



READER OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT 2026

Maine Initiatives invites community volunteers to become application Readers, reading and evaluating three applications submitted to the 2026 Immigrant-Led Organizations (ILO) Fund.

Interested individuals are encouraged to apply and will be provided with an orientation on the ILO Fund, participatory grantmaking, and guidelines to support their review and evaluation of assigned applications.

Application deadline

**Feb 25, 2026
11:59 PM ET**

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**All photography courtesy Yoon S. Byun at the 2025
ILO Fund Grantmaking Retreat.*

OVERVIEW

Participatory Grantmaking

We understand that advancing immigrant flourishing and justice are not achieved through perfect grantmaking, but are relational: requiring people to come to a deeper understanding of themselves in relation to others in community.

We seek to foster this type of transformation through our participatory grantmaking process, creating opportunities for individual reflection and collective conversation about the needs of a robust and sustainable ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations. This is an opportunity for the broader community to learn about and be inspired by the work currently being done in our state to advance immigrant flourishing. We seek to engage people as active agents in racial justice work and to leverage new financial, social, and human resources to advance racial equity in our communities.

THE 2026 IMMIGRANT-LED ORGANIZATIONS FUND

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 Fund 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.

This year's grantmaking is part of a three-year commitment, during which Maine Initiatives is making \$1.35 million in multi-year, unrestricted, general operating support grants to 30 immigrant-led and -serving organizations whose work advances immigrant, refugee, and asylum seeker flourishing in Maine ([view a list of our current Grantees here](#)).

Help inform the selection of the 2026 ILO Fund cohort: ten (10) organizations who will each receive unrestricted, general operating grants of \$45,000 paid out over three (3) years, \$15,000 per year!

JOIN IN THE PARTICIPATORY GRANTMAKING PROCESS

How to Participate:

- **Access our Application Portal:** Create an account (if you are a new Reader) or sign in to Maine Initiatives' grant management portal at: t.ly/maineinitiativesgrants to access the Reader Application.
- **Apply to be a Reader:** Complete the Reader Application in the portal by February 25th, 2026. You can review our ["How To Apply" pdf](#) to support your application process.
- **Attend the Information Session (optional):** Attend the prospective reader information session on Wednesday, February 11th, 2026, 12:00pm - 1:00pm ET. [Please click here to register for the Information Session](#). If you are unable to attend, you can reach out to ilofund@maineinitiatives.org to request a recording.
- **Read and evaluate your assigned applications:** 5 to 10 hours of at-home commitment (March - April 2026)
- **Grantmaking Advisory Committee (if selected):** Readers can apply to join the Grantmaking Advisory Committee, which entails a two-day in-person retreat (May 8-9, 2026).



READERS -HELP US EVALUATE APPLICATIONS!

Who can be an Application Reader?

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

What level of time commitment is required?

Readers will be asked to review three (3) applications. Each application will require approximately one to two hours to read, assess, and score. Additionally, Readers will be invited to participate in an optional one-hour Reader Orientation via Zoom on Wednesday, March 11th, 2026.

What if I am a board member, staff member, or otherwise affiliated with an applicant organization?

That's okay! We are deeply committed to engaging a range of voices in our decision-making process and actively seek to include individuals directly involved with work that advances immigrant flourishing. We have designed our process to permit us to identify and mitigate potential conflicts of interest in this process. We 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 be kept anonymous, compiled and summarized by Maine Initiatives staff, and shared with the members of the Grant-making Advisory Committee members to inform their decision-making about the 2026 cohort selection.

2026 ILO FUND GRANTMAKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Grantmaking Advisory Committee (GMAC) is a cross-race and cross-class committee (majority immigrant identifying) of approximately 30 individuals.

We prioritize those with relevant lived experience and those most impacted by our grant-making, while also reflecting geographic, demographic, and other forms of diversity within the Maine Initiatives community.

Committee members may include representatives of the following groups:

- Past ILO Fund grantee organizations;
- Current ILO Fund applicant organizations;
- Individuals with specific proximity to and knowledge about the ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations in Maine;
- BIPOC individuals with an expressed interest in greater proximity to immigrant-led efforts;
- Maine Initiatives volunteers, donors, or institutional funders; and
- Individuals with peer and partner organizations with a clear commitment to deepening their learning and funding of immigrant-led efforts to advance immigrant flourishing.

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