

Groundwork Lawrence



FOUNDED: 2001

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$1,047,744

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Groundwork Lawrence (GWL) brings together government, schools, businesses, and other nonprofits to lead community-driven initiatives focused on building a healthier, stronger, more vibrant city. GWL restores and revitalizes open spaces through parks, community gardens, greenways, and trails, and provides programs centered on youth education, job training, fresh food access, environmental awareness, healthy living, and community engagement and stewardship.

GWL knows that a community's social and economic well-being is inextricably linked to the quality of its physical environment. Research shows that improvements in infrastructure yield significant benefits:

- Adjacency to a stabilized lot, improved through cleaning and greening, increases a home's base value by about 15 percent
- When people have access to parks they exercise more, and increased exercise improves health outcomes. Every \$1 spent on trails yields almost \$3 in medical cost savings
- Schools that use outdoor classrooms and other forms of experiential education produce significant student gains in social studies, science, language arts, and math

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Groundwork Lawrence aims to raise \$2.1 million over the next two years to expand its education and job training programming, to increase access to fresh food in the city, to secure and develop new open space and trails, and to build organizational capacity to sustain planned growth. Due to GWL's unique ability to engage multiple stakeholders and lead successful partnerships, an investment in GWL leverages additional resources from across the community to create significant change.

TWO-YEAR GOALS

- Triple the number of youth engaged in school-based programming (500 to 1,500)
- 50 percent increase in the number of Green Team youth summer jobs (20 to 30)
- 42 percent increase in sales of fresh food
- 8 percent increase in open space and trails
- 28 percent increase in staff capacity to support program growth and create robust outcome measurement system

WAYS TO INVEST

FINANCIAL

- \$60,000 funds a new education program coordinator
- \$45,000 develops a new database and outcome measurement system
- \$12,000 builds a new community garden
- \$3,500 funds one Green Team youth position for a year

IN-KIND

- A pickup truck to transport tools, supplies, and gardening materials
- Communications, database and marketing support
- Garden construction support
- Board and Advisory Council members

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Heather McMann, MBA, joined GWL in 2005 and became executive director in 2009. Heather brought her varied background to GWL, having worked for a state granting agency, a think tank, and numerous social service agencies.

GWL has a 13-member board of directors that represents a wide range of sectors, including education, social services, investment management, brownfields, land conservation, legal services, large corporations, and small businesses. The board is led by: Sarah B. Young, *MA School Building Authority*, Eli Levine, *Brownfields Recovery Group*, Linda Zimmerman, *Neighbors in Need*, and Rosa Lopez, *New Balance*.

GWL also has a 15-person Advisory Council.

The Groundwork Lawrence Model



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To be a steward of Lawrence and its green spaces is not just a job, it is also an amazing privilege. As stewards we have the joy of knowing that we ARE making a change.

Jaxell

GREEN TEAM MEMBER, AGE 16

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Open Space and Environmental Improvements

GWL works to make the Greater Lawrence area a cleaner, greener, safer place to live, work, and play. Its **open space and environment** projects focus on the city’s underutilized outdoor spaces. Vacant and often contaminated open spaces are transformed into parks, playgrounds, gardens, orchards, wooded trails, and pathways. These improvements promote healthy pursuits like walking, running, cycling, and gardening, and research shows that access to public parks and recreational facilities is strongly linked to reduced crime and juvenile delinquency. GWL works with community members and partners to envision and design the open space improvements they would like to see. GWL’s role is to make these dreams become a reality.

GWL will leverage the successful completion of the Spicket River Greenway to catapult new trail development projects and connections forward, including the Merrimack Riverwalk Trail, Manchester Lawrence Rail to Multi-Use Trail, and the North Canal tow path. These projects will help the community achieve the dual goals of riverfront restoration and neighborhood revitalization.

GWL’s GreenStreets program helps Lawrence residents become stewards of their community. Homeowners whose yards are within 20 feet of a public way are offered assistance in selecting, planting, and subsequently caring for a tree. With nearly 150 trees planted so far, GreenStreets has already contributed to less flooding, lower energy costs, and better water quality.

Community Engagement

GWL **engages the Greater Lawrence community** through a series of volunteer events and family activities such as beautification projects, city-wide cleanups, and the annual kite festival that has brought families together for 14 years. Cleanup events routinely attract hundreds of residents, over half of whom are youth. These activities increase residents’ sense of belonging and foster their ownership in making the city a safer, greener, healthier place to live.





I have lived in Lawrence all my life. It's been amazing to see the growth of the city in just the short span of my son's life. I remember when he was first born I would travel just to have a decent park for him to play in. To see the changes around the city, it's been amazing, we can just walk anywhere. We feel safe.

Loreen Lopez
GWL BOARD MEMBER
& LAWRENCE RESIDENT



Education and Job Training

GWL's education and employment initiatives include the **Green Team**, which provides paid, part-time positions for Lawrence high school aged youth to learn about and lead local environmental and public health initiatives, challenge peers to do community service, and participate in hands-on improvement projects throughout the city. Other education programs include the **Urban Adventures Summer Program**, a nature-based education program based in the heart of Lawrence, and **school-based programs** that aim to increase knowledge of nutrition, environmental science, and gardening topics through hands-on learning that combines physically active games, scientific inquiry, health and nutrition content, and work in the garden. GWL also offers a **Green Jobs Training Program**, which prepares unemployed and underemployed adults for the growing green job sector.

Fresh Food Access and Healthy Living

Research shows that when gardeners save "food dollars" by producing their own food, their overall food consumption patterns and dietary knowledge improve. GWL's **fresh food access** programs combine access with education in an effort to reduce the city's disproportionately high rates of obesity and diet-related diseases. GWL increases fresh food access by promoting and supporting food subsidy tools, developing and programming community gardens, and planning and running farmers markets, where prices for fresh food are often lower than at grocery and corner stores. GWL also offers healthy living programs that include cooking classes focused on integrating healthy foods into culturally appropriate meals.

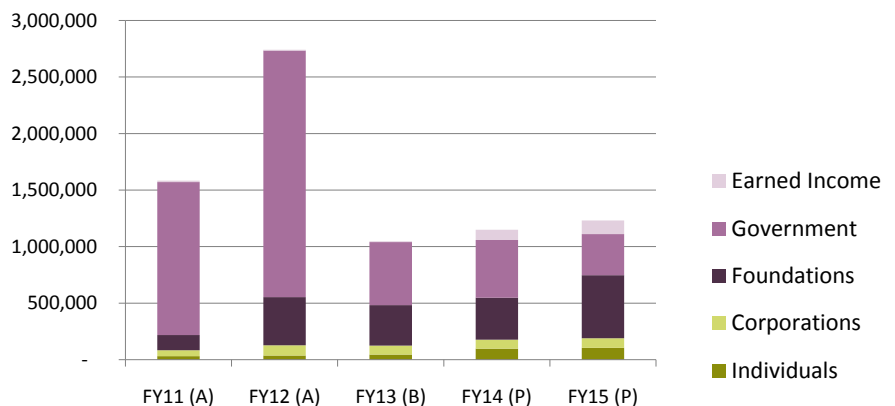
Financial Sustainability

GWL has experienced substantial growth in the past three years, tripling staff size as well as undertaking capital intensive public infrastructure improvements such as the Spicket River Greenway. Our planned expansion includes growth in earned income from educational programming for the Lawrence Public Schools and investments in fundraising capacity to support programs and open space acquisition. Note: FY11 and FY12 revenues include \$785,000 and \$1,865,000 respectively from the Commonwealth of MA for the Spicket River Greenway.

KEY INVESTORS

- COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
- CITY OF LAWRENCE
- NEW BALANCE FOUNDATION
- MA SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE
- ABBOTT AND DOROTHY STEVENS FOUNDATION
- BANK OF AMERICA FOUNDATION
- AMELIA PEABODY FOUNDATION

FIGURE 1: Revenue by Source



SUCCESS STORY:
Spicket River Greenway

GWL served as the catalyst and project manager for the transformative Spicket River Greenway. The Greenway, a three-mile-long “emerald bracelet” of green spaces and walking paths, connects seven recently built or rehabilitated parks to approximately 27,500 residents and seven schools through Lawrence’s poorest neighborhoods.

For over 12 years, thousands of residents, multiple nonprofit partners, the City of Lawrence, and numerous public agencies were involved in decision making, planning, fundraising, and troubleshooting to move the project forward.

GWL coordinated community outreach, environmental investigation and remedial activities, site design and planning, legal and real estate transaction work, fundraising, project permitting, construction, and volunteer involvement to make this community dream a reality.

The Spicket River Greenway is a shining example of the value that a beautiful, community-designed open space can bring to a city. Thanks to the strong commitment and partnership of city and state officials and neighborhood stakeholders, the Greenway will celebrate its ribbon-cutting this June.



Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures Groundwork Lawrence will track to demonstrate progress, capture lessons learned, and make course corrections.

Note: Fiscal year is July 1–June 30.

	FY 2013	FY 2014 (P)	FY 2015 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE			
# of square feet of open space improved	27,000	17,500	10,725
# of youth engaged in school-based programming	500	1,000	1,500
Number of Green Team youth summer jobs	20	25	30
Fresh food sales	\$72,000	\$85,000	\$102,000
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY			
Expand capacity of educational programming	Hire program director	Add 1.5 FTE	Add 1.5 FTE
Expand database and outcome measurement system	Analyze current systems	Study best practices and plan launch	Test & launch new system
Expand fundraising and marketing capacity	Create development and marketing plan	Add 1 FTE, launch plan	Evaluate plan
Total revenue	\$1.05M	\$1.15M	\$1.23M

Social Impact

Measuring GWL’s effectiveness at making Lawrence a great place to live, work, and play is a complex task. All projects led by GWL involve partnerships and collaborations, interconnected efforts among nonprofits, government, and the private sector. Some projects take years to develop, yielding intermediate outcomes as they progress toward completion. GWL knows from research that its priority areas of work—community engagement, healthy food access, environmental improvements, education, and green job training—are the building blocks for a healthy community, and indicators of progress in each area are measured and tracked. In the next two years, GWL will continue to develop its evaluation processes by implementing a robust measurement system.

INDICATOR	SINCE 2001
# of residents living within a 10-minute walk of the Spicket River Greenway	27,500
% of Green Team alumni attending college	Over 90%
Playgrounds and parks built or improved	13
Amount of clean, safe growing and park spaces	50 Acres
Volunteer hours donated to community projects, including river and park cleanups, tree planting, and beautification	60,683
INDICATORS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION	
Community gardeners report an increase in social capital	Not measured yet
Youth participants demonstrate a change in perception of the city, an increase in their sense of place, and an increase in their understanding of their urban environment	Not measured yet