



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) Rooted Farmers – FY 2024 Floral Collective Grant Opportunity

Rooted Farmers was founded (six 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 for 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 dozens of hubs 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.

We 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! We have set aside funds to invest in collaboratives of growers who are working to develop their local flower markets in the 2024 season.

Our goal is to help provide you with funding and coaching needed to kick start your hub or 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 will be issuing 2-4 grants ranging from \$500-\$1,500. These grants are structured as reimbursement-style awards for approved collective-related expenses. Grant term is nine months.

Grant recipients also receive monthly coaching sessions from the Rooted team, which includes leaders of established hubs and collectives who bring their expertise to help navigate challenges and opportunities that your group is facing.

Deadline:

Applicants must submit applications by 5pm EST on March 15, 2024. All applications should be submitted to reachout@rootedfarmers.com. Awards will be announced on or before April 1, 2024.



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Applicant Eligibility Requirements:

- Group must be based in the United States
- 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 and growing a collective in their local markets

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** – e.g., for-profit/not-for-profit; single-owner vs. group ownership model (**note:** there is no preferred model, and you are not required to have registrations in place at the time of application). 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! If you're already selling as a collective, what is the feedback you've received to date from your buyers?
- 5) **Geography** – What is the geographic distribution of your member farms? Do you have a planned and/or existing central market location or meeting point? What is your model or plan for collecting and distributing product?
- 6) **Facilities** – Please share a description of any current and/or future facilities that you plan to utilize (e.g., cooler access, market location, delivery vehicles).
- 7) **Resources** – How are you currently funded? Who is your collective manager/administrator? If you don't currently have a collective manager, do you have an individual identified? Do you have any redundancies in place (i.e., a backup administrator who will be familiar with communications and processes if the regular manager is unavailable)?
- 8) **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.