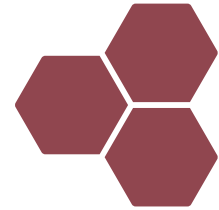




APPLICATIONS DUE  
**AUGUST 31, 2023**



**Grants For  
Change Fund**

a program of Maine Initiatives

# RFP 2023

Maine Initiatives is now accepting proposals for the 2023 Grants for Change Program, which seeks to fund and strengthen community-based efforts advancing racial justice in Maine. The 2023 Grants for Change Program is prioritizing Black and Wabanaki communities in decision-making and funding support. All Black, Brown, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and People of Color (BIPOC) -led and -serving organizations whose work advances racial justice in Maine are encouraged to apply and will be eligible for grant awards.

# overview

## THE 2023 GRANTS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

### **The Grants for Change (G4C) Program at Maine Initiatives**

is a participatory grantmaking program that funds and strengthens Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community-based, nonprofit organizations in Wabanaki Territory (Maine). The Program seeks to organize people and resources in support of efforts across the state that intervene on legacies of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and racialized capitalism by creating or reclaiming liberatory possibilities for today and future generations.

For a three-year period, beginning in 2022, the Grants for Change Program has committed to providing over \$1.5 million in multi-year, unrestricted, general operating support to BIPOC-led and -serving organizations that:

- seek to dismantle racial injustice in its institutional, structural, and systemic forms;
- further the racial justice movement through community building, grassroots organizing and advocacy, and/or policy change;
- strengthen communities through traditional and/or indigenous wisdoms and liberatory cultural practices, including (but not limited to) healing, earth protection, and the arts; and
- are led by, serve, and/or organize in solidarity with Black and Wabanaki communities.



Wabanaki Alliance, 2022 G4C Grantee

**The twelve (12) organizations selected for the 2023 Grants for Change cohort will receive unrestricted, general operating grants of \$45,000 paid out over three (3) years, \$15,000 per year.**

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 the grant period, from December 2023 through November 2026.

Members of the 2023 G4C cohort will be selected by a Grantmaking Advisory Committee comprised of volunteers

(majority-BIPOC) from the community (see *The Participatory Grantmaking Process*).

The G4C participatory grantmaking process offers the G4C ecosystem (which includes current and past grantees, applicants, donors & peer funders, activists & organizers, and members of the general public with a commitment to racial justice) opportunities to participate in program design, proposal review and evaluation, and the grant decision-making process. We view this process as an opportunity for individual and collective learning about the important work occurring in Maine to advance racial justice, further movement building, and strengthen communities.



# vision

## FOR 2023 FUNDING

Advancing racial justice requires that we name the particular histories and realities of racial injustice and address how those legacies continue to impact specific communities today. The Grants for Change Program seeks to name and respond to:

- a) the particular intergenerational effects of anti-Black racism experienced by descendants of enslaved people in the continental U.S. & Caribbean; and
- b) the specific histories and contemporary realities of settler colonialism experienced by generations of Wabanaki in this land now called Maine.

The Grants for Change Program supports and strengthens the ecosystem of racial justice organizing and activism in Maine, with Black and Wabanaki voices, visions, and leadership at the center, based on the recognition that:

- the root causes of racial inequality today in this country are anti-Black racism and settler colonialism
- the legacies of settler colonialism, genocide, and chattel slavery are foundational injustices that continue to inhibit our ability to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice;
- the pervasive and persistent realities of bias, discrimination, and structural & institutional racism impact Black and Wabanaki communities in unique and acute ways, despite the extraordinary leadership and advocacy efforts of leaders from within these communities; and
- the work in support of and led by Black and Wabanaki communities has been and continues to be systematically undervalued and underfunded in Maine.



Maine Inside Out, 2022 G4C Grantee

# priorities

## FOR 2023 FUNDING

In consultation with community partners and leaders, we have identified the need to support the work of community building and organizing by organizations playing distinct but complementary roles building and strengthening the racial justice movement and ecosystem in Maine.

The Grants for Change Program seeks to support **COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ORGANIZING** that is:

- **Intersectional:** We seek to support organizations that draw their leadership from and center the experience of historically marginalized groups such as: women, LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit, disabled, poor and working class, and those impacted by incarceration and the carceral system.

*We recognize that a robust racial justice ecosystem in Maine is grounded in intersectional, feminist, queer, and class analysis and leans into work that addresses patriarchy and racial capitalism head-on.*

- **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.

*We recognize that a robust racial justice ecosystem in Maine requires spaces for BIPOC communities to be and build together with Maine's Indigenous peoples.*

Some examples of Community Building and Organizing work include:

- Abolitionist efforts that foreground harm-reduction, collective healing, transformative and/or restorative justice practices;
- Advocacy for essential services such as education, health equity, affordable housing, transportation, and food security;
- Tribal sovereignty and Land Back movements; and
- Efforts that center Black joy and liberation through the arts, cultural preservation and embodied practices.

The Grants for Change Program also seeks to fund community building efforts from both established organizations and newer 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: relatively more established (compared with other BIPOC-led or -serving organizations in Maine) with higher visibility to the general public; having developed access to resources or established funding sources and relationships; and/or working across race and class identities or across geographic communities.

- **Emerging Organizations** are typically: staffed by a few people, many often in volunteer capacity; applying for their first few grants and/or seeking fiscal sponsorship; and less visible to traditional funders and/or the general public.

The purpose of this framework is to challenge our Grantmaking Advisory Committee, funding partners and our peers, and the general public to recognize and support the broad array of racial justice work that is critical for a robust, effective, and sustainable ecosystem. These designations are neither mutually-exclusive nor are they exhaustive. Rather, we present this framework as an invitation for our community to be in conversation about the needs of racial justice organizing and funding across Maine.

# participate

## THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS

Maine Initiatives is committed to participatory, community-led grantmaking. We rely on volunteer community members to engage in a collective decision-making process for selecting our grant recipients. This multi-phase process extends from July through December through the following steps:

**Community-Led Design:** Each year, we invite community input to inform and update the program design, including from a ten-person Community Advisory Board made up of respected BIPOC community leaders with experience participating in the Grants for Change process.

**Request for Proposals:** The grantmaking process begins with an open invitation for proposals from BIPOC-led and -serving organizations doing work to advance racial justice in Maine.

**Volunteer Proposal Readers:** The process continues with an invitation to community members from around the state to serve as Volunteer Proposal 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 three (3) separate proposals.

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.

**Grantmaking Advisory Committee:** The final phase of this community-led process takes place via a three-day retreat of the Grantmaking Advisory Committee. This majority BIPOC Committee brings together approximately 40 individuals selected from the pool of Volunteer Proposal 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 over three days with the goal of selecting a cohort of twelve (12) grantees from the applicant pool.

**Grant Selection and Announcement:** Final decisions about the Grants for Change 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 early December 2023.



For more information about our participatory grantmaking program or to participate as a Proposal Reader [click here](#).

# eligibility

## 2023 REQUIREMENTS

### TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2023 GRANTS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM, APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS ARE:

- working exclusively or primarily in Maine communities
- programming primarily serves and supports BIPOC communities
- a Black-, Brown-, Indigenous-, Latinx-, Asian-, or People of Color-led (BIPOC) organization, group, or coalition

All BIPOC-led and serving organizations working to advance racial justice in Maine are encouraged to apply and will be considered for grant awards. The Grants for Change program **prioritizes Black and Wabanaki-led and-serving organizations** and then those BIPOC-led groups working in solidarity with Black and Wabanaki communities.

#### Eligibility Criteria for BIPOC-led Organizations:

To be eligible for a 2023 Grants for Change award, **applicants are required to meet at least two out of three of the following for at least the past two years:**

1. BIPOC key staff leaders of the organization - 50% or more of the total in leadership roles
2. BIPOC members on Board of Directors - 50% or more in governing decision-making roles
3. BIPOC organizers - 50% or more of on the ground, community interfacing staff/volunteers

*\* If applicants serving BIPOC communities do not meet all three because of intentional strategic or labor equity considerations made by BIPOC decision-makers within the organization, please explain this in the application.*

#### **Applicants are also required to meet the following:**

- Implementing programs that advance racial justice in local communities or statewide.
- A Maine-based organization or group or a coalition/alliance of groups (we do not fund individuals):
  - If your group is - or is sponsored by - a Wabanaki Tribal government you may apply without additional IRS designation.
  - 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 November 1, 2023.
- Have an organizational operating budget, including administrative and programming budget, of under \$1,500,000. (Not required for groups applying with sponsorship from a Wabanaki Tribal Government or other tribal entity.)



If the applicant is unsure if they meet the eligibility requirements, please contact the Grants for Change program staff at: [grants4change@maineinitiatives.org](mailto:grants4change@maineinitiatives.org).



# apply

## 2023 HOW-TO



Sunlight Media Collective, 2022 G4C Grantee

**Applications are currently being accepted for the 2023 Grants for Change program. Please follow the process below:**

- 1. Check your eligibility:** Please confirm that your organization meets the eligibility criteria listed above.
- 2. Read the Application:** Please read the full application instructions prior to starting your application. Please contact the Grants for Change program staff with any questions at [grants4change@maineinitiatives.org](mailto:grants4change@maineinitiatives.org). If a translation of the application into a preferred language would be helpful, please contact the G4C program staff to discuss options by August 15, 2023.
- 3. Attend the Information Session:** Attend the applicant information session on Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 12:00pm - 1:00pm EST. Please [click here](#) to register for the Information Session. If you are unable to attend, please watch the recording available on the [Grants for Change webpage](#) after the event.
- 4. Complete and Submit the Application:** Submit your application using either 1.) the online application google form which you can save as you go if you have a verified google account, or 2.) the fillable pdf which must be emailed back to [grants4change@maineinitiatives.org](mailto:grants4change@maineinitiatives.org).

ONLINE APPLICATION

FILLABLE PDF APPLICATION

**THE DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2023, BY 11:59 PM.**

Due to the multi-phase nature of this process, the Grants for Change decisions will be made early December 2023. Groups that receive a grant can anticipate receiving the first installment of grant funds within a month of providing Maine Initiatives with documentation of fiscal sponsorship or 501(c)(3) status.



[maineinitiatives.org](http://maineinitiatives.org)  
(207) 607-4070

# evaluative

## CRITERIA

In a commitment to transparency, we are pleased to share with all applicants the evaluation criteria our Proposal Readers and Grantmaking Advisory Committee will use to evaluate each proposal. As you can see, the following assessment areas are directly related to the proposal 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.

*This evaluation form is just for reference, applicants do not need to fill this out.*



### GRANT PROPOSAL EVALUATION FORM FOR REFERENCE ONLY

**Instructions:** Readers, please review the entire grant proposal packet for the organization you are evaluating and then answer the following questions based on what you read. For each “Rating Chart” please check off the statement that most accurately reflects your thoughts on the proposal. A comment section is available after each assessment and at the end of the form.

#### ASSESSMENT: ORGANIZATION

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

Rating	
	This is an inspiring organization.
	This appears to be a good organization.
	I was not very impressed with this organization.

#### ASSESSMENT: THE WORK

- *Does this organization’s programmatic approach make sense?*
- *Does the organization make the case that their programs and activities will bring about the impact they seek?*

Rating	
	I strongly agree that the organization’s work is clear and compelling.
	I agree that the organization’s work is clear and compelling.
	I disagree. I do not think the organization’s work is clear and compelling.
	I strongly disagree. I do not think the organization’s work is clear and compelling.



## ASSESSMENT: ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE

Please rate the following questions on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all" and 10 being "in a significant way". Indicate N/A if the organization has noted they do not work in this area.

To what extent does this organization advance racial justice through work that addresses systemic, structural, and institutional expressions of racial injustice?

(N/A) not at all... (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) ...in a significant way

To what extent is this organization led by, serving, and/or organizing in solidarity with Black and Wabanaki communities?

(N/A) not at all... (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) ...in a significant way

To what extent does this organization further the racial justice movement through community building, grassroots organizing, advocacy, and/or policy change?

(N/A) not at all... (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) ...in a significant way

To what extent does this organization strengthen communities through traditional and/or indigenous wisdoms and liberatory cultural practices, including (but not limited to) healing, earth protection, and the arts?

(N/A) not at all... (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) ...in a significant way

## ASSESSMENT: SUCCESS

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

Rating	
	Yes
	Somewhat
	No

## OVERALL RATING

Please choose one option:

- This is one of my top choices.
- This is a good proposal, definitely fundable, but not one of my top choices.
- I liked this proposal, but I am not quite convinced that it merits funding.
- I don't think this proposal should be funded at this time.

**EVALUATIVE NOTES**

*Please explain your reasoning for rating this proposal the way you did:*

*Include any additional comments here:*

*This organization has a RED FLAG. I have the following specific concerns about this proposal:*