
Criteria & Process for Identifying & Selecting Flow Funders

A Guide for Bioregional Flow Funding Groups

KINSHIP EARTH

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This guide outlines the criteria and considerations we use at Kinship Earth to identify, evaluate, and onboard Flow Funders aligned with our values and mission. We offer it not as a definitive standard, but as one pathway others may adapt.

Flow Funders are trusted individuals who move resources with care, responsiveness, and deep relational awareness.

Core Qualities of a Kinship Earth Flow Funder

A strong candidate typically embodies many of the following:

Community-Rooted - Deeply embedded in the place and community they are resourcing—trusted by peers, respected across differences, and attuned to local needs.

Relationally Oriented - Prioritizes authentic relationship-building, listens deeply, and operates from a place of care, humility, and reciprocity.

Track Record of Stewardship - Has demonstrated experience in community care, ecological work, cultural organizing, mutual aid, or other aligned fields.

Strategic Awareness - Understands broader systems and is thoughtful about how funds can be used for long-term, cascading impact.

Clarity of Purpose - Brings a clear, grounded intention to the Flow Funding role—rooted in service, not personal gain.

Ethical & Accountable - Demonstrates integrity, follows through on commitments, and welcomes feedback and reflection.

Additional Considerations

Language & Cultural Fluency - If working across linguistic or cultural lines, consider candidates who can serve as effective bridges—or identify and onboard liaisons, individuals who are deeply engrained in the community you're resourcing who can support communication between the Flow Funding organization's leadership and grantees.

Sectoral & Demographic Diversity - We aim to select Flow Funders who reflect a range of lived experiences, disciplines, and perspectives—including BIPOC leaders, youth, elders, and system-impacted individuals.

Alignment with Kinship Earth’s Impact Areas - We prioritize candidates whose work aligns with our impact areas, such as ecological regeneration, food sovereignty, food and housing security, social justice, cultural revitalization, water protection, and more.

Our Vetting & Selection Process

For our first round of Flow Funders, we gathered nominations from Flow Fund Advisors (who are grassroots changemakers actively working in the field), our board members, and our partners. We then evaluated each candidate using the criteria above, through a process that included anonymous scoring and group discussion. Final decisions were made by our Flow Fund Allocation Committee—which includes Kinship Earth’s leadership and our Flow Fund Advisors.

Once we finalized our list of prospective Flow Funders, we sent them a [Flow Funder Role & Responsibilities Doc](#) outlining the role and our processes. If, after reading it, they accepted the invitation to serve as a Flow Funder, we onboarded them through 1-on-1 calls with our Executive Director. We also invited them to a group introductory call to meet one another and ask questions to gain further clarity on what is involved in Flow Funding with Kinship Earth. Then we welcomed them to our quarterly Community of Practice calls.

To make this work more accessible, we offer a modest honorarium payment to those who needed it - upfront - as a thank you to our Flow Funders for their service. We recognize that Flow Funding requires time, care, and effort—and we want to support those stepping into the role.

We ask our Flow Funders to sign this [Agreement](#) outlining expectations. While some Flow Funding organizations do not use written agreements, we find it helpful to ensure clarity and alignment.

As our model evolves, we increasingly emphasize participation in Flow Funder selection. Once a term is complete, Flow Funders are invited to recommend future candidates—deepening peer-trusted leadership and shared stewardship of the process.

We also welcome Kinship Earth’s donors to express their desire to support specific bioregions or impact areas. If a donor feels called to contribute toward healing a particular place or impact focus area, we can identify aligned grassroots leaders with experience in these areas and or locations. In these cases, the criteria outlined above can guide our vetting and selection process. If a donor already has a

trusted relationship with a grassroots leader, we encourage them to give directly—though Kinship Earth will not manage that relationship or serve as an intermediary. This is to ensure clear boundaries and accountability. Because these direct relationships fall outside of our stewardship, Kinship Earth cannot assume responsibility for how those funds are used or for any outcomes that may arise.

To help maintain integrity, we ask nominators and participants in the vetting process to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest—for example, recommending individuals with whom they have direct financial relationships. Our process includes diverse voices and group discussion to reduce bias and foster shared accountability.

We hope this guidance is useful for those building their own Flow Fund ecosystems—and invite you to adapt or evolve it to meet your unique context.

If you use or adapt this resource, we'd love to hear from you. Please share your feedback with us at kins@kinshipearth.org so we can continue learning and growing together.