

COMMON COUNSEL FOUNDATION
GRASSROOTS EXCHANGE FUND APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Common Counsel's Grassroots Exchange Fund (GXF) is a rapid response small grants program designed to support networking and collaboration between grassroots social change organizations throughout the United States. GXF prioritizes grants to small community-based groups seeking to meet with other grassroots organizations, to build collaborative campaigns, and to benefit from organizing, training, and technical assistance opportunities. The program strives to meet the following goals:

- To strengthen the ability of community organizations to participate in public debates. Examples include but are not limited to language translation and interpretation.
- To maximize the impact of community organizing through collaboration and learning across sector or issue area;
- To contribute to collaborative policy and advocacy victories in the realms of social, economic, and environmental justice; and
- To strengthen organizational infrastructure for digital and physical safety and security training in relationship to mass mobilizations and/or organizing.

Eligibility

- Organizations must have 501(c)3 tax-exempt status or a 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor.
- Organizations must be under \$1 million of annual expenses. Note: If you are fiscally sponsored, projects must be under \$1 million of annual expenses.
- Organizations are only eligible for one GXF grant annually.

A typical GXF grant is \$1,000.

Priority is given to:

- Organizations that most clearly demonstrate a membership-led community-organizing model work toward social justice, racial justice, or economic or environmental policy change.
- Organizations that recognize the intersections between their organization's work and broader policies and systems.
- Organizations based in and organizing in low- or moderate-income communities.
- Organizations that operate with a clear racial justice and intersectional framework.
- Organizations that have a strong group of leaders and board members that represent the community they serve and who are accountable to the community.
- Organizations that have strong leadership development programs for their members.
- Organizations that have a concrete plan to grow and to build more power by getting more people involved.
- Organizations that organize collective action of members to bring concerns to public officials and other decision-makers.
- Organizations that can demonstrate alliances with base-building organizations.
- Proposed exchanges or events that promote strategy development and skills transfer between organizations and leaders.

- Organizations working in rural areas, including the southern US, the “rust belt” and the Rocky Mountain States.
- Small organizations that do not have access to large government, corporate or private funding sources, and for whom a small grant from GXF would make a significant impact.
- Applicants that have not received recent GXF funding (grants are typically not awarded for more than three consecutive years).

Exclusions

GXF will not support the following:

- Organizations located outside of the United States;
- Organizations with over \$1 million of annual expenses;
- Direct social services;
- Government agencies and programs;
- Capital expenditure, endowments, construction or renovation programs;
- Scholarship funds or other aid to individuals;
- Schools and educational institutions, cultural institutions, or medical institutions;
- Film, video, publications, or other media projects;
- Grantmaking institutions;
- Research or fellowships.

Reporting

Although a report is not required, Common Counsel wants to stay in touch with grantee partners about their work. In that spirit, grantee partners are invited to share a post-exchange/event recap, photo, article, newsletter, or story highlighting the impact of the exchange/event.

Timeline & How to Apply

Starting in June 2021, GXF grants will be distributed on a monthly rolling cycle through November. Applications submitted by the first Monday of each month will be reviewed for consideration by the end of the month. Turnaround time for requests to be processed and reviewed by our grants committee is approximately 3-4 weeks from the deadline. GXF does not provide funds for events/exchanges that have already occurred. Therefore, please submit applications 3-4 weeks in advance of the application due date.

To apply, register, and log on to Common Counsel’s [online grant portal](#). While the application is open to the public, you will first need to create a user and organizational profile before you can submit an application. If you have further questions about your eligibility or criteria listed above, please contact us at info@commoncounsel.org. You can preview the application questions below.

**COMMON COUNSEL FOUNDATION
GRASSROOTS EXCHANGE FUND APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

General Information:

- Project Name
- Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable)
- Starting Date of Proposed Activities
- Grant Funds Requested
- Organizational Budget

Purpose, Mission Statement, and Demographics:

- **Organization's Mission Statement:** *(Recommended maximum word count: 50)*
- **Purpose of the Exchange or Event:** Please describe briefly the skills or information sought from the proposed exchange/event, the urgency of your request, and how information from the exchange will support networking or collaboration to inform goals and/or campaigns; or how your organization will benefit from proposed organizing, training, and technical assistance opportunities. If the purpose will foster your racial equity or policy goals, please include one sentence describing how. *(Recommended maximum word count: 250)*
- **Membership Demographic.** Please provide a broad overview (not a statistical breakdown) of your member base. We are interested in how your active membership reflects the demographic of the community you serve (in terms of income levels, ethnicity, and/or any other factors which you deem relevant to your work). Include the number of active or dues-paying members. Please describe how your organization plans to increase its base of low- and middle-income members who take leadership on local and regional issues to advance racial, social, economic, or environmental justice. *(Recommended maximum word count: 250)*

Additional Grant Proposal Details:

- **Participants:** Names of those people who will participate in the exchange and their roles within the organization.
- **Exchange Budget:** A budget for the exchange, including a list of potential funding sources *(can be attached as an excel document)*
- **Lobbying:** If applicable, what percentage of this grant will be used for grassroots lobbying or direct lobbying purposes?