

## Spring 2024 Grow Application & FAQs:

<https://grassrootsfund.org/grant-programs/grow-grants>



### Questions?

Contact Mary Jones at [mary@grassrootsfund.org](mailto:mary@grassrootsfund.org)

## Fall 2023 Grow Application Scoring Rubric

Grow grants support existing community groups in New England working at the intersection of Social Justice and the Environmental movement with grants between \$1000-\$4000. Grow grants prioritize supporting groups who represent a broad range of voices from their communities and have limited options to get resources to support their work. Groups do NOT need 501c3 status or a fiscal sponsor to apply.

Below is the rubric community grant readers and staff use to evaluate Grow applications. Every application is reviewed by at least five community grant readers and one staff member. Feedback and comments from grant readers guide staff review questions during follow-up calls with applicants. Reader input also influences how the Grantmaking Committee (composed of grassroots leaders) approaches each application before making a final decision on funding. For more details on our participatory grantmaking process, see <https://grassrootsfund.org/decide>

Readers and staff score applications using the Grassroots Fund's [Guiding Practices](#). In addition, applications are evaluated on the extent to which providing funding would support "Resourcing Community Work," meaning the group leverages local (financial & non-financial) resources and has limited access to alternative sources of funding. There is also a category where readers score based on their gut feeling. In each section, readers rate applications on a scale of 1-4, with 4 indicating that the applicant is exceling in that area. Thus, the minimum total score an application can receive is 6 and the maximum is 24.

	Score	Notes / Comments
<b>Eligibility considerations</b>	Yes / No	
<b>Staff:</b> No more than 2 full time paid staff equivalent (80 hrs/week total)		
<b>Budget:</b> Annual operating budget of no more than around \$100K		
<b>Geographic Scope:</b> Local focus, New England based		
<b>Project assessment</b>	1-4	
<b>Rooted Innovation</b>		
With this guiding practice, you will be asked to consider how a group perceives the landscape of needs and work being done in a community as a whole, and analyze where and how a project fits in. It is an opportunity to ensure that the work is informed by the whole community, rather than a small group. This can be advantageous in building for redundancy and resilience, identifying needs gaps, and considering non-traditional partners or allies for your work. Refer to the reader handbook if you are unclear on what Grassroots Fund considers excellent practice for rooted innovation.		
<b>Shifting Power &amp; Decision-Making</b>		
While grassroots groups have the ability to flip top-down, capitalist power structures and build alternative solutions, they may also replicate the same systems that privilege only certain people's needs for health, safety, and wellbeing. The issues at hand are urgent, but without creating groups that challenge these dynamics, our solutions will remain faulty at best, and perpetuate oppressive dynamics at worst. The Shifting Power practices are a structure with which to reflect on how a group is already operating under the guidance of this value, and what they could improve upon. Refer to the reader handbook if you are unclear on what Grassroots Fund considers excellent practice shifting power.		
<b>Equity in Participation</b>		
Equity in Participation is not just about saying that meetings are "open to everyone." We know that there are many barriers to participation that extend beyond closed meetings. This Guiding Practice asks us to consider what a group is doing to create spaces and projects where everyone in the community feels welcome or connected. Has the group done all it should to reconsider how we gather community members to be a part of a process and set priorities together, before moving ahead with a project or agenda. Refer to the reader handbook if you are unclear on what Grassroots Fund considers excellent practice for equity in participation.		
<b>Centering a Just Transition</b>		
We believe that true resilience and wellbeing is built from the bottom-up. A Just Transition requires the leadership and sustained engagement of organized communities. This means anchoring the principles of this transition in real community context and understanding of place. Remember: resilience doesn't mean just "doing a better job" of planning a watershed, foodshed, or energysshed. It also means creating a culture of problem-solving that trusts people as the experts of their own lives and can hold the complex and diverse needs of a community and their environment. Refer to the reader handbook if you are unclear on what Grassroots Fund considers excellent practice for just transition.		
<b>Resourcing Community Work</b>		

This practice centers an approach that recognizes two things: 1. resources can take more forms than just financial; 2. groups face different barriers to accessing resources. Resources can be non-monetary, including things like skills, knowledge, space, energy, and time. Resources can also be financial, including money, paid staff time, or a formal tax status for a group. Grassroots Fund was originally founded to prioritize funding to ad-hoc and unincorporated groups because they faced barriers to accessing grant funding due to their lack of tax status. We've also learned that groups also face other challenges and barriers to accessing funding. This theme asks us to consider what barriers a group might face in accessing funding, and how to creatively address or think about how they are resourcing their work. Refer to the reader handbook if you are unclear on Grassroots Fund's considerations for Resourcing Community Work.

**Overall "Gut Feeling"**

Recognizing that our rubric cannot capture everything about this project that might be worth up-lifting, this category speaks to the reader's overall assessment of the project. Proposals scoring a four may be bringing important ideas or people to the table, or demonstrate that their work fits into a community context or political moment that is worth addressing.

**Total score**

**Recommendation (%)**

**Recommended funding level (\$)**

**Reader Comments/Questions**

**CALL NOTES**

QUESTION: RESPONSE:

Total Score	Rec. % of request	Rec. Funding Level
21.5-24	100.00%	\$4,000.00
18.5-21.4	85.00%	\$3,400.00
15.5-18.4	70.00%	\$2,800.00
13.5-15.4	50.00%	\$2,000.00
10.5-13.4	Automatic discuss, even if staff/reader scores align. Funding level TBD on case-by-case basis.	
1-10.4	0.00%	\$0.00