



Celebrating **25** Years
of Fighting for Social and
Environmental Justice!

GreenRoots

GreenRoots, Inc.
Strategic Planning Request for Qualifications
January 9, 2019
Deadline to Apply: January 23, 2019

Organizational History and Background

GreenRoots, Inc., is a resident-led, grassroots, community-based organization with a track record spanning twenty-five years of achieving significant environmental justice accomplishments and public health victories. GreenRoots' mission is to achieve environmental justice and greater quality of life through collective action, unity, education and youth leadership across neighborhoods and communities.

GreenRoots previously operated under the umbrella of a multi-issue organizing agency as a community committee known as *Chelsea Green Space*. In April 2016, *Green Space* members decided they wanted to deepen their impact in the community by expanding environmental justice campaigns and projects into an independent organization with intentionality in addressing systemic racism and oppression in environmental decision-making and prioritization. The parent organization's Board of Directors and staff supported the decision for the community committee to evolve into an organization with broad reaches into the myriad of environmental and public health threats facing Chelsea.

On May 1, 2016, members decided on an organization name, mission statement, slate of "founding" board of directors for the new spinoff. On July 1, 2016, GreenRoots opened its offices on the Chelsea Creek in Chelsea.

Since inception, GreenRoots has grown from nine staff (two full time and seven part-time – a majority of whom were youth) to fifteen staff (seven full time and eight part-time) plus interns. Our board has grown from the five "founding members" to a full board of nine members, most of whom came through our membership. We also expanded from focusing only on Chelsea to include East Boston, particularly the East Boston side of the Chelsea Creek, into our environmental justice organizing.

GreenRoots' Organizational Structure

GreenRoots is entirely resident-led from our members, to our staff and board. We are a membership-based organization where the members decide on, carry out and evaluate the workplan. Staff support members' leadership development and assist with project implementation goals.

Every GreenRoots' project is spearheaded by dedicated residents who are engaged, passionate and excited to further the vision of environmental and social justice. GreenRoots' core leadership is

approximately 75 members who are multi-generational, ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse and who include youth and members of the LGBTQ community. More than 300 members engage in regular and ongoing activities; and GreenRoots' work positively impacts thousands of residents annually.

Our staff and board represent the communities in which we organize. Our staff team is 100% bilingual in Spanish and English; 80% of our staff live in Chelsea and East Boston, the two communities in which we organize; 80% identify as ethnic and racial minorities; and 80% identify as women or members of the LGBTQ community. Most of our staff came through the membership of the organization and all participated in GreenRoots activities before coming on board as employees.

The Board of Directors oversees the organizational mission and direction and ensures its fiscal solvency. Our Board of Directors consists of nine members of whom 66% live in Chelsea and East Boston; and 56% identify as people of color. The Board represents a variety of skills and expertise including environmental law, public health, academia, community activism, international grassroots social movements, youth and community organizing.

Programmatic Areas of Focus

- a. Environmental Justice (EJ): GreenRoots' EJ campaigns focus on engaging the most ethnically and racially diverse, lowest income and most vulnerable communities in holding industries accountable; lifting up and upholding the voices of those who are most marginalized in asserting their environmental and public health priorities; thwarting egregious proposals that further degrade the community's public health and environment; and increasing communication between responsible businesses and the community.
- b. Waterfront Access: Using the Chelsea Creek Community Vision Plan, created with deep community involvement from Chelsea and East Boston residents, GreenRoots implements aggressive campaigns and projects to gain public access to the Chelsea Creek, Mill Creek, Island End River and Mystic River. We implement ecological habitat, wetland restoration, green infrastructure and water quality improvement projects.
- c. Youth Leadership on Environmental Justice Concerns: GreenRoots values the leadership development and empowerment of all low-income youth of color. We do this through the permanent employment of the 5-member ECO youth crew. ECO works on projects important to youth in Chelsea.
- d. Improved Public Health and Air and Water Quality: GreenRoots works to improve public health by reducing air pollutants and improving surface water quality. Additionally, we collaborate on research studies seeking to document health measures, indoor and outdoor pollutants and ways in which they exacerbate quality of life concerns and worsen health outcomes.

- e. Climate Justice: Almost every neighborhood in Chelsea and East Boston is impacted by climate change and sea level rise, yet these neighborhoods are also home to some of the most diverse and low income communities in the Commonwealth. GreenRoots believes in the need for the traditional environmental and climate movements to become more intersectional and diverse, prioritizing frontline communities like East Boston and Chelsea. Our work includes advocating for and implementing energy efficiency programs, climate preparedness plans as well as creating opportunities for communities to own and generate their own power, and implementing green infrastructure to reduce flooding and water quality impacts.
- f. Greater Open and Green Space: Understanding the direct relation between greater and open green space with increased public health, GreenRoots has worked to maximize the quantity and quality of open, green, space and recreational opportunities for Chelsea. We have done so by constructing two new parks with two additional parks in the planning stages. We continue to advocate for the creation of other open and green spaces. GreenRoots also engages in aggressive tree planting efforts to build an extensive tree canopy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and heat island effects. GreenRoots was instrumental in Chelsea's Tree City USA designation.
- g. Urban agriculture and Food Justice: Low-income, ethnically diverse communities like Chelsea often have less access to healthy, local foods. In fact, while Chelsea holds the second largest produce distribution center in the country, we are still considered a food desert, a place where most people cannot easily access healthy affordable foods. To combat this, GreenRoots manages three successful community gardens and recently constructed Chelsea's first urban farm.
- h. Transit Justice: We understand transit justice to be a key pillar of environmental justice and economic justice. As one of the most transit-dependent communities in the Commonwealth, access to public, affordable and reliable means of transportation is central to transitioning from dependence on fossil fuels, reducing carbon emissions, improving public health and lifting communities out of poverty.

Major Organizational Accomplishments:

Over the past twenty-five years, GreenRoots has:

- defeated the siting of a dirty diesel power plant;
- Led the city's successful pursuit of a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation [Culture of Health Prize which recognized GreenRoots' environmental justice, waterfront access and youth leadership work.](#)
- Selected as a [Social Innovator](#) by the Social Innovation Forum to help expand GreenRoots' capacity and impact.
- stopped a proposal to have explosive ethanol freight trains from traveling thru 90 Massachusetts communities en route to Global Oil's facility along the Chelsea Creek;

- implemented three EPA ARRA-funded diesel emissions reduction projects which invested more than \$3 million to eliminate 2000 tons of annual air pollutants and 400,000 gallons of fuel usage, and to repower (or replace) 132 high sulfur content diesel engines in Chelsea and Everett, MA;
- improved the public realm along Mill Creek through the
 - development of waterfront walkways;
 - design (through a community driven process), funding and project oversight of the construction of the dynamic Creekside Commons park;
 - design, with significant youth input, and fabrication of interpretive, bilingual signage;
 - restoration of two acres of urban salt marsh;
 - implementation of several green infrastructure measures to improve water quality of the estuary; and
 - fundraising and community designing the next new amazing public access area along the river's upland banks.
- achieved trellised walkways, raised boardwalks, a new park and public canoeing and kayaking access at the Island End River;
- launched a successful team of teen leaders through the Environmental Chelsea Organizers (ECO) youth crew which carries out environment justice campaigns. Over the past twenty years, dozens of youth have graduated from this program, leaving a mark in their community and a strong legacy of what it means to be a member of the ECO youth crew.
- Created and manage four community gardens and an urban farm in an effort to reduce food insecurity while building lasting social bonds and connections among neighbors.
- Organized for and achieved significant transit justice victories for Chelsea and surrounding communities, including a permanent youth pass program which provides reduced-fare passes to young people ages 12-25, limit system-wide fare increases annually and others.
- Established strong community relationships and a track record of organizing with East Boston and Everett residents to advance environmental justice, business accountability and public access projects along the Chelsea Creek, Island End River and lower Mystic River watershed.
- Built and continue to strengthen the movement of empowered, informed and mobilized people who, in the last two decades, have developed deep analysis around issues of environmental justice in their own communities. Now, it is this very same movement of people who are working each and every day to achieve equity and a better quality of life through environmental justice, climate justice, and food justice and energy justice campaigns.
- among many other [victories](#).

Strategic Planning

Over the past two years as a stand-alone organization, GreenRoots has grown exponentially in staff size and programming. At the very beginning of 2019, GreenRoots announced a year of celebration and reflection on our 25+ year legacy of fighting for and winning amazing environmental justice victories. As we begin this year of celebration and reflection, GreenRoots finds ourselves at an inflection point. Together with our members, board and staff, we want to embark on a strategic planning process that reviews our successes and challenges to date, determines organizational and community priorities, and maps the organization's strategic direction for the coming 3-5 years.

GreenRoots envisions a strategic planning process that begins with robust member engagement in March and is completed by our Annual Meeting at the end of May. The process must be inclusive and truly engaging, utilizing a combination of popular education tools and traditional strategic planning tactics in a multi-lingual setting. GreenRoots will provide simultaneous interpretation. The process should include specific tasks/goals for members, staff and board while also gathering input from the community at-large.

At the conclusion of the process, it is expected that consultants will provide GreenRoots with an articulate, usable, three-to five- year strategic plan that guides and shapes GreenRoots' current and future work.

Consultant Qualifications

Consultants should have the following experience/expertise:

- Value and prioritize racial, social, economic and environmental justice;
- Experience working with low-income communities, immigrant communities, communities of color, LGBTQ communities and other marginalized populations;
- Understand and appreciate movement building, community organizing and member-led organizations;
- Have experience working in ethnically diverse and multi-lingual spaces;
- Identify and implement models of strategic planning that provide robust community/member engagement (including popular education and/or other successful methods of meaningful and just engagement);
- Define priorities for different sets of organizational stakeholders (e.g. members, staff, board, community at-large);
- Have experience working with different groups of stakeholders through a process of reflection and goal setting, while determining measurable outcomes to evaluate and track the articulated goals.
- Articulate strong, written action plans for implementation;
- Complete projects on task and within defined timeframe;
- Reflect the communities in which we are organizing.

Response requested

If you are interested in being considered for this work, please submit a brief statement of your qualifications, your approach to strategic planning, cost estimate and anticipated schedule of activities by **January 23rd** to Roseann Bongiovanni at RoseannB@greenrootschelsea.org or via mail to:

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