

**FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
ANNOUNCEMENT
for**

2024 Rockford REGROW Grants funded by the City of Rockford Cannabis Fund

Reinvest. Energize. Give. Restore Opportunity. Win.

Summary:

The City of Rockford invites you to apply for the 2024 Rockford REGROW Grant Program funded by the Cannabis Fund. This is an equity-driving, restorative justice and community reinvestment grant program funded by the City of Rockford's 3% local tax on adult-use cannabis retail sales. The decades long "war on drugs" and related policies led to disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing which have had long lasting legal, social, economic, and inter-generational consequences on certain disproportionately impacted communities, individuals, and their families, especially communities of color. This program aims to rectify some of these past harms and to reinvest in these disproportionately impacted communities, individuals, and their families directly.

In alignment with the City of Rockford Resolution 2021-7-R, the Rockford REGROW Grant Program shall be used for:

- programs for economic and business development; education; youth programming; job training; housing; health; or other financial assistance to individuals, businesses, and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by cannabis-related laws,
- programs to substantially reduce both the total amount of gun violence and concentrated poverty in the City of Rockford
- programs to protect communities from gun violence through targeted investments and intervention programs, including economic growth and improving family violence prevention, community trauma treatment rates, gun injury victim services, and public health prevention activities,
- programs to promote employment infrastructure and capacity building related to the social determinants of health in the eligible community areas,
- programs to address economic development, violence prevention services, zero entry and re-entry services, and youth development.

For the 2024 funding cycle, \$500,000 is available for Rockford REGROW Grant Program through the following funding opportunities:

- Tier 1
 - TEN (10) quick deployment grants at \$10,000 per grant to support smaller, shorter-term projects.
- Tier 2
 - FOUR (4) one-year grants at \$50,000 total per grant
 - TWO (2) two-year grant at \$100,000 total per grant

The Rockford REGROW Program seeks applications from non-profit and for-profit entities, of any size. Please note, newly formed groups or initiatives with fiscal sponsorship from a nonprofit

entity are also eligible to apply. Multi-entity collaborations, coalitions and/or consortium efforts are also encouraged to apply. A letter of support must be submitted by all collaborating entities, or partners, identifying the nature of the program collaboration.

Applications must be submitted via the REGROW Online Portal by: **October 22nd, 2024 at 5PM CST**

Questions may be directed to: REGROW@rockfordil.gov

SECTION A - GENERAL GRANT INFORMATION

1. About Rockford REGROW Grant Cannabis Program

The decades long "war on drugs" and related policies led to disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing which have had long lasting legal, social, economic, and inter-generational consequences on certain disproportionately impacted communities, individuals, and their families, especially communities of color. In 2020, an ongoing portion of the local cannabis tax revenue was allocated by the Rockford City Council to rectify some of these past harms and to reinvest in these communities directly.

The 2024 Rockford REGROW Grant Program, will have \$500,000 available in grants.

2. Rockford REGROW Grant Purpose

The Rockford Regrow Grant Program aims to aid, strengthen, and foster community reinvestment and wealth creation in disproportionately impacted communities, individuals, and families suffering long-lasting negative impacts caused by over 80 years of cannabis prohibition laws. Cannabis policies and disparate cannabis-related arrests, convictions, and sentencing have had life-altering and inter-generational consequences for these specific communities. The grant program is one small step for the City in acknowledging and addressing the decades of harm caused to vulnerable communities by cannabis criminalization and stigmatization.

Moreover, intergenerational marginalization and community disinvestment are further continued by policies denying U.S. residency, child custody, voting rights, employment, business loans, business licensing, student financial aid, public housing and other public assistance to people with criminal convictions.

The Rockford REGROW Grant Program will distribute funding across a range of projects, programs and services within and serving the designated disproportionately impacted communities and individuals in accordance with the stated intent of Resolution 2021-7-R.

Projects, programs and services that demonstrate institutional policies and practices in equity, community partnerships, and economic development in communities most negatively impacted by cannabis prohibition will be prioritized. Projects proposed by applicants, and primarily serving, those directly impacted by the enforcement of cannabis laws, will receive highest priority.

3. Definitions & Eligibility

"Disproportionately Impacted Community": A census tract within the City of Rockford corporate limits determined by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to be eligible for the State of Illinois Cannabis Equity Program. A map of Disproportionately Impacted Communities can be viewed [here](#).

"Disproportionately impacted individual": An individual who, prior January 13, 2021, was arrested for, convicted of, or adjudicated delinquent for any offense that is eligible for expungement under the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

"Member of disproportionately impacted family": An individual who has a parent, legal guardian, child, spouse, or dependent, or was a dependent of an individual who, prior to January 13, 2021, was arrested for, convicted of, or adjudicated delinquent for any offense that is eligible for expungement under the Illinois Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

Program Eligibility:

The Rockford REGROW Grant Program seeks applications from non-profit and for-profit entities, of any size, within Rockford city limits. This includes community-based organizations, individuals, firms, teams, or consultants. Please note, newly formed groups or initiatives with fiscal sponsorship from a non-profit entity are also eligible to apply.

Multi-entity collaborations, coalitions and/or consortium efforts are also encouraged to apply. Applicants are encouraged to be innovative with existing services, explore new initiatives, or expand partnerships and clients served.

(see Allowable and Unallowable Costs below.)

4. Grant Funding

For the 2024 funding cycle, \$500,000 is available for the Rockford REGROW Grant Fund. The City of Rockford will return cannabis funds to the community through the following grants:

- TWO (2) two-year grants at \$100,000 total per grant (\$50,000 per year)
- FOUR (4) one-time grants at \$50,000 total per grant.
- TEN (10) quick deployment one-time grants for short term projects or events, \$10,000 per grant

For 2024 Rockford REGROW Grant recipients, work is expected to start by January 1, 2025. Quick deployments grant projects must begin in the fall of 2024.

Distribution of grant funds will be determined on a program by program basis and defined in the specific grant agreement.

5. Timeline for Grant Process

Key dates for this grant opportunity are as follows:

MILESTONE	TIMELINE
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TIER 1 APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT 8 AM CST	October 1 st , 2024
Informational Session	October 9 th , 2024
TIER 1 APPLICATIONS DUE BY 5 PM CST	October 22 nd , 2024
Recommendation to P&D Committee for 2024 Tier 1 Grantees	November 25 th , 2024
Recommendation to City Council	December 2 nd , 2024
Public Announcement of 2024 Recipients	December 3 rd , 2024

SECTION B - WORK REQUIREMENTS

Deliverables and Schedule

Deliverables are work products and information that grantees must provide to the City such as reports, draft documents, data, interim findings, trainings, meeting presentations, etc. Rockford REGROW Grant recipients are encouraged to provide deliverables via email, as appropriate.

Rockford REGROW Grantee Deliverables shall include (but not limited to):

- Monthly mini-progress reports aligned with pre-scheduled individualized check-in meetings
- Narrative: One major progress report at the halfway point (50% completion) to account for the delivery of services, output measures, and any programmatic observations or highlights.
- An itemized account of expenditures submitted with each invoice for reimbursement.
- A final report to account for the delivery of services and output measures including:
 - Total number of participants and information about participants referred per project/program activity.
 - Aggregate data and analysis of confidential and voluntarily-contributed demographic information of service participants (demographics form will be provided).
 - Other metrics defined by the Applicant(s) in their application.
 - All deliverables and resulting work products from this grant agreement will become the property of the City of Rockford.

Place of Activity

The project/program work must benefit the City of Rockford community members and primarily be delivered within Rockford city limits.

Period of Activity

The expected project/program start date for the quick deployment grants is Fall/Winter, 2024
The expected project/program start date for the one-time cycle is January 1, 2025 for a period of 12 months until December 31, 2025.

The expected project/program start date for the two-year cycle is January 1, 2025 for a period of 24 months until December 31, 2027.

Allowable and Unallowable Costs for Rockford REGROW Grants

Activities, efforts, and materials needed for the performance of the grant program/project are generally eligible expenses for reimbursement. Costs accrued solely to promote or advance the awardee business or organization may not be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible expenses must be included in a program budget with the application. Any modifications to the budget must be approved by the City of Rockford prior to incurring expenses.

Unallowable costs include (but are not limited to): some political activities (for example, activities to promote a specific candidate); purchase of cannabis inventory; purchase of alcoholic beverages; purchase of real estate.