

2017 Grants for Change



Maine Initiatives is convening a broad-based group of community representatives to assist in the decision making process for the 2017 Grants for Change Program, which seeks to fund and strengthen community-based nonprofit organizations whose work is advancing racial justice and racial equity in Maine.

Overview: The 2017 Grants for Change Program

Maine Initiatives' 2017 Grants for Change program will provide three years of general operating support to a cohort of ten (10) community-based nonprofit organizations advancing racial justice and racial equity in Maine.

Members of the 2017 Grants for Change cohort will also be invited to participate in a series of peer learning, training, capacity-building, and community outreach activities over the course of the grant period.

The 2017 Grants for Change program is designed around a broadly participatory grantmaking process. The process will offer our grantees, donors, stakeholders and the broader community opportunities to participate in the proposal evaluation and decision-making process.

2017 Grants for Change PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING

Maine Initiatives takes an expansive view of who is and who can be a community philanthropist. This view is rooted in our conviction that money is only one of the many resources and assets that our community possesses for advancing justice and equity. We use a broadly participatory grantmaking process in order to identify, mobilize, and leverage key non-financial resources by engaging and connecting the members of our community around our mission and in our work.

We also understand that racial justice and equity are not achieved through perfect grantmaking, but are relational: requiring people to come to a deeper understanding of themselves and in relation to others in the community. We seek to foster this type of transformation through our participatory grantmaking process. We open our process up to the full community to create opportunities for individual reflection on and collective conversation about the following questions:

- ▶ What do racial justice and racial equity mean?
- ▶ What do they look like?
- ▶ What do they require?
- ▶ Who is doing this work?
- ▶ What is my role?

We also seek to create opportunities for people to learn about and be inspired by the work currently being done around our state to advance racial justice and equity. In so doing, we seek to engage people as active agents of greater racial justice in Maine and to mobilize and leverage new resources – financial, social, and human – for advancing racial equity in our communities.

Get Involved: Participate in Our Grantmaking Process

We invite our community to join us as active participants in our grantmaking process in one of two ways:

▶ **BECOME A READER:**
5 to 10 hours at home commitment
(July-Sept 2017)

▶ **JOIN THE GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE:**
5 to 10 hours at home commitment (July-Sept 2017)
and 3 day in person commitment (Oct 19-21, 2017)

BECOME A READER — HELP US EVALUATE PROPOSALS

The initial phase of the grantmaking process is the proposal evaluation phase. We invite our stakeholders, grantees, donors, and members of the broader community to volunteer to serve as proposal readers. Each volunteer will receive training in our grantmaking program, our thematic focus of racial justice and equity, and the proposal evaluation process; and will be asked to read and evaluate approximately three proposals. These evaluations may be done at home or online, permitting participation by a wide-range of people.

▶ **WHO CAN BE A PROPOSAL READER?**

Anyone! No experience necessary. All proposal readers will receive training and guidance about the proposal evaluation process, the evaluation criteria, and the online system.

▶ **WHAT LEVEL OF TIME COMMITMENT IS REQUIRED?**

Each proposal will require approximately one to two hours to read, assess, and score. Proposal readers will be asked to review approximately three proposals.

▶ **WHAT IF I AM A BOARD MEMBER, STAFF MEMBER, OR OTHERWISE AFFILIATED WITH AN APPLICANT?**

That's okay! We are deeply committed to engaging the broadest range of voices in our decision-making process and this means we actively seek to include individuals directly engaged in racial justice and equity work. We have designed our process to permit us to identify and mitigate potential conflicts of interest in this process and will make every effort to structure each individual's participation in such a way that avoids any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

▶ **HOW WILL READER EVALUATIONS BE USED?**

Reader evaluations (both comments and ratings) will individually and collectively inform subsequent activity by staff and decision making by the Grantmaking Committee members.

COMMITTEE MEMBER — HELP CHOOSE OUR GRANTEE COHORT

The second phase of the grantmaking process will be led by a community-based Grantmaking Committee that brings together perspectives representing the full range of our stakeholders: grantees, board members and advisors, donors, and other voices from the broader community in Maine. Members of this Committee will be selected through an open nomination process from the pool of Readers, facilitated by the Maine Initiatives staff and Board.

Participation in the Grantmaking Committee is a unique opportunity to engage in intensive exploration of the themes of racial justice and racial equity and to shape the Grants for Change 2017 grantee cohort. Members of the grantmaking committee will commit to an intensive participatory process of learning and engagement related to our theme, and decision-making about our 2017 Grants for Change. In addition to making funding recommendations to Maine Initiatives' Board, committee members will be invited to participate in a process of networking, training, capacity-building and collective learning around issues of racial justice and racial equity in Maine.

HOW WILL THE GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE OPERATE? All grantmaking committee members must first participate in this process as proposal readers. After the reading period the full grantmaking committee will convene over the course of three-days for a workshop retreat in October 2017 that combines opportunities for shared learning about issues of racial justice and racial equity as well as a participatory deliberative and decision-making process about our grants.

The workshop will be structured around four distinct objectives:

Community building and networking: We put a priority on the power that a networked community can have in addressing the challenging issues of racial justice and racial equity. In response, we will emphasize community building throughout the Grantmaking retreat. We hope that Committee Members leave the three-day program having formed strong bonds with fellow participants, strengthening our state's progressive community and our ability to respond in coordinated, collaborative, and creative ways to justice and equity challenges.

Training and capacity-building around issues of racial justice & racial equity: We recognize that racial justice and racial equity are complex social, economic, and historical concepts. For this reason, we are building into the grantmaking process an explicit commitment to training and capacity-building related to these themes.

Co-creation of knowledge and collective learning about racial justice & equity in Maine: We also recognize that there exists in our community incredible knowledge, experience, relationships, and expertise about racial justice and racial equity that can be brought to bear for our collective benefit. For this reason, we will also incorporate explicit opportunities for the grantmaking committee to identify and connect around their native wisdom.

Discussion, deliberation, and decision-making about our racial justice & racial equity grants: Fundamental to the grantmaking process is a broadly democratic practice that engages a range of voices and perspectives in our decision-making. To this end, we will engage the committee in a collective and collaborative process of reviewing, evaluating and deciding which organization should receive the 2017 Grants for Change funds.

At the conclusion of the three-day grantmaking committee retreat, the committee will make formal funding recommendations to Maine Initiatives' Board of Directors regarding the proposals. The Board of Directors, as the fiduciary authority, will make the final funding decisions based on the committee recommendations.

Additional Questions about the Grantmaking Committee

▶ WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO SERVE ON THE GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE?

All committee members will be drawn from the pool of individuals who participate as proposal readers in the first round. The members will be selected by Maine Initiatives staff and Board. It is mandatory for Grantmaking Committee members to attend the Grantmaking Retreat October 19-21 at the Schoodic Institute in Winter Harbor. Unfortunately, those with date conflicts will be unable to join the committee.

▶ HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE?

The committee will be comprised of between 40-45 individuals, with approximately equal representation from the following groups: past grantees, board members, donors and advisors, and community members.

▶ WHAT SORT OF DIVERSITY WILL THE COMMITTEE REFLECT?

We will make every effort to ensure that the committee reflects both the geographic and demographic diversity of the state as well as other forms of diversity, including cross-class and cross-cultural diversity.

▶ HOW WILL THE GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE BE SELECTED?

Maine Initiatives will request volunteers and nominations to serve on this committee. Board and staff will collaborate to make the final determination about committee membership.

▶ WHAT COSTS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SERVING ON THE GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE?

The costs associated with individual participation in the grantmaking committee workshop, including mileage/travel costs, overnight accommodation, event space, food, and materials, will be covered by Maine Initiatives. Any participant or community member interested in offsetting budgetary costs are encouraged to contact Phil Walsh (phil@maineinitiatives.org or 207-607-4070) to make a much appreciated donation.

2017 GRANTS FOR CHANGE GRANTMAKING TIMELINE	
June 15	Proposal Reader/Grantmaking Committee Request for Applications
July 19	Proposal Reader/Grantmaking Committee Applications Due
August 11	Readers: Proposal Evaluations Begin
September 12	Readers: Proposal Evaluations Due
October 19-21	Grantmaking Committee Retreat at the Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park



2017 Grants for Change APPLICATION TO SERVE AS A PROPOSAL READER

Maine Initiatives is convening a broad-based group of community representatives to assist in the decision making process for our 2017 Grants for Change program. This is an open call for applicants. All are welcome, even if you are associated in some way with an applicant organization. Individuals are invited to apply to join our grantmaking process as proposal readers and to indicate their interest in joining the grantmaking committee.

Applications are due July 19, 2017, to be submitted online at bit.ly/G4CReaders

Applications will be reviewed by the Maine Initiatives Board and Staff. Individuals selected to be proposal readers will be contacted directly Maine Initiatives staff no later than July 25, 2017.

Please complete the following application online at bit.ly/G4CReaders. To aid your preparation, the application questions are included below:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Email _____ Phone: _____

Mailing Address (street, city, state, zip): _____

Professional Role/Occupation: _____

Company/Organization: _____

Did you participate as a Proposal Reader or a Grantmaking Committee Member last year? Yes No

NEW READERS

Question #1: Tell Us About Yourself

What would you like us to know about you? Please include any experience you may have had with with nonprofits, grantmaking, and/or racial justice and racial equity issues. (100 words or less)

Question #2: Your Thoughts on our Racial Justice and Racial Equity Theme

The 2017 Grants for Change program aims to fund organizations that advance racial justice and racial equity in Maine. Please tell us what about this process excites or inspires you. (100 words or less)

RETURNING READERS

Question #1: Why are you returning?

If you participated last year, what did you value most about the experience? (100 words or less)

Question #2: Your Thoughts on our Racial Justice and Racial Equity Theme

How has your thinking about racial justice and racial equity changed or evolved since this process last year? (100 words or less)

GRANTMAKING COMMITTEE INTEREST

The members of the Grantmaking Committee will be chosen from the pool of proposal readers. In addition to reading approximately three proposals in August and September 2017, members of the Grantmaking Committee will be expected to attend a mandatory three-day retreat in Winter Harbor, Maine on October 19th through 21st, 2017, that will be both a capacity building opportunity related to racial justice and racial equity and a participatory decision-making process related to the Grants for Change program. All travel expenses will be covered.

Please indicate if you would like to be considered for the Grantmaking Committee.

- Yes, I'd like to be considered for the Grantmaking Committee and can attend the October 19-21 retreat
- No, I am unable to/not interested in joining the Grantmaking Committee

THANK YOU.