



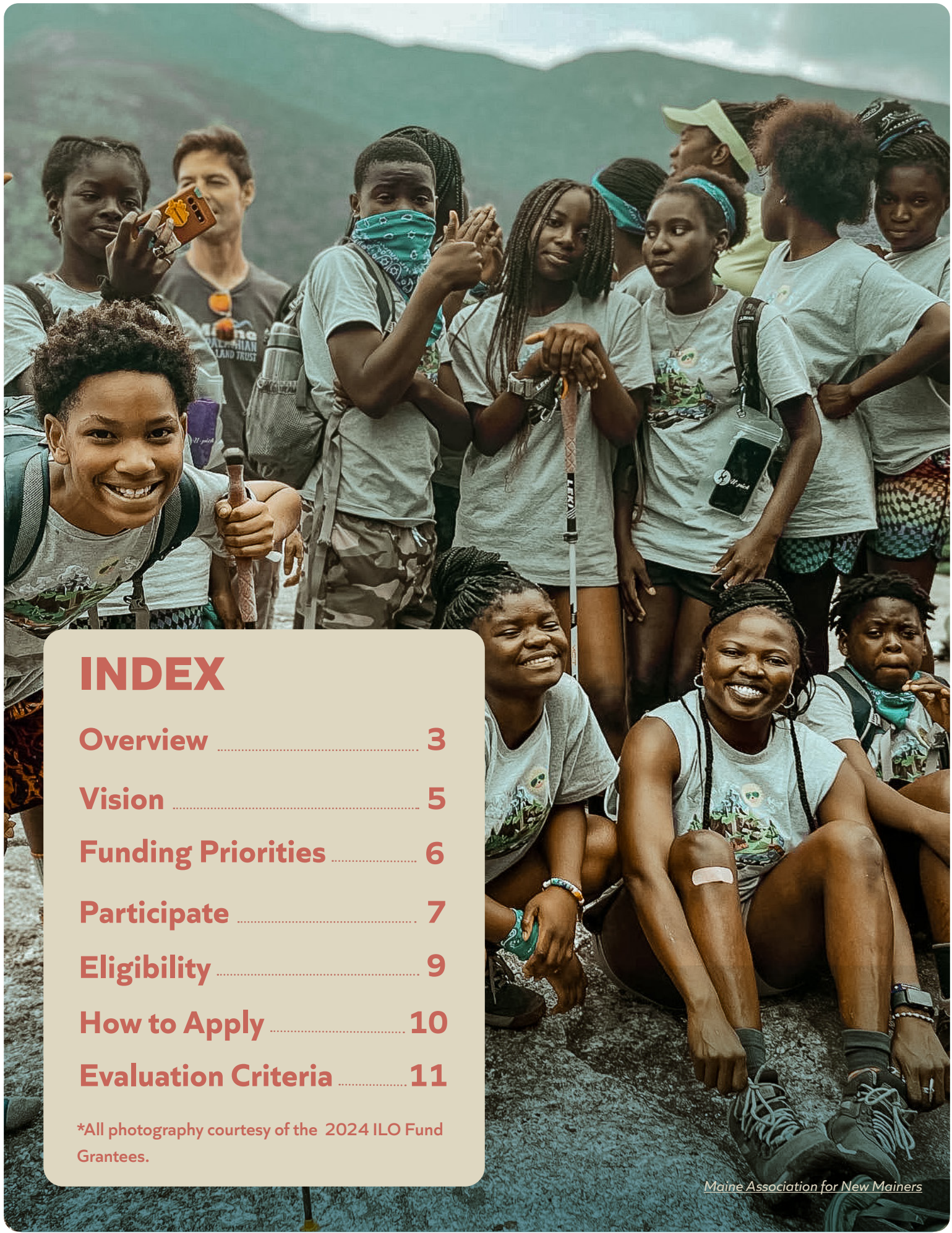
2025 Immigrant-Led Organizations (ILO) Fund Funding Opportunity Announcement

Maine Initiatives is now accepting applications for the 2025 Immigrant-Led Organizations (ILO) Fund.

The ILO Fund supports immigrant-led organizations whose work advances immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker flourishing in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory. All immigrant, refugee, and migrant-led organizations are encouraged to apply and will be eligible for grant awards.

APPLY HERE
for eligible organizations

Applications due by
May 9th, 2025
11:59 PM ET



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*All photography courtesy of the 2024 ILO Fund Grantees.

OVERVIEW

The ILO Fund at Maine Initiatives is a participatory grantmaking program that funds, strengthens, and convenes immigrant, refugee, and migrant non-profit organizations in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.

The Program seeks to organize people and resources in support of efforts across the state that intervene on persistent issues experienced by immigrants of color: xenophobia, racialized discrimination, and insufficient support from municipal and state governments.

We believe that immigrants enrich our communities and should be fully included, valued, and celebrated in all aspects of life. We also believe that the flourishing of immigrants is required to advance our commitment to racial justice.

For a three-year period, beginning in 2024, the ILO Fund Program has committed to providing \$1.35 million in multi-year, unrestricted, general operating support to immigrant-led and serving organizations that:

- Provide critical direct service support to immigrant communities;
- Advance immigrant flourishing through community building, grassroots organizing and advocacy, and/or policy change;
- Strengthen immigrant communities by embracing and preserving cultural practices;
- Are led by and serve immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Maine.

NOTE: The ILO Fund welcomes applications from groups whose work is advancing immigrant flourishing in other important ways that may not be captured in the list above. If the applicant is unsure if they meet the eligibility requirements, please contact the ILO Fund staff at ilofund@maineinitiatives.org.

GRANT DETAILS

AMOUNT & TERMS

\$45,000

paid annually over 3 years

\$15,000 each year

GRANTS AWARDED

10

selected by the 2025 ILO
Grantmaking Advisory Committee

DEADLINE

MAY 9, 2025

11:59 PM ET

In addition, these organizations are invited to participate in a series of peer learning, training, capacity-building, and community outreach activities over the course of their 3-year grant period, from August 2025 through August 2028.

Organizations chosen for the 2025 ILO Fund cohort will be selected by a Grantmaking Advisory Committee, the majority of which will be members of the immigrant community.

The participatory grantmaking process offers the ILO Fund ecosystem (current and past grantees, applicants, donors & peer funders, organizers, and members of the general public with a commitment to immigrant justice) opportunities to participate in program design, application review and evaluation, and the grantmaking decision process. We view this participatory framework as an opportunity for both individual and collective learning about current work in our state that advances immigrant flourishing, furthers immigrant movement building, and strengthens immigrant, refugee, and migrant communities.





VISION

Immigrants have and continue to be essential for the social and economic development of Maine. Since its inception in 2018, the ILO Fund has forged deep relationships with the multifaceted, highly skilled, and robust ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations in our state.

The continual growth of this ecosystem was one of the driving forces behind the ILO Fund's transition from rapid-response, short-term awards to multi-year, unrestricted grants in 2024. This shift reflects the ILO Fund's steadfast belief that immigrant flourishing is vital to advancing racial justice and equity statewide.

Advancing racial justice requires naming the particular histories and realities of immigrant injustice in the United States and how those legacies and ongoing violence continue to impact specific communities today. The ILO Fund seeks to name and respond to:

- the particular effects of xenophobic rhetoric and policies on the opportunities for immigrants of color to seek safety within the United States; and
- the current restrictive systems designed to reduce immigrants, regardless of status, from accessing fundamental necessities such as healthcare, housing, and safe working conditions in Maine.

The ILO Fund is committed to supporting an ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations that represent the diverse backgrounds of immigrants in Maine.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The ILO Fund seeks to support work in the state that is:

- **Intersectional:** We seek to support organizations that draw their leadership from and work in solidarity with other historically marginalized groups such as: women, LGBTQ and Two-Spirit, disabled, poor and working class, and those impacted by incarceration and the carceral system.
- **Geographically Diverse:** We seek to support organizations from across the state of Maine: not just in more densely populated cities and towns in Southern Maine, but also in rural areas of the state.
- **Programmatic/Thematic Variety:** We seek to support work across a broad diversity of programmatic and thematic areas that are necessary for advancing immigrant flourishing. Some examples include, but are not limited to: advocacy, education, food security, healthcare, housing, workforce development, etc.

The ILO Fund also seeks to fund efforts from both established organizations and new organizations in their first few years of existence. We have designated these as HUB ORGANIZATIONS and EMERGING ORGANIZATIONS, respectively.

- **Hub Organizations:** might be understood as serving various immigrant communities through more than one program across the state of Maine; relatively well-established with higher visibility to the general public; and having developed access to resources or established funding sources and relationships with donors.
- **Emerging Organizations:** are typically providing specific or unique programs/services to one or more immigrant communities; staffed by a few people, many often in volunteer capacity; applying for first few grants and/or seeking fiscal sponsorship; and perhaps less visible to traditional funders and/or the general public.

PARTICIPATE

Maine Initiatives relies on community input for all aspects of this program, including design, implementation, decision-making, and evaluation. This includes our commitment to participatory, community-led grantmaking, through which community members engage in a collective decision-making process for selecting our grant recipients.

This multi-phase process extends from April through August through the following steps:

- 1. Community-Led Design:** Each year, we invite community input to inform and update the program design, including from a sounding board made up of respected immigrant-identifying community leaders from current ILO Fund cohort members or those with experience participating in the ILO Fund process.
- 2. Funding Opportunity Announcement:** The grantmaking process begins with an open invitation for applications from immigrant-led and -serving organizations doing work to advance immigrant flourishing in Maine.
- 3. Volunteer Application Readers:** The process continues with an invitation to community members from around the state to serve as Volunteer Application Readers (“Readers”). Each Reader is provided with an orientation and basic training about this program and the process, and is invited to read, reflect on, and complete a short evaluation of approximately three (3) separate applications.



Anonymized input from the Reader evaluations is compiled and aggregated by Maine Initiatives staff and a summary is shared with the Grantmaking Advisory Committee (see below) to inform their discussions, deliberations, and decision making.

4. Grantmaking Advisory Committee: The final phase of this community-led process takes place via a retreat of the Grantmaking Advisory Committee. This majority immigrant Committee brings together a group of community volunteers selected from the pool of Volunteer Application Readers representing the broad diversity of identities and perspectives in our community. These individuals engage in a facilitated process of discussion, deliberation, and decision-making during the retreat with the goal of selecting a cohort of ten (10) grantees from the applicant pool.

5. Grant Selection and Announcement: Final decisions about the Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund grantee recipients will be made by the Grantmaking Advisory Committee (with approval by the Maine Initiatives Board of Directors) and announced by Maine Initiatives in August of 2025.



Somali Bantu Community Association

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the 2025 Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund, applicant organizations are:

- Working exclusively or primarily in Maine
- Programming primarily serves and supports immigrant communities
- An immigrant-led organization, group, or coalition

NOTE

Organizations that are current grantees of other Maine Initiatives programs (like Grants for Change or the Outdoor Equity Fund) are still eligible to apply to the Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund.

To be eligible for a 2025 ILO Fund award, applicants are required to meet at least two out of three of the following for at least the past two years:

1. Immigrant key staff leaders of the organization: 50% or more of the total in leadership roles
2. Immigrant members on board of directors: 50% or more are reflective of the community
3. Immigrant organizers: 50% or more of community interfacing staff/ volunteers

Applicants are also required to meet the following:

- Implementing programs that support immigrant communities in local communities or statewide
- A Maine-based organization or group or a coalition/alliance of groups (we do not fund individuals):
 - * If your organization is a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS, you may apply.
 - * If your organization is fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, you may apply.
 - * If you do not currently have a fiscal sponsor or nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, you are still welcome to apply but will need to obtain a fiscal sponsor prior to July 1st, 2025.
- Have an organizational operating budget, including administrative and programming budget, of under \$2,500,000.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2025 Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund. Please follow the process below:

- 1. Check your eligibility:** Please confirm that your organization meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Contact the ILO Fund staff with any questions at ilofund@maineinitiatives.org.
- 2. Request language accommodations (optional):** If you would like translation or interpretation assistance to complete an application, please make a request by emailing ilofund@maineinitiatives.org by April 18th, 2025. Such a request will not negatively impact your chance to receive funding. We will make every effort to accommodate each request, but cannot guarantee requested accommodations.
- 3. Read the Application:** Prior to starting your application, we strongly recommend you read all the application questions and prepare your responses in advance. You can find a [PDF with the full application questions here](#). Once you begin the online application, you will NOT be able to save your progress and resume at a later time.
- 4. Attend the Information Session (optional): Register for the applicant information session** on Wednesday, April 9th, 2025, 12:00pm - 1:00pm ET. If you are unable to attend, you can reach out to ilofund@maineinitiatives.org to request a recording.
- 5. Access portal and apply:** Create an account on Maine Initiatives' grant management portal at: t.ly/maineinitiativesgrants and submit your application when ready. You can review our ["How-To Apply" document](#) here if any questions arise.

* We acknowledge that traditional grantmaking application processes often present barriers and/or unfairly represent the work of individuals who do not have English as their first language. The ILO Fund is committed to acknowledging this bias in its review of applications and will make every effort to support the Grantmaking Advisory Committee in conducting a fair, nuanced, and informed evaluation of applications.

Application deadline
MAY 9, 2025
11:59 PM ET

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for eligible organizations



Evaluation Criteria

For Reference Only

In a commitment to transparency, we are pleased to share with all applicants the evaluation criteria our Application Readers will use to evaluate each application.

As you can see, the following assessment areas are directly related to the application narrative questions; each question will include an opportunity for the Reader to elaborate in a comment section (not included in the reference copy below). All Readers will be expected to review the entire grant application and complete the assessment worksheet based on the materials submitted.

Grant Application Evaluation Form - For reference only (applicants do not need to fill this out.)

ASSESSMENT: ORGANIZATION

- What is your impression of this organization?
- Is its mission clear, important, and timely?

ASSESSMENT: THE WORK

- Does this organization have clear and understandable programs?
- Do you think the organization's programs and activities will bring about the impact they seek?

ASSESSMENT: ADVANCING IMMIGRANT FLOURISHING

- To what extent does this organization advance immigrant flourishing?

ASSESSMENT: SUCCESS

- Is the organization's success story of advancing immigrant flourishing compelling and important?
- Does this organization's success story demonstrate meaningful impact in this area?

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Presente! ME



APPLY HERE

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