Starting a Groundwork Trust in your Community
About Groundwork USA

The only network of local organizations devoted to transforming the natural and built environment of low resourced communities.

- National enterprise, local roots
- Working where environment, economy, and civic engagement intersect
- Broad participation in building equitable, healthy and resilient communities for all
Our Network

Groundwork Atlanta
Groundwork Bridgeport
Groundwork Buffalo
Groundwork Cincinnati/Mill Creek
Groundwork Dallas
Groundwork Denver
Groundwork Elizabeth, NJ
Groundwork Hudson Valley
Groundwork Indianapolis
Groundwork Jacksonville

Groundwork Lawrence, MA
Groundwork Milwaukee
Groundwork Mobile County
Groundwork New Orleans
Groundwork Rhode Island
Groundwork Richmond, CA
Groundwork Richmond, VA
Groundwork San Diego-Chollas Creek, CA
Groundwork Somerville, MA
Groundwork Southcoast, MA
Our Commitment, Core Values

- Equity -- access to opportunity and well-being for all
- Green, healthy and resilient neighborhoods
- Leading by doing
- Investing in people and in place
- Community engagement and collaboration -- everyone has a role to play
A Replicable, Adaptable Model

- Informed by best practices
- Tailored for each unique community
- Leverages existing assets, opportunities
- Driven by meaningful community engagement and cross-sector collaboration
Our Focus Areas

- Equitable Local Economies
- Healthy Communities
- Transforming Brownfields
- Revitalizing Urban Waters
- Youth Development
What do we mean when we say “equitable development”? 

- Everyone should benefit from development
- Revitalization without displacement
- Community defines “benefits”
- Asset-based planning
- Mutual accountability; building trusting relationships
- Collaborative, inclusive community engagement
- Finding common ground (i.e., balancing community priorities, developer/financing/regulatory realities)
- No “finish line”
What is a Groundwork Trust?

- Independent 501c3
- Trusts are established by local stakeholders in a community
- Intermediaries between local government and neighborhood residents
- Together, Groundwork USA and the Groundwork Trusts make up the Groundwork USA Network
Our History
Inter-Agency Agreement Supports Groundwork USA Network
Establishing a New Groundwork Trust
Overview of the New Trust Process

- Steering Committee
- Letter of Interest
- Site Visit
- Full Proposal
- Feasibility Study / Vote
- Launching Phase
Forming a Steering Committee

Assessing local interest and support for the Groundwork model
The Steering Committee

- Representative/reflective of community
- Team players commit to 6-month process
- Collaborators agree to “ground rules” for participation
The Letter of Interest

Describing your community’s ideas for how Groundwork could take root
The Letter of Interest

- 4-5 page letter
- Demographics; environmental, economic & community development challenges
- Demonstrated community interest
- Opportunities for the potential new Trust
- Lead organization and contact person
- Ability to leverage local funding (municipal, private, in-kind)
- Past/current funding or technical assistance from EPA, NPS-RTCA, and/or GWUSA
What is the potential for Groundwork to...

- Facilitate creation, improvement, stewardship of parks, greenways, gardens?
- Stimulate local economic revitalization that is accessible to all
- Increase local capacity to address “3Es” (environment, economy, equity)?
- Engage stakeholders in planning and development of projects, programs, partnerships?
The Site Visit

Orienting the Selection Committee to local people and conditions
Why Groundwork?

And why now?
Diving more deeply into what the Groundwork model could accomplish
Elements of the full proposal

Letter of Support from Highest Ranking Local Official

- Commitment to providing required local match of at least $35K/year for first three years

Commitment of private sector match of at least $10K/year

More Fully Developed Description of Potential

- Likely first partners
- “Low-hanging fruit” projects that will build momentum
- Amplification of an inclusive “big idea” or vision the Trust would champion
The Feasibility Study / Vote

Where the rubber meets the road: Planning to implement the Groundwork model locally
The Feasibility Study Process

- 6-month process guided by GWUSA, NPS staff with Steering Committee
- Up to $7,000 available from GWUSA for local project consultant to work with Steering Committee
- Explore needs, opportunities, priorities
- ID projects, programs, partnerships
- “Meet and greet” info meetings to build relationships and gain commitments from potential funders
- Yay/nay vote from Steering Committee to proceed
The Launching Phase

Taking the steps needed to get doors open and lights on, staff hired, community engaged
The Launching Process

- Begins once GWUSA Board okays the Feasibility Study & Launch Strategy for the new Groundwork Trust
- Involves outlining a concept for the “Launch Event,” which announces Groundwork to the broader community
- New Trust signs MOU with GWUSA and commits to milestones in organizational development
Launching Phase Framework

NPS/EPA Seed Funding, Through GWUSA

- $190K dispersed over 3-4 years, with $90K for the launch year
- Remaining $100K (as available) is released over 3 years in annual increments of $25K-$50K

NPS/GWUSA Task Agreement

- Deliverables help build Trust organizational and program capacity during launch phase
- Provides vehicle for federal funding

Fiduciary Agreement

- Between GWUSA and new Trust
- Provides for nonprofit status while IRS 501(c)(3) application is pending
Next Steps

Anticipated Timing

- LOIs to be submitted by July 31, 2019
- Notifications of selection will go out around August 13, 2019
- Site visits – August and September
- Anticipated due date for full proposal submission is October 15, 2019
- Anticipated notification of the community selected around November 15, 2019
- Feasibility study will begin around December 2019
Questions?

Stacey Moran
Director of Operations
Groundwork USA
stacey@groundworkusa.org

Heather Passchier
Groundwork Program Manager
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance
National Park Service
heather_passchier@nps.gov