



## Frequently Asked Questions

Welcome to the GROW Grants FAQ page! This is a living document designed to clarify aspects of the GROW Grants application processes, elaborate on certain program rules, and our grading team's considerations. FAQs are added as we receive feedback and questions.

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## Applications, Process, & Eligibility

### FAQ: Is there a minimum score I need to get to have my application approved?

#### Answer:

There is no minimum numerical score to pass. When needed, the GROW Grants team tries to work with applicants to either clarify or adjust parts of their projects so we *can* approve their funding. Applicants very typically receive funding so long as they are amenable to suggested changes and conditions.

However, applications are generally approved or denied based on specific factors that include:

- A. The Grants Team judges' collective assessment of your project's Purpose, Outcomes, and Management,
- B. grant funds available for distribution versus the proven need of other applicants, and
- C. additional considerations that may arise during the assessment process.

Separately, there are pass/fail elements that we look at. These elements are the "**Required Criteria**" that are described under "Indivisible", "Collaboration and/or Capacity-Building", and "Budget and Accounting" within the [rubric](#). Failure to pass these means the grant is denied on *technical* grounds. Additionally, your project must also abide by the [Political Spending requirements under the Distributed Fundraising program](#), so keep this in mind as you plan your project.

### FAQ: How long does it take to receive our grant money if we are awarded?

#### Answer:

If the group that submitted the grant application already has a Distributed Fundraising account linked to their Treasurer, these funds can potentially be transferred into this account as early as the same day they are notified of their award.

The factors that can delay this transfer are:

- A. How quickly the applicant and/or treasurer responds to the [award notification email](#) sent on the 1st Tuesday of the succeeding month after the application deadline and provides the information requested.
- B. How quickly the Treasurer signs the [grant award letter](#) that is sent after the award notification email is responded to.
- C. If the group and the Treasurer applied for a [Distributed Fundraising account very recently](#), before the application deadline, it can take 1-2 weeks to onboard groups into the Distributed Fundraising program. Time is needed to set up their account, mail their account card to the Treasurer, and then activate the account to begin transferring funds.

## FAQ: How soon can we apply for another grant after receiving one?

Answer:

Groups can apply month to month for a GROW Grant; The same group or coalition of groups awarded a grant to fund a specific project can apply for another grant in subsequent rounds - whether to request more funds for the same project or to fund a *different* project.

However, each state/statewide network is only able to receive two, Tier IV (\$8,000) grants within a year.

If you are applying for another grant to fund a project that was previously awarded a grant, **you will need to have spent approximately 75% (a little under is okay) of your first/most recent grant before you can be approved for more funding.** Your spending of grant funds is recorded in your Monthly Reports through the Distributed Fundraising program.

**NOTE:** Please understand that our grant fund is not infinite, and the needs of other groups who have not yet received a grant will be weighed against those re-applying for funds each month. **Groups are *not guaranteed* to receive a grant every time they apply.** We want to ensure that groups from across the country have a fair opportunity to have their projects funded as we *do our best* to sustain the ongoing work of previous grant recipients.

## FAQ: A grant was just awarded to a group in our state. Does that hurt our chances of getting our grant approved?

Answer:

Geographic representation is currently included as an additional “consideration” in the grant rubric. Since we have a limited amount of funding, we want to make sure to have a thoughtful geographic distribution of grants. If one other group in your state has been awarded a grant, that likely won’t impact your grant application. However, if we have awarded a higher number of grants in an individual state relative to all others, we likely will consider that as we make funding decisions.

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## Statewide Grants

### FAQ: Why are Statewide grants of up to \$8,000 limited to just two per state, per year, when grants at the other funding levels are not?

Answer:

This rule is meant to help GROW Grants program sustain its budget throughout the year and ensure we have enough funds to distribute support to as many groups as we can, as often as we can.

While groups are able to apply for multiple grants at the other levels (\$1000, \$2500, \$4000) throughout the year (so long as they are spending any grants they've previously received), **we are limiting the number of times that any one State Structure or set of 10+ groups in a particular state can acquire multiple, \$8,000 grants in a year.**

**We may consider making exceptions to this yearly limit based on two factors:**

- A. Emergency actions or statewide advocacy pressure within that state.

*The GROW Grants Team would directly contact previous statewide grant recipients in this situation.*

- B. Available funds in our budget closer to the end of the year (e.g. October, November). Around that time, we may have the flexibility to consider giving a third statewide project award to any state that had previously received two \$8,000 grants.

*Please contact the GROW Grants Team if you are thinking about applying for a third statewide grant around this time and would like to know our capacity to consider it.*

### FAQ: My group and others across my state are joining together for a state-wide project, but our state doesn't have a large number of Indivisible groups in it. Even if we are not 10+ groups in total, are we still able to apply for an \$8,000 grant?

Answer:

Yes; even if yours is a “small” state with only a few indivisible groups, this does not preclude you from accessing grant amounts up to \$8000 for state-wide projects.

This \$8000 grant amount level, or “tier”, is indeed reserved for highly collaborative projects at a larger scale than the lower three grant tiers. Because some states have very large Indivisible networks, we have the requirement of 10 or more Indivisible groups to apply for the highest tier. However, the Grants Team is considerate of the fact that some states may not have 10 groups within their networks.

Because of this, this tier has qualifying eligibility beyond a hard numerical minimum. Alternatively, this highest grant tier is accessible to groups if:

- A. They can demonstrate that their projects are at such a scale that it benefits a large state-wide endeavor benefiting, coordinated, and led by *multiple* Indivisible groups, and which merits support up to \$8000—even if the number of groups involved is lower than 10, or
- B. The groups applying are coordinated across different states (“cross-state”) in such a way that they meet the 10-group minimum or can demonstrate that their cross-state project is at such a scale that it merits up to \$8000.

We want to open the door for more Indivisibles, no matter where they are or the size of their state-wide networks, to seize opportunities for support and be encouraged to coordinate across their state or with those groups in other states for larger-scale projects

### **FAQ: What makes the “State Structure Building” category of GROW grants different from existing GROW grants?**

**Answer:**

The “State Structure Building” category under the *Project Elements* section is the *optional* checkbox that groups mark that flags their proposal for review and potential support under a specific program Indivisible is running for statewide, coordinated networks of Indivisible groups (a.k.a. State Structures)

Those who check off this “State Structure Building” box in the grant application must show how their proposal is geared toward long-term investment in their current or future state structure: how their GROW Grant will invest in their state structure’s communication, collaboration, ability to take action together across the state, DEI knowledge & practice, and organizing infrastructure (e.g. shared tools, platforms, technology, etc).

Those who check off this “State Structure Building” box will have their application looked at by Indivisible staff who specialize in state structure development as part of the regular review process. They, alongside your state’s Organizer, can potentially provide additional support and coordination for your project.

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## Activities

### *Election-Specific Activities -----*

#### **FAQ: Can GROW Grants fund election work? What are the limits for this kind of activity?**

##### **Answer:**

GROW grants can be used to do election awareness, voter engagement, and candidate support during an election. However, there are important restrictions and nuances on GROW Grants being used to fund such activities

- A. GROW Grants **can, with pre-approval**, be used for independent expenditures (spending supporting a candidate without any coordination with that candidate or his/her campaign) supporting **races at the federal level** (e.g. President, U.S. House, U.S. Senate).
- B. GROW Grant funds **cannot** be used for independent expenditures to support **state and local races** (e.g. Governor, state assembly, county commissioner, etc), including **state or local propositions** (e.g. "Support 'Prop 1'" **once they are on the ballot**).

You can [refer to this explainer](#) to see what activities and purchases can, and cannot, be paid for using funds processed through the [Distributed Fundraising program](#) (as GROW Grants are).

If there are other questions on this, please feel free to reach out to your regional Organizers. We also encourage applicants to attend the [GROW Grants Office Hours](#) if they'd like to go over questions like these in greater depth with the GROW Grants team.

#### **FAQ: Are we able to use a GROW grant for GOTV or other election actions that we are doing in collaboration with another organization?**

##### **Answer:**

Yes; you and other Indivisible groups are allowed to collaborate with other advocacy organizations. However, there are two important items to acknowledge:

- A. These other organizations do not count towards the number of "Participating Groups" that affect your grant level eligibility.
- B. Since GROW Grants is a 501(c)(4) program, groups cannot share grant funds or any resources/materials bought with grant funds with any organizations that are registered

Political Action Committees (PACs) or other entities that make direct or in-kind contributions to, or coordinate with, candidate campaigns and political parties.

## **FAQ: Our group wants to write postcards and letters to mail to voters and/or promote our group. Can we use a GROW Grant to pay for postage and mailing materials?**

### **Answer:**

We know sending postcards and letters to people is a popular activity among Indivisible groups in their GOTV and recruitment efforts. Still, these activities can have costs that don't always translate into meaningful investments towards groups' capacity-building and collaboration.

**While GROW Grants can be used for postcarding and letter-writing activities, the GROW Grants review team will have specific expectations and limitations for any proposal that intends to use grant money for these activities.** These requirements and expectations are meant to align these activities with the primary purpose of GROW Grants: ensuring grants are being used for investments in groups' organizing capacity, membership growth, and helping them collaborate with other Indivisibles.

#### ***Please note:***

*Indivisible will provide more information about other upcoming programs that are outside the GROW program and meant to logically and financially support groups' postcard activities.*

*If you're interested in Indivisible National-led postcard programs, we suggest [signing up for the weekly emails](#) to stay in the know about when those are launched.*

### ***GROW Requirements & Expectations for postcarding and letter-writing activities***

- 1. GROW Grants must not be used exclusively to pay for postage** (e.g. stamps). Any proposal whose budget is *entirely* dedicated to paying for postage will not be approved by our review team.

*Why? While the GROW program is here to support groups' material needs, we have an objective to invest in as many groups as we can throughout the entire year while on a limited budget. The more money we approve for postage diminishes available grant funds that we could provide groups for their investments in other activities and organizing materials/tools—investments that, we argue, better connect with the group capacity-building and collaboration we want to see through the GROW Grant program.*

*Postage is often the bulk cost of any postcarding effort. Our research of past Indivisible postcard programs shows that between 88% and 99% of the money spent on postcarding is spent on stamps alone. The other 1% - 12% was actually on cardstock and printing costs. There are so many other ways groups can*

*spend their grant funds and postage is just not the most ideal investment for GROW Grants.*

- 2. If a large majority of your grant budget is dedicated to postage, the grant review team *will very likely recommend* that a proposal's budget be re-balanced so it invests more in other line items related to your project.**
  - a. Our review team may also recommend using your other Distributed Fundraising money to cover these postage costs, or use our other support programs as supplements, as a condition of funding your proposal.
- 3. Articulate any, or all, of the following as components for your entire project:**
  - a. How you intend to recruit new members by inviting people to the event(s) wherein you are writing the mailers;
  - b. How the materials you are mailing will promote your Indivisible group(s), provide ways for people to connect with you for future events/activities, and how the group is following up with new contacts;
  - c. How your group is using this activity as an opportunity to build your relationship with other Indivisible groups, develop leadership in current members, and/or reengage inactive members; and
  - d. How you intend to invest this grant into your group's organizing capabilities *beyond* purchasing the materials for your postcards and letters  
E.g. Using this grant for things like group-branded merchandise for your efforts, web hosting platform subscriptions to enhance communications, materials for in-person voter turnout, etc.
- 4. Any postcards or letters *that mention electoral candidates* in either text or images must have their content approved through our [Political Spending Review](#) process before you use a grant for their printing and distribution.** You do not need to have your text/graphics approved before *applying* for a grant. However, as a condition of your awarded grant, you will need to have those texts/images approved before you use a grant for printing or ordering those mailers. Also, they must be approved before using any grant-purchased stamps for those mailers' distribution.

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## FAQ: My group wants to apply for a grant to pay for an organizer/fellow/intern to help us with our activities/event. Is this allowed?

Answer:

No. Because of the [restrictions included in Indivisible's Distributed Fundraising program](#), paying staff or independent contractors as a paycheck or stipend is not allowed.

However, funding is allowed to pay vendors for “services rendered”. Receipts or invoices must be provided to the group so they can include those in their Monthly Spending reports under the [Distributed Fundraising program](#).

## FAQ: Can we use our GROW Grant for mutual aid work?

Answer:

Yes, we encourage groups to pursue mutual aid work within the community as part of their capacity-building efforts. We consider this “capacity building” within the GROW Grant Program insofar as such activity helps your group(s) members grow their community relationships and outreach efforts, and foster goodwill within the community that is important for any movement at the local level.

A few guidelines on how GROW Grants are allowed, to be used practically for mutual aid work:

- A. Grant money cannot be directly donated to another organization or charity in full (see *next FAQ question*).
- B. Grant money cannot be used to buy items/supplies purposed for donations.
- C. Grant money **can** be used to cover expenses for a fundraiser, **but**:
  - a. the fundraiser must benefit the Indivisible group(s) involved directly as they raise funds that will *then* be donated directly or used to purchase donation items;
  - b. if the fundraiser is meant for another organization’s benefit, the Indivisible group(s) involved must demonstrate how they will also benefit from planned recruitment and promotion of their advocacy issues at the fundraiser.

## FAQ: Can we use our GROW Grant as a donation to another organization as part of our community and partnership-building efforts with others doing work aligned with our values?

Answer:

No; A GROW Grant can only **partially** be used to distribute money to another organization if it is a “fee for service”—**not a “donation”**. There must be a service rendered, essentially, by the organization the same as if they were a vendor, and an invoice will be required.

“Services rendered”, in this case, can be considered as:

- A. Paying another organization for their staff’s time helping with your event (not to the staff themselves).
- B. Paying for / renting another organization’s equipment or venue space.
- C. Paying an organization for having their leader(s) speak at your event, is treated like a speaker fee, up to \$600.

OR

Instead of a speaker fee, the speaker asks for a “voluntary contribution” – also at a maximum of \$600 – from your group made to an organization of their choice. This would need an invoice, and must be treated as a “payment for service”.

*NOTE: An invoice from the identified organization would still be required in this situation, and this would still need to be reported as a “GROW Grant expense” in your Monthly Reporting*

Furthermore, there are certain conditions around using part of your grant as a donation to another organization that need to be cleared through the Indivisible Legal Team:

- D. The recipient organization, if not a vendor, must be an approved 501(c)(3) organization or a 501(c)(4) organization if they are engaging in advocacy activity with your group for your project. The recipient organization should not be a partisan political organization.
- E. We will need the name and contact info for the organization in your application so we may verify the group with our Legal team during our review.
- F. You will be required to obtain an invoice and written acknowledgment, [per IRS regulations](#), from the organization for the amount. The invoice will need to be included in your Monthly Reporting with Distributed Fundraising when reporting GROW Grant spending.

Additionally, Indivisible groups are not allowed to “donate” or distribute the entirety of their grant to another organization. This would not constitute any collaborative or capacity-building activity on the part of the *Indivisible* groups. GROW Grants, in principle, are not meant to be used as sub-grants to other organizations for work that we want Indivisible groups to be doing themselves.

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## Grant Spending and Allowed Expenses

### FAQ: Can I use grant funds to pay for the services of a third-party vendor to support my project?

Answer:

You are allowed to pay a *vendor* for services using grant funds, but **certain conditions must be met for this to be a simple process** -- one that your group can manage without the need for a contract or arrangement through Indivisible National:

- A. The person you are paying for services must be a licensed vendor.
- B. The vendor must be able to accept payment through your group's TrueLink card under the Distributed Fundraising program.
- C. There is a limited payment structure timeline (1-2 payments). They cannot be hired on a "payroll" structure as if they were an employee.

*(Continued)* Due to legal and financial requirements within the Distributed Fundraising program, there are certain circumstances where the payment structure/amount for the vendor will require Indivisible National to arrange an alternative method for your group to pay the vendor as part of your project. The GROW Grants team, alongside Indivisible's Finance and Legal teams, will assess if this is necessary on a case-by-case basis, and we'll issue guidance if your project is approved.

### FAQ: Can we buy/be reimbursed for items bought through the Indivisible store if those items are a part of our project?

Answer:

**Regrettably, no.** For legal and ethical reasons, the GROW program cannot be used to purchase or reimburse you for items bought directly from the Indivisible online store.

If you want to purchase Indivisible-branded items for your event but need help covering this cost, please contact us at [supportteam@indivisible.org](mailto:supportteam@indivisible.org) and we will explain an alternative way to request assistance for these items.

### FAQ: Can my group apply for a GROW grant to reimburse expenses for a project we are already executing?

Answer:

Generally, applicants should apply *before* the project expenses are made, and then we send the grant to their Distributed Fundraising account. The GROW Grants Team emphasizes that you apply for a grant to spend this money on *future* expenses for your grant-approved project(s).

However, while it's not something the GROW Grants team makes a general practice, **we're willing to consider a reimbursement as it is *technically* possible.**

In addition to satisfying the metrics for a grant to be awarded, approval for reimbursement would also be contingent upon:

- A. the activity, as described within the application, is the one approved for a GROW grant,
- B. the items purchased are expressly tied to the project detailed in the application,
- C. the activity in the application is ongoing or is a recent activity completed **within 31 days before that month's application deadline.**
- D. the intent to use funds for reimbursement is detailed in the project description outlined in the application, and
- E. the expenses you want to be reimbursed are listed as line-item costs for that project within the budget the group submits with their application.

It is not guaranteed that the grant would be awarded; any grant applications, even those meant for reimbursement, would still go through the [normal review and grading process](#) by the GROW Grants Team. If such a grant is approved, though, the group would need to submit those [original expense receipts](#) and label them as "reimbursements" as part of the Monthly Reporting. Monthly Reporting is how grant spending is tracked through the Distributed Fundraising program and is required for awardees once they start spending their grant money.

## **FAQ: Can we use a GROW Grant to pay for speaker's fees?**

**Answer:**

Yes; you can use a GROW grant to pay for a speaker's fee **up to \$600** so long as an invoice is provided for payment.

Grow Grants may be used to pay a speaker's fee, but—whether you are paying the speaker directly or paying a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) organization for that speaker's time—**an invoice from the speaker's LLC or from an identified organization is required** as documentation for payment.

*NOTE: The invoice must not come from a speaker's electoral campaign or from a PAC.*

*NOTE: Invoices will need to be reported as a "GROW Grant expense" in your Monthly Report for Distributed Fundraising.*

## **FAQ: Can my group purchase gas cards with a GROW Grant as part of my project/activity?**

### **Answer:**

No, but you can set a portion of your project budget to provide **gas/travel reimbursements** for your event/activity participants if it will significantly assist attendance at an event or the execution of your project.

There are a few guidelines you will need to follow:

- A. Gas reimbursements must not constitute the entirety of your project budget and must be attached to a larger endeavor; it cannot be the only expense within a submitted budget.
- B. It will be on the group to portion out how much in reimbursements you will offer each participant.
- C. Your group's Treasurer will be responsible for receiving travelers' receipts, paying them from the group's Distributed Fundraising account using Venmo, and submitting those receipts as "GROW Grant expenses" in your Monthly Report for Distributed Fundraising.

## **FAQ: Can my group purchase prizes as part of a competitive or raffle aspect of my project/activity?**

### **Answer:**

No. GROW Grants will not fund the purchase of prizes or giveaway items in order to avoid legal compliance issues within the Distributed Fundraising program.

Distributed Fundraising prohibits funds from being used for "direct payments" or "rewards" to individuals. We want to avoid any confusion or inconsistent application of this rule, so GROW will not allow the purchase of any giveaway items as part of a project, as they are reasonably considered "rewards" to project participants.

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## Other Program Rules

### Can we use unspent GROW Grant funds for expenses that are different from our original, approved budget?

If your project has concluded and you still have unspent funds from your grant, here's how you can, and cannot, use them:

 **Reallocating to previously approved expenses:**

You are welcome to reallocate unspent funds to any line items that were already approved in your project's original budget—no need for additional approval.

 **Using funds for new expenses related to your original project:**

If you'd like to use remaining funds for new expenses that are still related to your original project, you must submit a revised budget to GROW Grants and receive approval before spending. Contact GROW Grants for guidance on this process.

 **Using funds for new expenses unrelated to your original project:**

If your remaining funds are *more than a few hundred dollars*, then we cannot approve them for use for expenses unrelated to your original project. There are legal reasons why we cannot allow this, as such large amounts of money must be used and accounted for within the original scope of an approved project.

- You will need to return those funds to the Distributed Fundraising (DF) program. We can bring in the DF program manager to help guide you through the return process.
- You may then apply for a new GROW Grant to cover those new expenses.

 **If only a small amount remains (\$200 or less):**

In this case, we may be able to approve the use of those funds for general purposes by your group outside of your original project, within DF program restrictions. Please email us for confirmation.

### FAQ: Can we transfer our grant to another Indivisible group for them to use?

**Answer:**

Yes; It is fine for one Indivisible group to transfer the whole, or the remainder, of their GROW Grant to another Indivisible group for them to use on the *same project* for which that grant was approved.

We see this typically when the Indivisible group that is in charge of managing grant funds on behalf of a collaborative project has an unexpected delay and it makes sense for another group to steward these funds to keep the project going. There can be other reasons for this, but

transfers are consistently done between two Indivisible groups that were already listed as collaborators on **the same, approved project**, and the grant must continue to be spent for the same purposes--and on the same expenses--originally approved.

Here are the steps that must be followed and the requirements around transferring a GROW Grant between groups:

- A. The Indivisible group holding the grant will need to email the GROW Grants ([growgrants@indivisible.org](mailto:growgrants@indivisible.org)) and Distributed Fundraising ([amy@indivisible.org](mailto:amy@indivisible.org)), indicating that they would like to transfer their grant to another Indivisible group they are working with on the same project.
  - An explanation as to why this transfer is being requested is needed.
  - The receiving group should be named in the email, and the treasurer for that group should be included on that email.
- B. The exact amount of the remaining grant funds will need to be communicated to the GROW Grants and Distributed Fundraising teams in that email.
  - **Please Note:** the *whole* of the remaining grant funds (a.k.a. whatever is unspent from the original total awarded) must be what is being transferred. No two groups can spend a grant at the same time for reasons related to #4, below
  - If you need help verifying the exact amount of your remaining funds, you can ask the GROW and Distributed Fundraising teams for assistance. The group that would be receiving the grant must have an active Distributed Fundraising account with a treasurer managing that account.
- C. Once authorized by the GROW Grants team, the Distributed Fundraising team will transfer the funds in the indicated amount from the original group's account to the new account. This is usually instant.
- D. Once transferred, the group that will be receiving the grant will then be in charge of spending that grant. They must then report that spending on behalf of the project within their Monthly Spending reports to Distributed Fundraising.

### FAQ: Under what circumstances would my GROW grant award be rescinded?

**Answer:**

While these situations are very rare, there are a few circumstances when we would need to rescind a grant offer or request that grant funds be returned:

- A. If 4 weeks have passed since you were offered a grant award and **there is no response accepting the award**.

***Reminder: Applicants are notified, by email, of their grant award decisions two weeks after each month's application deadline.***

Award recipients are sent two reminder emails to accept or decline their award offer: the first 1 week after and then another 2 weeks after the initial notification email is sent. Failure to respond by the 4th week will result in the offer being rescinded.

- B. If, after an award is distributed, the applicant, State Organizer, and/or group leaders indicate to the GROW Grants Team that they **are unable to continue the project or fulfill its original objectives** due to changing priorities, a desire to focus on other work, changes in leadership, etc.
- C. If 6 months pass since the award was distributed and the awarded group **does not indicate any spending** of their GROW award AND the **group is unresponsive** to the Grant Team's inquiries about this lack of spending.
  - a. This timeframe will take into consideration the timeline of the project itself and if it is a long-term endeavor with gradual, or delayed, spending outlined.
- D. If, during the course of executing your project, and after having your activity and expenses approved for a grant, you **violate the restrictions** around allowed project activity and/or expenses:
  - a. Unapproved expenses that violate the [Distributed Fundraising restrictions](#) on what can be purchased with a GROW Grant.
  - b. Unapproved activity within a grant-funded project that violates the 501(c)(4) restrictions. This pertains to any unapproved political activity, any partisan coordination or contributions, or any coordination with or contributions to electoral candidates and political parties.

The GROW Grants team will be in close communication with groups whose projects violate these restrictions to see if there are solutions to these problems, working closely with our Legal Team. However, if there is no resolution possible, your GROW Grant may be revoked and the money – in part or in full – recovered from the designated Distributed Fundraising account.