



GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING WESTERN WISCONSIN VALUES, VISION, AND PLATFORM

Background: What are GROWW's Values, Vision, and Platform?

GROWW is a people's organization. We were formed in 2019 when seven neighbors gathered around a kitchen table on a farm in Pierce County. Today, we work across seven counties in western Wisconsin. Our focus is on building power through issue campaigns, led by ordinary people, to tackle concrete problems facing our local communities.

We are guided by our Statement of Values, Vision and Platform. Our values are those things which we believe deeply, defend passionately, and act upon regularly. Our vision is the dream of what it would look like for our communities to embody those values. Our platform is a statement of the actions we support for those values to become real in our communities.

This statement is the product of a democratic process, led by a team of grassroots leaders and organizers, which brought together many voices through an online survey, community meetings, one-to-one conversations, and door knocking. The process culminated at GROWW Fest on September 30th 2023 in Ellsworth WI where our members convened to discuss, debate, amend, and ratify the final statement by majority vote using a parliamentary process.

This is a living document reviewed and amended periodically, to reflect changes in the world and within our organization. Together, we shape this organization. Our vision will carry us forward.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING WESTERN WISCONSIN

VALUES, VISION, AND PLATFORM

Mission

We build power together to create the change we need for everyone in our communities to make ends meet, live with dignity, and have a voice in shaping the decisions that impact us.

Preamble

GROWW belongs to us. We belong to GROWW. Together, we are working across Barron, Buffalo, Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix counties to build a world where all of us can flourish and be free. Our organization is a vehicle for communities to build and exercise power to make that world a reality. We live in cities, small towns, and rural areas. We are young and old, rich and poor, white, black, and brown. We will not be divided by false narratives that pit us against each other. We take action together because we believe that change is necessary, and it is possible if we courageously leap into the public arena.

Our Values

-  **Community.** We focus our work on our community. We stand with the people who add meaning to our lives and sustain us through their trust, understanding, and care.
-  **Power.** We make positive, lasting change and write our own futures by building, organizing, and wielding power together.
-  **Stewardship.** We take care of what is most valuable to us - people, community, land, water - so that it can be shared with our children and our children's children.
-  **Solidarity.** We are united in collective action across race, gender, income, ability, and geography, leaving no one behind.
-  **Listening.** We build real connection and resist division by listening to understand each other and all of our values, interests, hopes, and fears.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING WESTERN WISCONSIN

OUR VISION

We are proud to live and work in western Wisconsin. It is the place we call home. We stick together, even when things get tough.

We envision communities where everyone can lead their best life. Where everyone has a roof over their head, a meal on the table, and a job that can support a family or an individual. Where everyone is an agent with a powerful voice, not just at the ballot box on election day, but also throughout the year in school boards, city halls, workplaces, county boards, or at the state capitol. Where every kid can grow, learn, and play in homes, neighborhoods, daycares, open spaces and schools that are supportive and safe. Where healthy landscapes with fertile soil and clean water nourish the food we grow and build an environment to support public transportation and active transportation where we can walk, roll, & pedal in a way accessible to people with disabilities.



Where new immigrants are welcomed and valued for their unique contributions to the community. Where local economies are thriving with small businesses on Main Street and an abundance of prosperous family farms across the countryside. Where no one must worry whether they can see a doctor if they get sick or injured. Where no one must struggle alone in the shadows of addiction, mental illness, abuse, or trauma.

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OUR VISION



For too long, our communities have suffered under policies that benefit the wealthy few while draining resources from our neighborhoods, towns, schools, and local governments. Too many of our people are struggling to get by, living paycheck to paycheck, facing rising medical costs, or worried about making rent. Droughts, smoke, floods, and heat waves exacerbated by climate change threaten us more and more each year. Meanwhile, corporate interests conspire with political insiders to rig the rules of our economy and government to serve themselves and their friends. We know things don't have to be like this.

We are advancing a long-term agenda to tackle structural barriers that hold us back from building communities across western Wisconsin where everyone - our families, friends, co-workers, and neighbors - can prosper regardless of race, gender, class, ability, or religion. We know the people who are closest to the problems are also closest to the solutions; yet, too often, those very same people have been distanced and displaced from the political process.

For our vision to become real, we must build power through the leadership of ordinary people to fight for each other against corporate greed and political corruption.

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING WESTERN WISCONSIN

OUR PLATFORM

Democracy

We support building a political system that is fair, accessible, and responsive to all of us.

- Fair representation
- Access to Office
- Right and Freedom to Vote
- Local Control
- Truth and Transparency

Economic Justice

We support building a robust economy where everyone's basic human needs are met regardless of immigration status.

- Housing
- Public Education
- Health Care
- Childcare
- Mental Health
- Workers' Rights
- Corporate Regulation
- Local Business Development
- Food & Farming

Environmental Justice

We support all people having equal access to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.

- Land Use
- Clean Water
- Climate Action

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OUR PLATFORM

Democracy

We support building a political system that is fair, accessible, and responsive to all of us.

-  **Fair representation:** We support electoral reforms that place power in the hands of the people including non-partisan legislative districts, final five voting and proportional representation.
-  **Access to Office:** Everyone should have access to elected office, not just the wealthy who can self-finance their campaigns. Everyone should be supported in running effective grassroots campaigns and governing powerfully to win on issues and create budgets that serve communities.
-  **Right and Freedom to Vote:** For democracy to work for all of us, let us ensure all our voices are heard. We support the protection of same-day voter registration. We reject the use of threats, harassment, and unsupported accusations against local clerks, poll workers, and election officials.
-  **Local Control:** We support the return of decision-making powers to local governmental bodies that have been “preempted” by the Wisconsin state legislature.
-  **Truth and Transparency:** We understand that democracy can only flourish in truth and transparency. We support truth-seeking efforts in order to combat misinformation and disinformation.

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OUR PLATFORM

Economic Justice

We support building a robust economy where everyone's basic human needs are met regardless of immigration status.

-  **Housing:** We support access to safe, affordable housing for everyone in our communities. We support local ordinances and state laws that favor our needs as tenants and residents, not corporate developers and out-of-state real estate investors. We support investments in public housing. We reject discriminatory zoning laws.
-  **Public Education:** We support school systems where kids have equal opportunity to learn and succeed. We support full state and national funding to get resources we need into our children's classrooms. We support ending private voucher school programs that siphon money away from our public schools.
-  **Health Care:** We support accessible, affordable health care for everyone. We support the acceptance of federal funding to expand Badgercare.
-  **Childcare:** We support expanding childcare subsidies to families, providing workforce development investments for childcare providers, and the development of community childcare centers.
-  **Mental Health:** We support increased access to professional mental health services, especially in schools and rural areas. We support efforts to stem the rise of addiction and overdoses.
-  **Workers' Rights:** We believe in the dignity of labor. We support workers' right to organize for a living wage, quality benefits, safe work environments, and governance of their workplaces.
-  **Corporate Regulation:** Corporations owe us fair wages and should pay what they owe in taxes so that money stays in our communities. We reject the extractive economy that lines the pockets of the few while hollowing out our main streets. We reject the idea that corporations should have the same rights as people in our politics or society.
-  **Local Business Development:** In the face of corporate consolidation, we support our community members having the ability to create their own livelihood while giving back to the community through the creation of small and local businesses.
-  **Food & Farming:** We support a food system that is local, sustainable, and equitable. We support access to high quality, affordable food for everyone. We support fair prices for the products of independent farmers and fair compensation for farm workers.

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Environmental Justice

We support all people having equal access to a healthy, safe and sustainable environment.

- 🌿 **Land Use:** We support the conservation of our regional landscapes. We support the use of regenerative farming practices such as grazing and cover crops. We support the restoration of native vegetation, wildlife habitat, and watersheds.
- 🌿 **Clean Water:** We support access to clean, safe water for everyone. We support policies and programs that protect our ground and surface water such as free access to contaminant testing for private well owners and regulation of industries and agriculture.
- 🌿 **Climate Action:** We support community investments to address and adapt to the local impacts of climate change such as coping with extreme heat, drought, biodiversity loss, and flooding by providing funding for weatherization of homes, mitigation of flooding, addition of renewable energy production and mutual aid in response to natural disasters.

