



# GRASS ROOTS FUND

2024

## Annual Report

New England Grassroots  
Environment Fund



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## Message from our Board Chair

*'In these uncertain times' might be the catchphrase that defines the realities of life, post-2024 election. From the macro level of social and political discord to the micro level of job and food insecurity, ambiguity surrounds us. The time is now to lean into our individual and collective potential. Despite recent challenges, we have witnessed the remarkable impact of community-led and driven projects. The work of our grantees reminds us of our commitments to:*



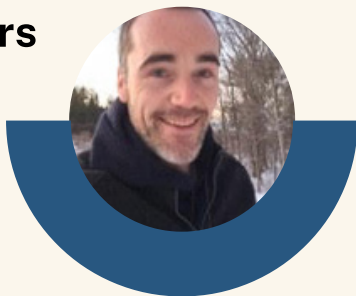
*Kimberly Blakemore*

- Strengthen the core of what we do, and bring together community members to engage in participatory grantmaking
- Amplify local leader success, and provide the resources for local leaders to drive positive change
- Build a resilient ecosystem, by connecting and supporting individuals and groups across New England as they develop local solutions to global problems.

*As we celebrate our 2024 progress, we remain grounded in the challenging – but not impossible – work ahead. Together, we can rise to the moment and achieve great things. Community has never been so important. Thank you for being on this journey.*

## Message from our Co-Directors

*As we present the 2024 Annual Report, we're reminded — like New England's unpredictable spring — that change is constant. This winter felt especially heavy amid growing disconnect between federal policies and community needs. Yet, across the region, people continue to organize, advocate, and build powerful networks of support. At the Grassroots Fund, we believe local communities hold the key to lasting change. Through participatory grantmaking, we support grassroots leaders tackling urgent issues like food sovereignty and climate resilience. As we head into 2025, we are proud to share this report with you, reflecting on the strides made, the lessons learned, and the ways in which we are collectively building a more just, equitable, and sustainable future for all.*



*Bart Westdijk*



*Faye Christoforo*

# A Year of Fortification & Growth

## Sustaining Community-Driven Grantmaking



Since 2020, the surge in grassroots organizing sparked by local pandemic responses has continued to drive strong demand for our grant programs. In 2024, the

Grassroots Fund sustained this increased level of support through our **Seed and Grow** grants, which help local groups meet urgent needs, provide mutual aid, and build long-term, community-rooted solutions.

## Deepening Participatory Practices



We launched a **Reader Incentive Program** designed to lower barriers and encourage new voices in our participatory grantmaking.

Our **Shared Gifting Cohorts** deepened engagement this year through two cohorts — one on **Food System Resilience** in New England and another on **Climate Resilience** in Greater Boston. These gatherings fostered trust, shared learning, and community-driven grantmaking.

## New Partnerships & Regional Initiatives



We partnered with Health Resources in Action and Alternatives for Community & Environment to implement the **Thriving Communities Grantmaker Program** for EPA Region 1. The Grassroots Fund's role is to share ideas and suggestions to make the process more rooted in local realities. We assist with outreach and recruitment for the program as we work to build infrastructure across New England.

## Staff & Board Transitions



We were excited to welcome **Naja Grasty** (Program Manager), **Veronica Lee** (Development Director), and **Lynn Ellen Schimoler** (Data & Learning Director). **Julia Dundorf** transitioned to Director of the Environmental Justice Hub.

We welcomed new board members **Kalila Booker-Cassano** and **Pierre Joseph**. Board President **Bilal Tajildeen** completed his second and final three-year term, and **Kimberly Blakemore** stepped into the role for 2025.

# Grantmaking Impact

**\$1.37M**

*Distributed across **273**  
grassroots groups*



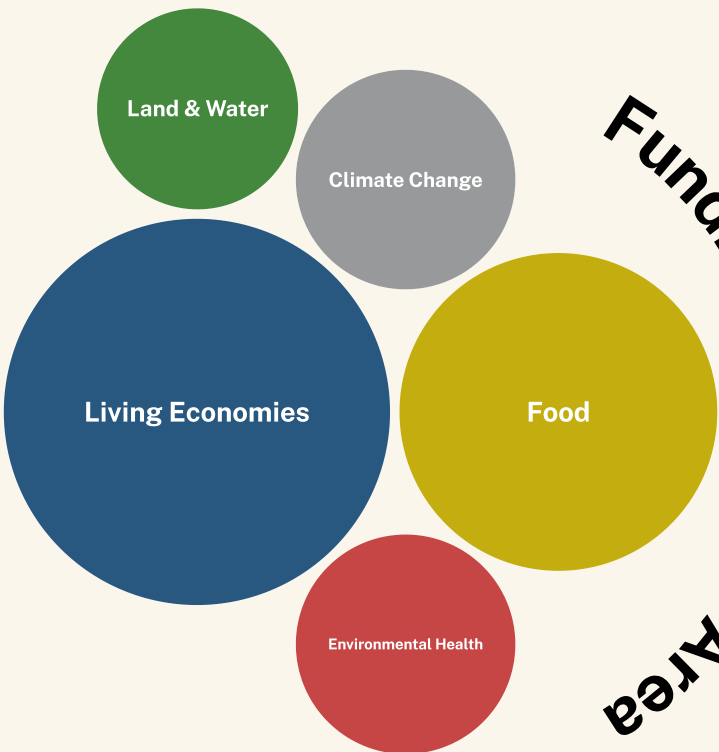
**63%**

Grantees with an annual budget under \$50k



**32%**

Grantees with ad-hoc tax status

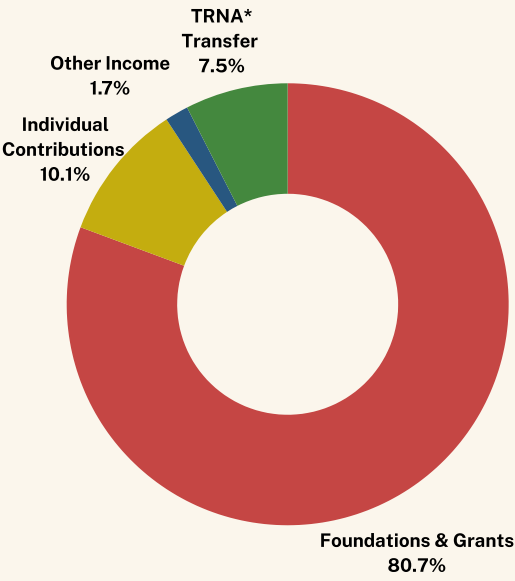


**Funding by Focus Area**

# Financial Overview

The Grassroots Fund is a public, non-endowed foundation that relies on strong partnerships to sustain our work. In 2024, we were supported by **over 30 institutional and family foundations**, alongside **\$300,000 in individual donations**. As we grow, we're focused on diversifying income streams and building long-term sustainability. Many of our grantees operate without 501(c)(3) status or fiscal sponsors — yet they are the ones providing vital mutual aid and peer support in times of crisis. The volatility and challenges of recent times have underscored the fragile nature of support systems available to grassroots groups.

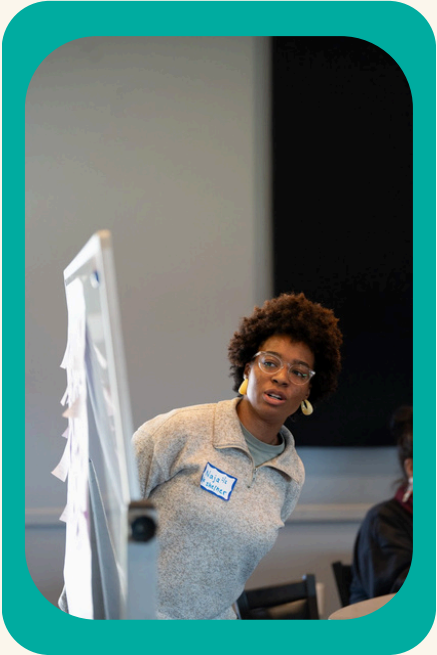
## Income:



\*TRNA = Temporary Restricted Net Assets

## Expenses:

GRANTMAKING PROGRAMS	\$1,096,336
PROGRAMS & EVENTS	\$38,774
FUNDRAISING & OUTREACH	\$23,434
PERSONNEL	\$673,612
CONTRACT SERVICES	\$118,093
ORGANIZATIONAL & NETWORKING	\$30,448
OFFICE	\$28,443



# The New England Environmental Justice Hub



**The New England Environmental Justice (EJ) Hub**, launched in 2024, is designed to accelerate the implementation of community-driven environmental justice solutions and projects. The EJ Hub works alongside New England state coalitions, community leaders, and advocates to support nonprofits in advancing EJ projects by leveraging federal, other public funds, philanthropic resources and various technical assistance programs. The EJ Hub prioritizes urban, rural, and tribal communities that have been underinvested in.

## Acting as an intermediary, the EJ Hub seeks to...

- **Support Grassroots Action:** Facilitating the conditions for grassroots nonprofits to implement effective EJ initiatives.
- **Build Connections:** Creating a bridge between federal funding opportunities, philanthropy and community-based organizations.
- **Provide Navigational Support:** Helping state coalitions and nonprofits identify technical assistance, capacity-building support, and resources to strengthen their EJ projects.

The EJ Hub is directed by staff member **Julia Dundorf** with support from chief advisor **Rele Abiade** of One Rhode Consulting.

# Rooted in Community

Meet some of our 2024 grantees driving change from the ground up.

## Roots2Empower

*Providence, Rhode Island*



## Community Garden of Joy

*Bridgeport, Connecticut*



## Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition

*Walpole, New Hampshire*



**The Indigenous People's Network &  
Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust**  
*Auburn, Massachusetts*



**United Immigrant and Refugee  
Communities of Vermont**  
*Burlington, Vermont*



**Waldo County Climate  
Action Coalition**  
*Belfast, Maine*

**Community Garden of Joy**  
*Bridgeport, Connecticut*

Community Garden of Joy, a **Fall 2024 Grow grant recipient**, promotes healthy living through gardening, education, and youth engagement. Their expanded garden serves as a welcoming space for all, offering hands-on learning, community connection, and free fresh produce for Bridgeport's South End neighborhood.

**Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition**  
*Walpole, New Hampshire*

Monadnock Farm and Community Coalition, a **Fall 2024 Grow grantee**, supports local food access by sourcing products for The Community Kitchen's mobile pantry. They lead regional efforts to build a sustainable, inclusive food system through community collaboration and policy work.

**Roots2Empower**  
*Providence, Rhode Island*

Roots2Empower was founded to improve the lives of justice-impacted and low-income people in Southern New England. Their mission has expanded to address the root causes of poverty and mass incarceration and enable civic engagement through economic empowerment, environmental connection, and access to food. They were part of the **2024 Food Systems Resilience Fund Cohort** at the Grassroots Fund.

**Waldo County Climate  
Action Coalition**  
*Belfast, Maine*

Waldo County Climate Action Coalition received a **2024 Seed grant** to support their focus on amplifying respective organizational efforts by working together on renewable energy transition, weatherization, land restoration and conservation, food insecurity, transportation, public health and other impacts of climate change.

**United Immigrant and  
Refugee Communities  
of Vermont**  
*Burlington, Vermont*

United Immigrant and Refugee Communities of Vermont received a **2024 Seed grant** to support resettlement services, citizenship education, and advocacy for livable wages and housing. Now a nonprofit, they aim to connect immigrants and refugees with resources and opportunities to thrive and contribute to Vermont communities.

**The Indigenous  
People's Network &  
Pocasset Pokanoket  
Land Trust**  
*Auburn, Massachusetts*

The Indigenous People's Network & Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust, founded in 2014 and fiscally sponsored, works to reclaim ancestral lands, support BIPOC land access, and promote Indigenous stewardship, culture, and environmental sustainability across New England. They were part of the **2024 Food Systems Resilience Fund Cohort** at the Grassroots Fund.

# Looking Ahead



We have big plans ahead of us as we step into 2025. We are starting the year with a strong and robust team and a clear focus for our work. While we anticipate challenges related to navigating the current political climate we know that communities will show up and fight back and we will support them in that. We are already seeing increased need for our low barrier grants as communities come together and strategize for long term resilience. In 2025 we will continue to collaborate with broad reaching communities across New England and we will strengthen our platforms and systems to support community engagement in granting decisions.

**We hope you will join us!**



**Scan to Donate**



## **Contact Us**

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