A workplan (or roadmap) helps guide the work of the group/organization within a certain timeframe. Some organizations find it helpful to create a 12-month workplan, while others find it more accessible to plan for 3 or 6 months at a time. You can think of a workplan as a “to-do list” for the organization. No matter the timeframe, defining actions in a workplan will help those involved in the organization feel organized, and will advance progress toward the mission.

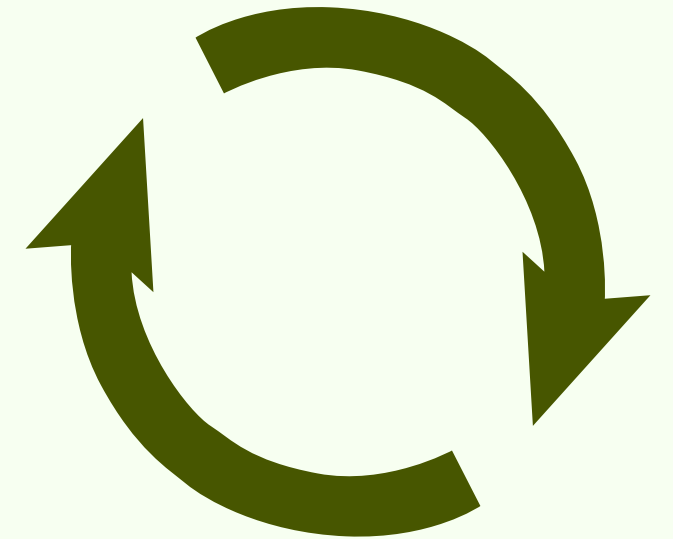
- *Where can you access the organization's workplan?*
- *Is the workplan up-to-date?*
- *Are others in the organization referring to the workplan regularly?*
- *Does the workplan help you identify the best ways to utilize funds?*



# INTRODUCTION

A good budget lays out what is needed to complete a workplan.

A good workplan references the budget for alignment of resources.



**BUDGET**

**WORKPLAN**

**GOOD  
DECISION  
MAKING**

# BUDGET 101

## WHAT IS A BUDGET?

Income + Expenses  
Over a specific period of time

## WHAT DOES IT TELL US?

1. What we spend money on
2. How much money we spend
3. How much money we receive
4. Where our money comes from
5. How much money we might have leftover after expenses are covered



# A GOOD BUDGET...

## Can answer the questions...

- Where can we save money?
- Where are we spending too much?
- Where does most of our money come from?
- Are there revenue opportunities we need to focus on more?
- Are we making enough money to do our work?
- If our expenses change, do we have the resources to respond?



# BUDGETING BETTER



## WHO MAKES THE BUDGET?

**Leader(s)**

*[executive team]*

**Treasurer**

*[finance committee]*

**Program Leads**

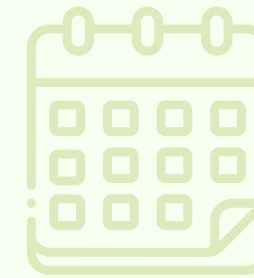


## WHO RECEIVES THE BUDGET?

**Board of Directors**

**&&**

**Leadership Team**



## HOW OFTEN TO BUDGET

**Annual Budget**

**&&**

**Monthly Budget**

# BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

**Current  
Income**

**Current  
Expense**

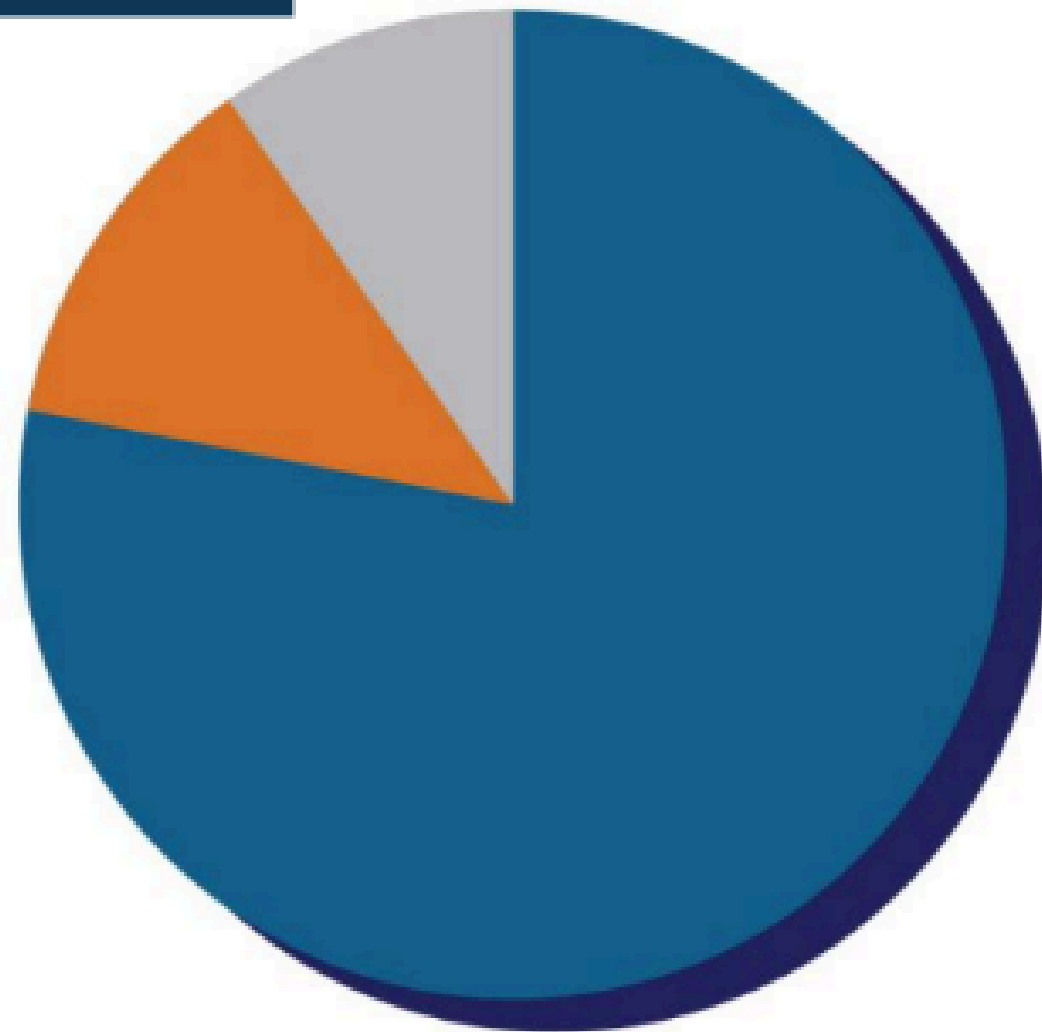
**Revenue  
Composition**

**Projections**

*Level of detail should be tailored to audience: categorize income and expenses instead of sharing specifics, unless relevant*

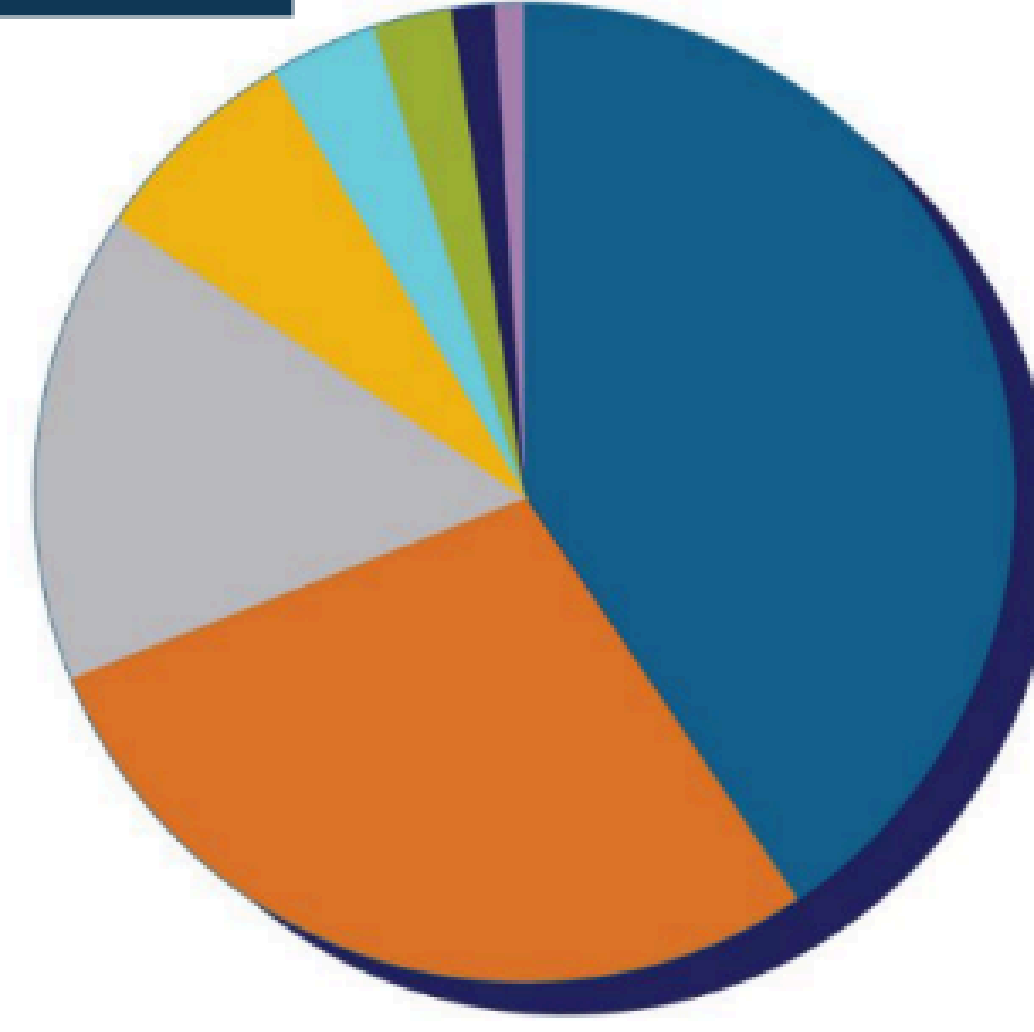
# EXAMPLE:

EXPENSE



- Program Services – 78%
- Fundraising – 10%
- Management & General – 12%

INCOME



- Foundation – 41%
- Government – 28%
- Individual – 16%
- Corporate – 7%
- River Rally Registration – 4%
- Interest & Other – 2%
- Program Contracts/Fees – 1%
- Membership – 1%

# BUDGETING TOOLS

## BASIC

Excel Spreadsheet

Google Sheet

Financial Institution

Reports

## LESS BASIC

Quickbooks

Xero

Martus



# BUDGETING WORKSHEET

## REVENUE

Grants  
Sponsorships  
Donations  
Earned Revenue  
Membership  
Fundraising Income

## EXPENSE

Supplies  
Transportation  
Office  
Utilities  
Staff/Contractors  
Professional Services

## DIFFERENCE

= \$0 “balanced budget”

> \$0 reserve

< \$0 deficit

# BUDGET FAQS

**Q: What if we don't have a bank account?**

A: This isn't a problem until you start receiving significant revenue. Grants or large donations will necessitate a separate account. Moving money through a personal account can get complicated. Consider a fiscal sponsor.

**Q: What if we're making money?**

A: Congratulations! You're building reserves. Ask your leadership if they'd like to use those funds or hang onto them for future needs.

**Q: Do I have to keep receipts?**

A: It's a good idea - audits can happen, and healthy organizations will initiate their own audits to make sure they're on the right track. Scan & file!

# WORKPLANS 101

Roadmaps, workplans, strategic plans - OH MY!

**A workplan helps us...**

- Pace our work
- Plan ahead
- Stay on track
- Honor our intentions
- Marry ideas, resources, and capacity

## WORKPLAN SCALES

monthly

quarterly

biannually

annually

# WHERE TO START?

1. Convene a workplanning team
2. Take stock of the work you're already doing or committed to
3. Include realistic growth areas
4. Categorize:
  - Programs
  - Projects/Campaigns
  - Outreach
  - Operations
  - Board Development
  - ???



# WORKPLANNING TEMPLATE

Organization Name:			
YEAR: 20xx			
	January	February	March
PROGRAMS			
Env Education Program	<i>Detail for meeting goal: include who is responsible</i>		
Water Quality Program	Example: Add last season's data to database, publish report (Program Committee Chair)	Example: Press release to local news on last season's data & report (Communications Committee)	
[program]			
[program]			
PROJECTS			
Community Clean Up	Example: Host training for clean up teams (Program Committee Chair)	Example: Schedule season clean ups with individual teams (Program Committee Chair)	
Tree Planting			
[project]			
OUTREACH & EVENTS			
Volunteer Recruitment		Example: Recruit registrants for clean up events (Outreach Committee)	
Parks Day			

# WORKPLAN + BUDGET

## If your budget...

Is balanced:

Is in deficit:

Is generating reserve:

Single revenue stream:

Fluctuates often:

## Then respond in your workplan...

Maintain work as is

Add fundraising actions OR decrease program expense

Consider investing in new materials/people/programs

Develop fundraising actions & capacity in workplan

Align actions with net-positive months

# USING YOUR WORKPLAN

## Keep your workplan front & center:

- Include as a standing item on your Board and/or Leadership agendas
- Use for check-ins with staff or volunteers
- Incorporate into committee plans and agendas
- Use it to create an annual evaluation (teaser for next series!)

### ***Nested Workplan***

*The group/organizational workplan might stand alone, but it can also inform the workplans for specific committees or working groups*

# RECAP

- **BUDGETS**

- What a budget is
- What a budget tells us
- Who is involved in budgeting
- Preparing a budget presentation
- Using a budget tool or template

- **WORKPLANS**

- Benefits
- Creating a workplan
- Marrying the budget & the workplan
- Using your workplan



# ORG HEALTH CHECKLIST

For new / early stage / in-transition groups

## MISSION STATEMENT

A well-written Mission Statement defines the organization's purpose, guides the work the organization engages in, and clarifies the organization's niche role in the community. A Mission Statement should be succinct: one sentence that clearly states WHY the organization exists.

- What are the main goals of your mission statement (up to three)?
- Does your mission statement state why your organization is unique?
- When was the mission statement last revised/updated?
- Does the mission statement help you decide what projects and programs are right for your organization?

Some organizations also have vision and values statements: a vision statement states WHAT the organization will do, and a values statement suggests HOW the organization will achieve it. Not all of these pieces are necessary, but in combination they can help with making clear decisions about how to invest the organization's capacity.

## LEADERSHIP

Regardless of whether a group is an incorporated nonprofit organization or a collection of committed community members, it's important to have an organized leadership structure. This could be a co-leader model, a team model, or a working group model - or something unique to your group!

- How many people currently make up your leadership team?
- Do you need to in-fill any expertise or skills on your leadership team?
- Does your leadership team model advance the work and values of the organization?
- Does the leadership team have a shared understanding of how decisions are made?

For more information on leadership models, [check out this article](#) from the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University.

## DEFINED ROLES

Defining roles for those involved in your group or organization serves a number of purposes: avoiding confusion and duplication of efforts, giving individuals the ability to self-manage confidently, guiding work and directing outcomes, and giving folks a sense of purpose. It's a best practice to define roles in writing with a position or role description, similar to a job description.

- What roles exist in your group/organization?
- Which roles need clarity and a written description?
- Are any roles/positions out-of-date, and need revision?
- Where do you keep/will you keep position descriptions, so members can access them?

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## WORKPLAN (ROADMAP)

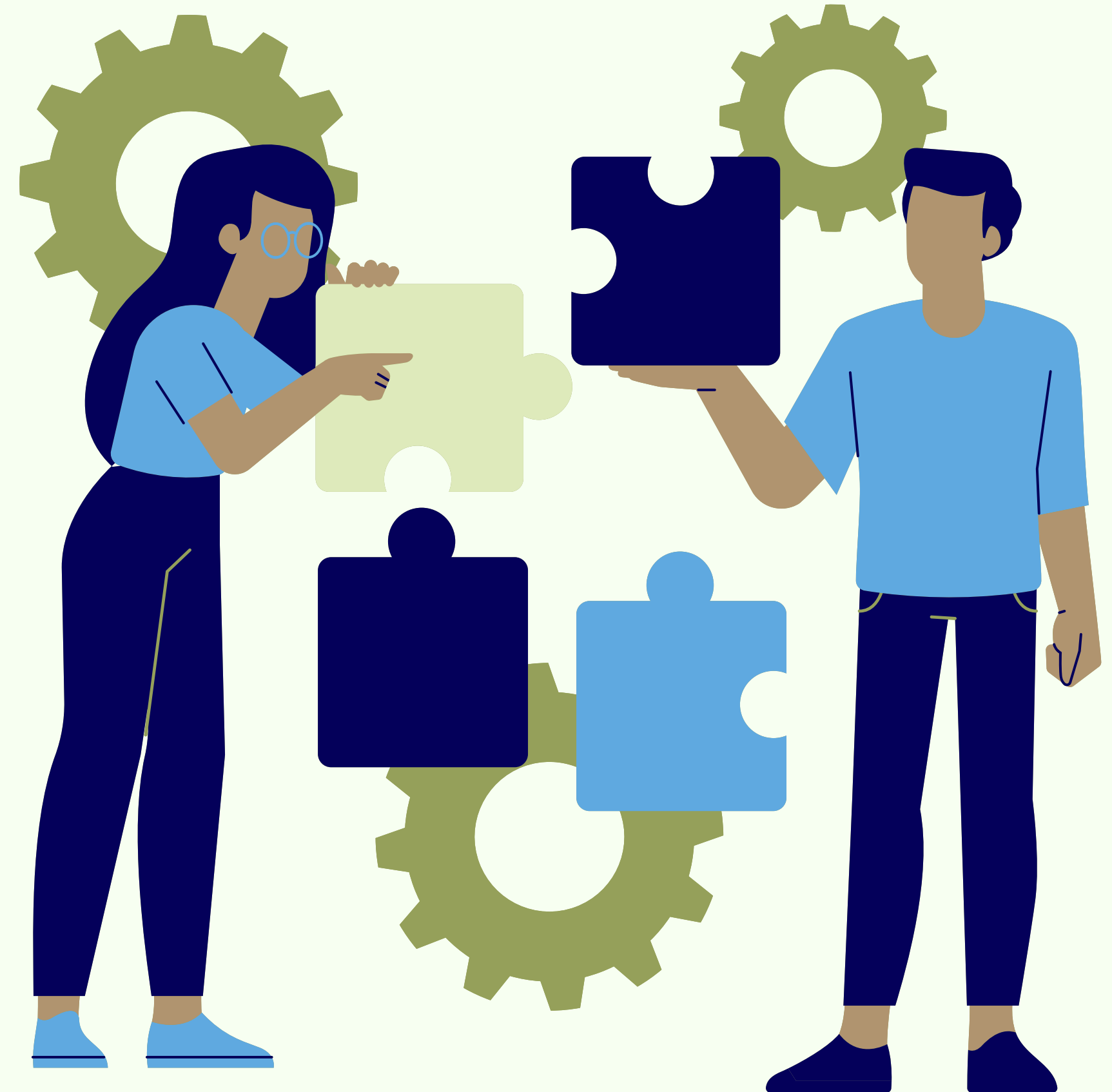
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Follow this link to access a [basic workplan template](#) - for guidance on using the template, check out [this short video](#).

# OTHER TOOLS

- **BoardSource**
  - [boardsource.org](https://boardsource.org)
- **Together Rising as an Environmental Community (TREC)**
  - [trec.org](https://trec.org)
- **National Council of Nonprofits**
  - [councilofnonprofits.org](https://councilofnonprofits.org)



# ***THANK YOU!***

Find more  
information at  
***[www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org)***

***Explore membership, resources, and join  
our newsletter & online community!***

