Groundwork Organizer Network

OVERVIEW, CRITERIA, AND PROCESS

The Groundwork Organizer Network supports local, grassroots organizers closest to the ground, the true trusted messengers in communities across our focus states. We are looking for the movement-makers, base-builders, democracy protectors, and progress-seekers who are doing the work year-round in the most under-resourced and overlooked regions of the country, with little to no recognition or funding to sustain their work.

The foundation of the Groundwork Organizer Network experience is capital, community and capacity. Groundwork welcomes local leaders from its focus states to the Network by offering unrestricted, multi-year general operating capital to support and scale their efforts.

Along with this financial assistance, all of our partners have access to wrap-around support from our team and trusted partners, a mini-grant fund to support further training and education, as well as the opportunity to build community and share best practices through an active, cross-state network.

We believe it is these organizers and their work that create the essential civic and political infrastructure needed to win our country's ongoing fight for justice, equity and democracy itself.

A Ten Year Program

In 2025, we doubled down on Groundwork Project's iron-clad commitment to long-term, sustainable investment in the organizing ecosystems we serve. We know that year-round organizing requires year-round resources and that our partners operate on trajectories far outside the narrow confines of election seasons. With this in mind, we introduced a **ten-year life-cycle in the Groundwork Organizer Network***. In offering this kind of long-term support for small and grassroots groups, in places most funders ignore, Groundwork is addressing a major roadblock when it comes to long-term power-building efforts across our partner states: the lack of resourced and ready community organizers to get the job done.

**Organizations must complete Tier I before being considered for Tier II and Tier III.*

TIER I: YEARS 1–4

Laying the foundation for sustainable, year-round organizing and helping build resilient, healthy organizations.

TIER II: YEARS 5–7

Deepening capital and capacity commitments to accelerate growth and impact.

TIER III: YEARS 8–10

Preparing for the next level of grassroots operations + financial sustainability.

Our Entry Point: The Tier I Experience

To become a Groundwork Organizer Network partner, you must first apply to enter Tier I of the program. If selected, Tier I partners receive:

Access to capacity support

including fundraising and digital wraparound support offerings, strategic planning calls with our team, and more.

An multi-year unrestricted capital commitment

offering accepted Network partners **$25k per year for four years**, totaling a $100k commitment over four years. After Tier I, there is an opportunity for possible growth in Tier II.

Access to community offerings

like Groundwork Organizer Network state and cross-state calls, trainings, and peer learning opportunities.

Tier I: Criteria & Process

GROUNDWORK ORGANIZER NETWORK

Groundwork's process for adding new members to the Groundwork Organizer Network is based on relationship cultivation with prospective partners, an ongoing landscape analysis of the needs and opportunities in our states, and an assessment of where our support can be most impactful.

We operate one open application cycle each year for organizations interested in joining the Network. Information about timing for each year will be available on all Groundwork channels as soon as it is available. Once an application window is open, any organization wishing to be considered must first **fill out our interest form** to set up an introductory conversation with our team. During this conversation, we will get to know you and your work, share more about ourselves, and discuss your eligibility for the Network. **For those interested in applying, please note that you must fill out the interest form, even if you have been in touch with Groundwork in the past.**

Application Process:

1. Fill out Interest Form on website.
2. Schedule introductory call with us.
3. Submit application by deadline.
4. Notification on final decision.

After our call, we will provide organizations who might be good fits for the Network with a brief application and guidance on applying. Groundwork may request to see additional, existing materials to get a better understanding of your budget, work to date, and strategic plans. Team Groundwork makes capital decisions based on the criteria and a collaborative assessment as to whether an organization is a good fit for our program.

In choosing our partners, Groundwork Project refers to the following criteria. It is not necessary to meet all of these, but the more their mission and work align, the better fit they will be for our Network:

Operations:

- Geographically based in one of our focus states: currently Alabama, Mississippi, Oklahoma & West Virginia;
- Full-time staff sizes of less than 5;
- Operating budgets under $300,000;
- 501c3 or 501c4 status or established fiscal sponsorship;
- Hyperlocal groups focused on a specific region, city, town or neighborhood;
- Enthusiasm to take advantage of Groundwork's wraparound support services, connect with fellow members of the Groundwork Organizer Network, and contribute to the larger Network community of peer grassroots organizers;
- Ability to absorb + effectively utilize multi-year funding ($25k/year for 4 years).

Programming:

- Commitment to grassroots community organizing as a tool for powerbuilding in disenfranchised communities;
- Commitment to grassroots community organizing as an essential part of successful democracy protection and social justice efforts;
- Year-round community organizing programs, networks and footprint aimed at base-building within and/or around a particular community, issue or demographic;
- Core organizational programming focused on civic engagement, direct voter contact and mobilization, community and movement building, issue advocacy or electoral work;
- Organizing activities include but are not limited to: community and voter education, direct action, election protection, issue advocacy, leadership development, canvassing, narrative change, digital organizing;

Organizations with BIPOC, women, working class and/or queer leadership encouraged to apply.

Click here to learn more about Tier II of the Groundwork Organizer Network.