



**The Giving
Project**

a program of Maine Initiatives

Funding Opportunity Announcement

2025-2026

Niweskok, 2025 Giving Project Grantee

Maine Initiatives is now accepting applications for the 2025 - 2026 Giving Project Fund for Community Organizing.

The 2025-2026 Giving Project Fund for Community Organizing at Maine Initiatives is a participatory grantmaking program that provides one (1) year of unrestricted, general operating support of \$20,000 to at least five (5) community organizing groups advancing social, economic, environmental, and racial justice & tribal sovereignty in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.

Grants will be awarded and announced in March 2026. **Application deadline: November 3, 2025.**

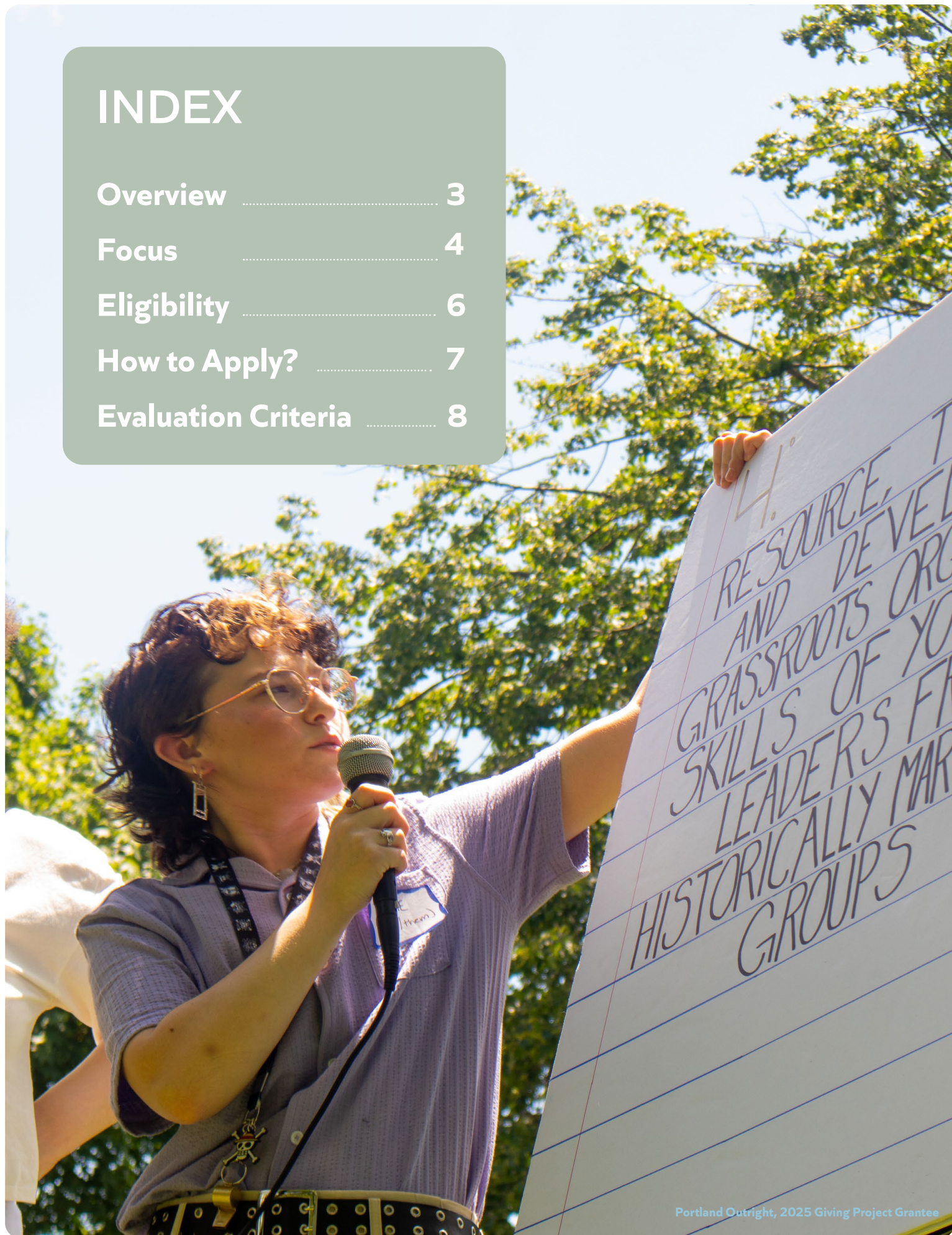
Learn more about [Maine Initiatives](#) and [The Giving Project](#) at Maine Initiatives.

[FIND APPLICATION HERE](#)

for eligible organizations

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OVERVIEW

We believe in self-resourcing, community-led movements to build power.

The purpose of the Giving Project Fund for Community Organizing at Maine Initiatives is to resource social change movements and organizing efforts by shifting money to community organizing groups advancing social, economic, environmental, and racial justice & tribal sovereignty in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.



Maine Initiatives is part of [The Giving Project Network](#), a coalition of seven progressive funders across the country dedicated to moving money and power to their local grassroots organizing ecosystem. A Giving Project is a model of social justice philanthropy that engages people across race and class to resource community organizing in their communities. At its essence, a Giving Project is a mechanism for donor organizing, wealth redistribution and community accountability.

We need to build our skills and infrastructure to fund our own movements.

Through the Giving Project, **approximately 15-25 Giving Project Donor Organizers** convene regularly over six months for shared learning and training on resource mobilization to support community organizing in Maine. These donor-organizers will raise funds through their networks for the Giving Project Fund and then make the grant award decisions. Maine Initiatives will convene the 2026 Donor Organizing Cohort beginning in September 2025 and will announce the Giving Project Fund Grantees in March 2026.



GRANTS



AMOUNT & TERMS

\$20,000
One-year, unrestricted.

GRANTS AWARDED

Between 5 and 10
grants awarded.

DEADLINE
Nov 3, 2025

DISBURSED
March 2026



FOCUS

The Giving Project at Maine Initiatives is dedicated to funding grassroots, community-based organizations across Maine that use community organizing as a core strategy to advance equity and justice. We recognize that there are many ways of making change happen and achieving important social justice victories.

We focus on **community organizing** because we believe that lasting change comes from the bottom and goes up, affecting not just political and economic systems but also the culture of communities. We also believe that community organizing involves the most people, allowing for the greatest diversity and number of perspectives to be expressed. Community organizing is the exercise of democracy in action.



FUNDING PRIORITIES

To address and respond to the continuing impact of structural racism and colonization the Giving Project Fund prioritizes funding consideration for community organizing groups focused on Black Liberation and Indigenous Sovereignty in particular, and frontline groups led-by and -serving Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities, in general. Groups organizing in the LGBTQ+, working class, rural communities, and other historically targeted and marginalized communities are also encouraged to apply.



CRITERIA

The Giving Project at Maine Initiatives welcomes applications from organizations and groups (with 501c3 fiscal sponsor) who use community organizing to bring affected people together to use their collective power to win improvements in their community and change the power structure to advance social justice. The Giving Project Network has identified the following key components of community organizing that will be used as our criteria for evaluating organizations for this year's grant awards:

- **Constituent-led:** led by the people most directly affected by the issues the organization is working on, promoting self-determination
- **Systems change:** works to change conditions by understanding and address the root causes of issues, not just addressing the symptoms
- **Collective Liberation:** Brings people together—across generations, issues, people—to build power they wouldn't have individually and uses that power to create systemic change, which includes altering unjust power relations; effecting community wide change that impacts folks beyond the organizers or campaign
- **Social Justice Vision:** has a strong vision for social justice and sees itself as part of a larger movement for social change, and works towards strengthening that movement
- **Building People Power:** builds power/base-building: builds leadership from within its own membership, base, or community



ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the 2025-2026 Giving Project Fund, applicant organizations must:

- use **community organizing** as a core strategy to advance equity and justice
- are a **Maine-based** organization or group or a coalition/ alliance of groups, working exclusively or primarily in Maine communities (we do not fund individuals or for profit entities):
 - 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 your group is - or is sponsored by - a Wabanaki Tribal government you may apply without additional IRS designation
- have annual operating expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year, including administrative and programming expenses, of under \$1,000,000.

**Note: 2025 Giving Project Grantees are not eligible to apply for the 2026 Giving Project Fund.*



DECISION-MAKING

The 2025-26 Giving Project Donor Organizing Cohort is a cross-class, multi-racial, multi-generational cohort of community members who come together over six months to move money to community organizers focusing on systems change. Through political education, community building, grassroots donor organizing, coaching, and collective grantmaking, Giving Project participants develop a shared understanding of race, class, and power as resource mobilizers within the social movement ecosystem.

Along with raising the funds to support the Giving Project Fund, participants in Maine Initiatives' Donor Organizing Cohort will read and evaluate grant applications, conduct follow-up conversations with selected organizations, and make collective decisions about the 2026 Giving Project Community Organizing Grant Awards.



HOW TO APPLY?

Applications are being accepted for the 2025-2026 Giving Project Fund until November 3, 2025. Please follow the process below to apply:

1. Check your eligibility: Please confirm that your group meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Contact frankie@maineinitiatives.org with any questions during your application process.

2. Read the Application: Prior to starting your application in Maine Initiatives' Application Portal, please read the entire Giving Project Fund application questions ([provided here as a PDF for reference](#)) and the Evaluation Criteria (provided below) that will be used by application reviewers.

3. Attend the Applicant Information Session: [Click here to register](#) for the applicant information session on October 7, 12:00 - 1:00pm on zoom. If you are unable to attend, you can request a recording.

4. Create account and apply: [Create a login here](#), or sign in if you have applied before, to Maine Initiatives' Application Portal. Click on "Open Funding Opportunities" and then the "2026 Giving Project Fund for Community Organizing Application". You can also review this [How to Apply pdf](#) to support your application process.

5. Request language accommodations: If you would like translation assistance or an interpreter to complete an application, please make a request by emailing frankie@maineinitiatives.org by October 15, 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.

6. Site-visit conversations: Please take note that in January and February of 2026, between 10-15 finalists will be selected for a conversation, in person or virtually, with a small group of the Giving Project Donor Organizing Cohort to give applicants an opportunity to speak to their work in their own words.

7. Timeline: The Giving Project Donor Organizing Cohort will begin convening in September 2025 and grant decisions will be made public in March 2026. Groups that are selected to receive a Giving Project Fund grant can anticipate receiving funds by March 31, 2026 or within

**Application deadline:
November 3, 2025.**

FIND APPLICATION HERE
for eligible organizations



Evaluation Criteria

For Reference only

In a commitment to transparency, we are pleased to share the evaluation criteria our Giving Project will use to evaluate each application. The following assessment areas are intended to be directly related to the application narrative questions. This evaluation form summary is provided for reference only.

ASSESSMENT: ORGANIZATION

- What is the general impression of the organization?
- Is the organization's mission clear, important, and timely?

ASSESSMENT: THE WORK

- Does the organization's approach make sense?
- Does the organization make the case that their efforts activities will bring about the impact they seek?

ASSESSMENT: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- To what extent does the organization use community organizing to bring affected people together to use their collective power to win improvements in their community and change the power structure to advance social justice?
- To what extent does the organization's efforts align with each of the following components of community organizing?:

1. Constituent-led: led by the people most directly affected by the issues the organization is working on, promoting self-determination

2. Systems Change: works to change conditions by understanding and address the root causes of issues, not just addressing the symptoms

3. Collective Liberation: brings people together—across generations, issues, people—to build power they wouldn't have individually and uses that power to create systemic change, which includes altering unjust power relations; effecting community wide change that impacts folks beyond the organizers or campaign

4. Social Justice Vision: has a strong vision for social justice and sees itself as part of a larger movement for social change, and works towards strengthening that movement

5. Building People Power: builds power/base-building: builds leadership from within its own membership, base, or community

ASSESSMENT: SUCCESS

Is the organization's success story of community organizing compelling and important?

Does the organization's success story demonstrate meaningful impact in this area?

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