

root2fruit boot camp guidelines

**Background and overview**

From 2002 through 2021, Evanston Community Foundation offered the root2fruit capacity-building grants and training program. The three-year program provided annual $10,000 grants along with four networking and training sessions for the grantee cohort each year. During the 20 years root2fruit was offered, 58 small to midsize organizations participated.

*Root2fruit boot camp* continues this legacy of building organizational capacity toward long-term sustainability. The program focuses on small emerging organizations that envision becoming established in Evanston. Eligible organizations must:

* Be Evanston-based or have a significant focus on Evanston
* Be less than five years old or have had paid staff of fewer than five years
* Have a budget of under $250,000
* Either has established or is committed to developing the following:
  + Having paid staff
  + Having a board that represents the diversity of the community
  + A commitment to building long-term sustainability for the organization to continue its work beyond its founder’s involvement
  + A 501(c)3 status, or the intention of applying for that status

Selected organizations must commit to participation in training sessions by both the executive director and the board president, as well as two additional representatives of the organization. Additionally, the executive director and board president must commit to working with a coach assigned by the program.

**Program Structure**

Selected organizations will be part of a learning cohort for 18 months. The program includes:

* A grant of $7,500 to $15,000 in support of organization infrastructure
* One year of monthly learning sessions
* Personalized organizational coaching for 12 months for a total of 12 hours
* A mid-year retreat in year 2 to share successes and challenges and identify emerging challenges and potential solutions

**Application process**

* Applications are available on our online GLM grants system, which you can access at [www.evanstonforever.org](http://www.evanstonforever.org).
* Tell us briefly and directly about your idea and organization for all narrative questions. Do not worry about phrasing everything exactly right.
* Grant decisions are made by a committee of community members with nonprofit experience. The committee will invite a subset of initial applicants to participate in an interview as a second stage of the grant selection process.
* Four to five organizations will be selected to participate in the 2023 cohort.

**Timetable**

Applications available September 6, 2022

Information session September 14, 5-6pm via Zoom (recorded)

Application deadline October 10, 2022

Interview Invitation October 21, 2022  
Interviews Week of October 31, 2022

Grantees selected Week of November 14, 2022

Introductory meeting December 2022 (specific date TBD)

Training sessions January through November 2023

Coaching June 2023 through June 2024

Cohort retreat May 2024

**Application questions**

* Please write two sentences summarizing your organization’s motivation for applying to root2fruit. *If your organization is selected, this may be used in ECF publications.*
* What have you done so far to get your idea and organization off the ground?
  + What staff and board resources does your organization have? What needs to be developed?
  + What services or programs have you offered?
  + How have you generated financial resources for your organization’s work so far?
  + If this nonprofit developed out of a for-profit business, tell us about the history of that business, which it has served, and the motivation for creating a nonprofit.
* What needs, challenges, or goals is your organization meant to meet?
* Why is this need, challenge, or goal important to Evanston and its people?
* Are other organizations or groups in Evanston already working on this need, challenge, or goal? How does your organization’s work differ? Do you think there are ways to work together with other organizations?
* What are the estimated racial and ethnic demographics of the people you serve?
* What are the top two things your organization needs to work on to become sustainable?
* What are your organization’s two most significant strategic challenges, questions, or issues?

Applicants are required to upload to the online grant system:

* Roster of Board, including names, address, affiliations, and demographics
* Organization’s current budget, including revenue sources
* If this nonprofit organization has developed out of or in conjunction with a for-profit business, the last year of that business’s financial statements