



Participants in the winter 2024 Community-Led Needs Assessment, convened by the ILO Fund. Photo credit: Luke Kaneb

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Maine Initiatives is now accepting applications for the 2024 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.



Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund

a program of Maine Initiatives

APPLICATIONS DUE BY
MAY 31, 2024

access **APPLICATION** here

overview

2024 ILO Fund Program

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 included, valued, and celebrated in all aspects of life. We believe immigrant flourishing is required for our commitment to racial justice.

From 2024 through 2029, 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.**

The ten (10) organizations selected for the 2024 ILO Fund 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 their 3-year grant period, from August 2024 through August 2027.

Organizations chosen for the 2024 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 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 the application design, 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:

- a) the particular effects of xenophobic rhetoric and policies on the opportunities for immigrants of color to seek safety within the United States; and
- b) 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 supports and strengthens the ecosystem of immigrant-led organizations that are committed to ensuring immigrants in Maine, regardless of legal status, are included, valued, and celebrated.

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.





The 2023 Maine Immigration Forum. Photo courtesy of Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition.

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:

- ▶ **Community-Led Design:** In the inaugural year of this new participatory process with multi-year grants, the ILO Fund has convened a Sounding Board made up of grantee partners and community leaders to inform the change in program design. This body will transition to a more formalized Community Advisory Board in subsequent years, to support the ILO Fund's continued review and progress.
- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **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 approximately 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 retreat of the Grantmaking Advisory Committee. This majority immigrant Committee brings together a group of community volunteers representing a broad diversity of identities and perspectives. 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.
- ▶ **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 2024.



eligibility

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2024 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

*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.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR IMMIGRANT-LED ORGANIZATIONS:

To be eligible for a 2024 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% of staff are reflective of the community
2. Immigrant members on Board of Directors:
50% or more are reflective of the community
3. Immigrant activists: 50% or more of on the ground, community interfacing staff/volunteers

APPLICANTS ARE ALSO REQUIRED TO MEET THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ 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 before the Grantmaking Advisory Committee's Retreat in August.
- ▶ 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.) applying with sponsorship from a Wabanaki Tribal Government or other tribal entity.)

Questions about eligibility? Contact ilofund@maineinitiatives.org



how to apply

APPLICATIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE 2024 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:** If you would like translation assistance or interpreter to complete an application, please make a request by emailing ilofund@maineinitiatives.org by May 13, 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. 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.*
- 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 Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 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 Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund webpage after the event.
- 6. Apply:** Submit your application using the fillable PDF available [here](#). Please email your completed application to ilofund@maineinitiatives.org.

access
APPLICATION
here

The deadline for applications is
FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2024
by 11:59 pm

Due to the multi-phase nature of this process, the ILO Fund decisions will be made early August 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 with all applicants the evaluation criteria our Proposal Readers will use to evaluate each proposal. As you can see, the following assessment areas are directly related to the proposal narrative questions. All Readers will be expected to review the entire grant application and complete the assessment worksheet based on the materials submitted. A comment section for Reader reflection will be available after each assessment and at the end of the form.

It is our recommendation that each applicant organization use this assessment document to review their own proposal before submitting it to ensure that all questions are clearly addressed in the narrative.

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?*

