



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)
Rooted Farmers & The Gardener's Workshop – FY 2022
Floral Collective Grant Opportunity



Rooted Farmers was founded (four growing seasons ago!) as a solution for our regional collective of growers to manage sales and aggregate product in our Northern New England market. The results were game-changing: because we had committed to solving buyers' chief concerns by working collectively and offering a purchasing platform that met their needs, buyers instantly doubled their purchases and began experimenting with less-familiar product.

During our collective's first year in business, we were able to tap into markets that were otherwise out of reach: volume constraints, consistency, breadth of offerings, and redundancies were all critical to building relationships and trust with florists and designers. Solving these challenges allowed growers to focus on building economies of scale, more profitable selling operations, and improved scalability for each individual farm.

In the years since, we have been fortunate at Rooted to build relationships with collectives and flower exchanges across the country, at all sizes and stages. We have partnered with these groups to collaboratively build operational and technical solutions for challenges ranging from maintaining relationship-based sales while enabling technical scalability, to managing the nuances of selling perishable product.

Together, the Rooted Farmers and The Gardener's Workshop teams believe that collaborative partnerships like these are critical to long-term sustainability and growth for small farms, and we want to support you in that journey. Read on to learn more about this grant opportunity.

Background:

We believe in you! Rooted and The Gardener's Workshop have set aside funds to invest in collaboratives of growers who are working to develop their local flower markets in the 2022 season.

Our goal is to help provide you with funding needed to kick start your collective, helping to pay for start-up expenses, easing your group's financial burden. The Rooted team will work with grant awardees to consult on startup questions and offer support on collective best practices.

Grants:

Rooted and The Gardener's Workshop will be issuing up to four grants ranging from \$500-\$1,500. These grants are structured as reimbursement-style awards for approved collective-related expenses.

Deadline:

Applicants must submit applications via email to reachout@rootedfarmers.com by 5pm EST on March 15, 2022. Awards will be announced on or before March 31, 2022. Grant term is nine months.

Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

- Group must be based in the United States
- Group must be within 0-24 months of formation date
- Group must be comprised of 4+ growers
- At least half of member farms should have 2+ years of growing experience
- Preference will be given to applicants who have demonstrated awareness of the opportunities and challenges of building a collective in their local markets



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Application

Applications should be submitted electronically. They should be typed, and may include tables, maps, or other supporting documents or images as needed. If you have any questions or concerns around any components of the application, please feel free to touch base with us at reachout@rootedfarmers.com.

Our goal in asking the questions below is to gain an understanding for how committed your group is building a collective, and how far into the planning process you are so far. If you have not begun any of the steps below, please include that context.

Application Submissions Should Include:

- 1) **Cover letter** – introduce your group. Include a discussion of the problem(s) you are trying to solve, share your reasons for deciding to organize as a group. Briefly share your goals for the season ahead; what are you most excited about? What are you most uncertain or concerned about? What do you hope this grant money will allow you to accomplish this season?
- 2) **List of member/participating farms** – include farm name, address, approximate growing acreage, farmer name, and a short bio for each grower.
- 3) **Description of planned ownership model** (*note: there is no preferred model; you are not required to have registrations in place at the time of application*) – Examples include for-profit vs. not-for-profit; single-owner vs. group ownership models. Include a brief explanation (< one paragraph) of your rationale in choosing this model, as well as any relevant org chart or leadership information.
- 4) **Brief market analysis** – Who are your target customers (e.g., wholesale floral buyers; designers; event planners; DIY brides; retail customers)? What is your target market geography? Have you begun developing a plan for how to reach these customers? If so, please share!
- 5) **Geography** – What is the geographic distribution of your member farms? Do you have a planned central market location or meeting point? Do you have a plan for collecting and distributing product? If so, please share!
- 6) **Facilities** – Please share a description of any facilities that you plan to utilize; cooler access, market location, delivery vehicles, etc.
- 7) **Resources (financial, personnel, etc.)** – Do you have any current funding sources? Do you have a collective administrator identified? Do you have any redundancies in place (i.e., a backup administrator who will be familiar with communications and processes in the event that the regular admin is unavailable)?
- 8) **Revenue Model** – Do you have a plan for a revenue model (e.g., buy-in fees, sales margins, etc.)? How do you plan to cover ongoing operating expenses of your collective?
- 9) **Product mix** – what is your product mix (e.g., single-variety bunches, bouquets, buckets, etc.)? For single-variety bunches, please share a sampling of the types of varieties that you plan to offer across your grower members.