



Photo: Melisa Cardona

A note on the origins of this document from ROOTS Staff, February 2022:

These demands were collectively developed by members of YOOTs and presented to Alternate ROOTS at ROOTS Week, August 2018. What follows has been untouched since then.

WHO IS YOOTs?

In school, in the courts, under the gaze of the state and its society, young Black, Latinx and Indigenous people are not allowed to be young, to be youth, to be children, to play. We are YOOTs. We are organizing so that ROOTS may better serve emerging artists between 13 and 30, pushing the bounds of Youth to include 25 and under. We are Black, Indigenous and Latinx artists working across mediums. We are Queer and Trans, unapologetically so.

WHAT DO WE WANT:

I. Leadership Development

- Recognition that we are a temporary cohort with limited capacity on Year Two of a two-year timeline. Organizational and community support of YOOTs, our efforts and to see that our demands are realized beyond our two-year commitment.
- A short-term Apprenticeship Program for young people to shadow ROOTS staff or ROOTS members during ROOTS Week or on shorter projects. A long-term Mentorship Program for one or more young artists to partner with an older ROOTS member from the same state or nearby with similar interests and expertise for personal, professional and artistic guidance. ROOTS would fund their travel and supplies, as well as facilitate the evaluation process, as well as building or supporting other intentional career and professional development for YOOTs.

II. Youth Programming

- ROOTS must hire an additional staff member specifically for Youth Programming, recruitment, to coordinate the Apprenticeship Program, the Mentorship Program and Youth Weekends with direct collaboration with young people who are compensated for their time in an equitable manner.
- Youth-led and youth-centered programming at ROOTS Week every year with attention to the various needs of different age groups and inclusion of their leadership and voices: 13-17, 18-24 and 25-30.
- Dedicated housing or hangout space for young and emerging artists during ROOTS Week **and** the continuation of YOOTs weekends biannually throughout the South. We understand that we must gather, connect and skillshare to continue building our collective power.

III. Funding Support

- Allotment of grants and funding support just for youth. Keeping ROOTS Week registration low and lowering membership costs for young people.
- Technical assistance for budget management, grant writing, skill-building, professional development, and mentorship for grant awardees without previous financial experience.
- Build regional capacity to expand YOOTs membership. Providing compensation for the coordination work done by YOOTs members. Recognizing that YOOTs has taken up the space of a part-time job, decreasing our capacity to make money elsewhere and make art.

IV. More Representation

- Always two youth on ex comm (at least one between 18-24)
- Transparency and inclusion of young people's perspectives and voices throughout ROOTS organization and in decision making roles. A commitment to planning ahead and including young people in the planning processes.
- A commitment from ROOTS staff and community to build membership under 30. Active efforts by ROOTS to find and support more queer, trans, genderqueer and Black, Latinx, Indigenous and Asian youth to come to ROOTS Week, gain access to ROOTS resources and network, and be in decision-making roles within ROOTS.