

# START SOMETHING

A six-month program to develop, launch,  
and run your community project.



**Lupinewood Institute &  
The Start Something program**

# Start Something.

The Start Something program's goal is to support community members launching projects that build skills, resources, and understanding between people.

## Projects in the Start Something program get support from the Institute through...

**Financial support** to help free up the time to launch a new project and afford the starting equipment and infrastructure.

**Support** for creating the plans, systems, and materials needed to successfully run a project.

**Membership** to a collective of community projects that support each other's work, learn from each other, and share in fundraising and administration.

## I | Applying

Applications are developed between October and December.

**On the first Sunday in October** there's an info session at 3pm about how Start Something works and how to apply held at Lupinewood: 172 Highland Ave, Greenfield, Mass.

If you want to be there but are struggling to attend reach out to us at [lupinewoodinstitute@proton.me](mailto:lupinewoodinstitute@proton.me).

If afterwards you're interested in applying we'll set up three get-togethers with you to give feedback and answer questions as you develop your proposal.

**In mid-November** you submit your proposal and it gets reviewed as part of the Institute's yearly planning.

In mid-December you'll hear back from us about whether your proposal was accepted into the Start Something program.

## **The proposal**

In addition to thoroughly describing what you want to do, your project needs to have an educational component, bring people together at Lupinewood, be directly democratic, and be open to anyone respectful of the space and the other people using it.

# **II | Incubation**

The six-month Start Something program starts in April.

## **Goals, values, and identity**

We'll start with a series of facilitated brainstorms about your project's intended impacts, values, and programs.

Next we'll turn the results into lists, and order the lists from most to least important.

Finally you'll take what you've learned and write descriptions of what you are doing and why in the various formats needed to communicate your project to supporters and participants.

## **Decision-making, positions, and access**

We'll work through the different levels of engagement a person can have with your project, beginning with project leaders and ending with people who've never heard of you.

From there we'll answer the following questions for people in each level of engagement:

- What decision-making power do they have?
- What responsibilities does they have?
- What access do they have?
- How are they communicated with?

## The plan

In the last part we'll do a brainstorm on where you envision your project to be in one year, three years, and eight years.

Then we'll return to your list of priorities from earlier brainstorms and pick the top 3-5 of them.

Finally we'll work through how each will be completed by laying them out step-by-step, putting the steps into a calendar, and assigning responsibility for them.

## III | Membership

Graduation from the Start Something program happens in September at an annual event where you'll present your project and its upcoming programming and goals.

After you've completed the program you'll be invited into the Institute as a member of the collective of projects that comprise the organization. From then on you'll participate in organization-wide decision-making, fundraising, and annual rhythms of planning and collaboration.

# Lupinewood Institute

A flywheel for community projects to take flight and established ones to grow.

## I | How it works

New projects join the Institute by completing the Start Something program: A six-month facilitated curriculum offered by the Institute that helps organizers to develop and launch a community project.

Once a member, the new project joins a collective of established ones that work together on individual and group goals, collaborating on administration, fundraising, and promotion.

The Institute is staffed by admins who provide a backbone for the collective of projects to operate, managing things like decision-making between projects, shared fundraising efforts, and the Institute's own programming.

Project leads and admins come together at monthly meetings to report back to each other, make and discuss proposals, and support each other's work. Once a year, annual plans and budgets are proposed, discussed, and decided on collectively.

# II | Yearly rhythm

Here's what a year in Lupinewood Institute looks like:

## Planning

**October** — Project leads in the Institute develop proposals for the upcoming year and talk through any challenges they face in completing them. An info session is held for the Start Something program and the application process begins.

**November** — Project leads and Start Something applicants submit their proposals to the Institute's admins, who synthesize these proposals into a draft plan for the upcoming year.

**December** — Admins present their plan to the collective of projects and it's discussed and modified until everyone can consent to it. Start Something applicants are then notified.

## Preparation & fundraising

**January to April** — Projects work towards their proposed goals and set up new infrastructure for programs. Admins apply for grants, and work towards an annual fundraising campaign.

**April to May** — Admins, with support and materials from individual projects, run a public fundraising campaign. The Start Something program officially starts with a facilitated curriculum and material support for organizer(s) whose proposals were accepted back in December.

## Putting things into action

**May to August** — Projects and the Start Something program are in full swing, while admins work toward a private fundraising event held in mid-October.

**September** — Admins and projects participate in an annual event called The Weekend, where Start Something applicants graduate from the program and projects give reportbacks about their year's work.

## III | Requirements

Projects in the Institute are expected to:

- Have an educational component
- Have graduated from the Start Something program
- Be directly democratic
- Bring people together in physical spaces at Lupinewood
- Engage fully as a member of the Institute
- Be open to anyone respectful of the space and the other people who use it

## IV | Lupinewood and the Lupinewood Collective

Lupinewood is four acres of meadow and forest that overlook the Connecticut river valley and surround a stone mansion and its outbuildings, once occupied by a convent of nuns and originally built by an industrialist family over two hundred years ago.

In 2016, with the house on the verge of foreclosure and collapse, a group of artists and organizers moved in with the intention of building a long-standing community resource together.

Since then the group has been managing the land and buildings collectively while living on-site, slowly repairing rot and reconfiguring spaces for community use while running programs and learning how to live and work together.

In 2023 they launched Lupinewood Institute to help facilitate the use of Lupinewood's land and buildings by a broader community of people, and in 2024 the Institute's first community projects started offering public programming.

More information about Lupinewood and the Lupinewood Collective can be found at [Lupinewood.com](http://Lupinewood.com) or by emailing them at [lupinewoodcollective@protonmail.com](mailto:lupinewoodcollective@protonmail.com).

# V | Why?

Lupinewood Institute's mission is to build shared resources and understanding between people by supporting community projects and the workers who run them.

## To support the creation, growth, and long-term health of community projects...

**Project incubator** — New projects undertake a six-month program to develop how to communicate about and accomplish their goals.

**Collective fundraising** — Administrators at the Institute find grants, build community partnerships, and coordinate public and private fundraising efforts in collaboration with individual projects.

**Living wages** — Projects and administrators work together to create fairly-paid positions for people working on and in the collective of community projects that make up the Institute.

**Community of peers** — People building lives around community work can find their own community of peers to learn from, commiserate with, and be supported by at Lupinewood.

## ...To put resources, equipment, and know-how in the hands of people who need them...

**Commons** — Anyone can get a membership to one of the projects, giving that person access to shared space, materials, and community.

**Control of production** — People are given a direct say in the spaces and equipment they rely on throughout the Institute and its projects.

**Education** — Each project orients new members to their space and equipment, and runs classes so that people can continue developing their knowledge and skills.

## ...To build relationships between people across differences.

**Shared interests** — Projects bring people together around their shared interests as a starting point, rather than their identities or politics.

**Shared stakes** — The Institute, its projects, and the people who participate in them learn how to come to shared agreements around space, equipment, and resources through a practice of consensus decision-making.

**Shared spaces** — Projects exist in physical spaces where different types of people encounter each other in real time within a culture of working through conflict and building common ground.

**If you have any questions don't hesitate to reach out!**

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