



Indigo Arts Alliance, 2023 G4C Grantee

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Maine Initiatives is now accepting applications for the 2024 Grants for Change Program, which seeks to fund and strengthen community-based efforts advancing racial justice in Maine. The 2024 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.



APPLICATIONS DUE BY
JULY 31, 2024

access **APPLICATION** here

overview

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). This 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, prioritizing Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty 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, repatriation, earth protection, and the arts; and**
- ▶ **are led by, serve, and/or organize in solidarity with Black and Wabanaki communities (see VISION below).**



The twelve (12) organizations selected for the 2024 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 2024 through November 2027. Members of the 2024 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, application 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

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.

*While Grants for Change prioritizes Black and Wabanaki-led and -serving efforts that address the histories described here, Maine Initiatives' Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund seeks to respond to the particular needs of Maine's immigrant communities. Organizations that identify as immigrant-led and -serving are encouraged to learn more at <https://maineinitiatives.org/grantmaking/immigrant-led-organizations-fund>.



Presente! Maine, 2023 G4C Grantee

priorities

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.

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, food security, and access to culturally relevant foods;
- Tribal sovereignty, repatriation efforts, and Land Back movements; and
- Efforts that center Black joy and liberation through the arts, cultural preservation and embodied practices.

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

► **Intersectional and Intergenerational:**

Organizations that draw their leadership from and center the experience of historically marginalized groups such as: women, LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit; youth and elderly; disabled; poor and working class; and those impacted by incarceration and the carceral system. We believe that a robust racial justice ecosystem in Maine must be grounded in intersectional, feminist, queer, and class analysis and must address patriarchy and racial capitalism directly.

► **Geographically Diverse:** Organizations across 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 simply exist safely and build together in solidarity with Maine's Indigenous peoples.

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 nonprofit 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 movement 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.



Members of the 2023 Grants for Change Grantmaking Advisory Committee

participate

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 June 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 Community Advisory Board and Steering Committee made up of respected BIPOC community leaders from current G4C cohort members or those with experience participating in the Grants for Change process.

► **Funding Opportunity Announcement:**

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

► **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 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.

► **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 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 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 2024.

eligibility

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2024 GRANTS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM, APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS ARE:

- ▶ Working exclusively or primarily in Maine
- ▶ Programming primarily serves and supports BIPOC communities
- ▶ A Black-, Brown-, Indigenous-, Latinx-, Asian-, or People of Color-led (BIPOC) organization, group, or coalition

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

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR BIPOC-LED ORGANIZATIONS

To be eligible for a 2024 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, 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, 2024.

- ▶ Have an organizational operating budget, including administrative and programming budget, of under \$2,500,000. (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.

how to apply

APPLICATIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE 2024 GRANTS FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

Please follow the process below:

- 1. Check your eligibility:** Please confirm that your organization meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Contact the Grants for Change staff with any questions at grants4change@maineinitiatives.org.
- 2. Request accommodations:** Please make accommodation requests by emailing grants4change@maineinitiatives.org by July 1, 2024. 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. *We acknowledge that traditional grantmaking application processes often present barriers and/or unfairly represent the work of individuals who did not learn English as their first language. Grants for Change 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.
- 3. Download Adobe Reader:** We strongly recommend using Adobe to download and complete the application form. You can download a free version of Adobe Reader [here](#).
- 4. Read the Application:** Please read the full application instructions prior to starting your application.
- 5. Attend the Applicant Information Session:** Attend the applicant information session on Tuesday June 25 from 12:00pm - 1:00pm EST. [Please click here to register](#) for the Information Session that will be held over zoom. If you are unable to attend, please watch the recording available on the Grants for Change webpage after the event.
- 6. Apply:** Submit your application using the fillable PDF available [here](#). Please email your completed application to grants4change@maineinitiatives.org.
- 7. Finish:** After you submit your application, G4C staff will conduct an initial review of the application to make sure it is complete, and will follow up with a confirmation email once they have had the chance to do so.

access
APPLICATION
here

The deadline for applications is
WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2024
by 11:59 pm

Due to the multi-phase nature of this process, the 2024 Grants for Change cohort decisions will be made early December 2024. 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.

evaluation criteria

for reference only

In a commitment to transparency, we are pleased to share the evaluation criteria our volunteer Application Readers and Grantmaking Advisory Committee 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. This evaluation form is just for reference, 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's programmatic approach make sense?*
- *Does the organization make the case that their programs and activities will bring about the impact they seek?*

ASSESSMENT: ADVANCING RACIAL JUSTICE

- *To what extent does this organization advance racial justice through work that addresses systemic, structural, and institutional expressions of racial injustice?*
- *To what extent is this organization led by, serving, and/or organizing in solidarity with Black and Wabanaki communities?*
- *To what extent does this organization further the racial justice movement through community building, grassroots organizing, advocacy, and/or policy change?*
- *To what extent does this organization strengthen communities through traditional and/or indigenous wisdoms and liberatory cultural practices, including (but not limited to) healing, rematriation, earth protection, and the arts?*

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?*