

**Contact:**

Jamie Samowitz and Jess Vecchia  
Roots Rising  
[info@rootsrising.org](mailto:info@rootsrising.org)  
413.344.0816



For Immediate Release

## PITTSFIELD NONPROFIT ROOTS RISING AWARDED \$430K TOWARDS YOUTH FARM

**[PITTSFIELD, MA]**—Roots Rising is planning a Pittsfield-based youth farm and has recently been awarded a Food Security Infrastructure Grant for \$430,219 by the state of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs towards this groundbreaking project. The farm will be an incredible resource for the city of Pittsfield, including youth, local farmers and the broader community.

Roots Rising has a history of quickly adapting to community needs, including launching a Virtual Farmers Market as an emergency response to the pandemic. Roots Rising's Youth Farm will be teen-powered and community centered, and will be an innovative approach to youth empowerment, food justice and sustainable development.

The farm will address the deepest needs of our community, including the vulnerabilities in our food system made evident by the pandemic. For instance, local farmers are experiencing a shortage of experienced workers, and our Youth Farm will serve as a training ground to cultivate the next generation of changemakers and land-stewards. More than just a work site for Roots Rising's Youth Crews, the farm will be a community and food hub, a green oasis in the city, and a headquarters to amplify Roots Rising's legacy of food justice work in the city of Pittsfield.

"It's so exciting that there will be a farm in the Berkshires whose central mission is to empower youth, connect the community to the land, and strengthen our local food system. The possibilities for what we can become and accomplish together are infinite. It's a different way altogether of thinking about community and agriculture," says Lauren Piotrowski, Farmer and Roots Rising Program Manager.

Youth Farm programming is currently being developed in conversation with the community and Roots Rising's youth. The farm will integrate Roots Rising's longstanding food justice and youth development work while supporting the deepest goals of the organization: connecting youth to the land and making healthy food available for all.

“We couldn’t be more proud and excited for this incredible investment in our Youth Farm. From our organization’s beginning, the community has had our back. It truly takes a village to launch a farm, and we feel the upwelling of excitement for this new initiative. Roots Rising’s Youth Farm will give our organization a home where it truly belongs- right in the heart of our city and community,” say Roots Rising Co-Directors, Jamie Samowitz and Jessica Vecchia.

### **About Roots Rising**

Roots Rising empowers youth and builds community through food and farming. Roots Rising’s Farm Crew hires teens to work on farms and in food pantries, and Market Crew runs the Pittsfield Farmers Market, the first teen-run farmers market in the region. We are in the planning stages of our third major initiative—a Pittsfield-based Youth Farm. Roots Rising’s vision is to lift up youth as community changemakers and strengthen the local food system through the transformational power of meaningful work.

Learn more at [www.rootsrising.org](http://www.rootsrising.org).