



FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

More Women + Surf, 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund Grantee

Maine Initiatives, in partnership with the Nature Based Education Consortium, is accepting applications for the 2024 Outdoor Equity Fund. The purpose of this fund is to strengthen the sector of Black and Wabanaki-led groups advancing safe, equitable access to outdoor spaces and increased opportunities for nature-based learning for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.

The Outdoor Equity Fund is open to all eligible BIPOC-led and -serving organizations advancing outdoor equity in Maine. The Outdoor Equity Fund prioritizes Black- and Wabanaki-led and serving groups.



APPLICATIONS DUE BY
APRIL 26, 2024

access **APPLICATION** here



Juneteenth Downeast, 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund Grantee

overview

2024 Outdoor Equity Fund

The 2024 Outdoor Equity Fund is a participatory grantmaking program that provides three (3) years of general operating support (Summer of 2024, 2025, 2026) to a cohort of ten (10) nonprofits groups who advance outdoor equity in Maine.

GOALS OF THE OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND:

- ▶ **Addressing barriers** that exist for communities that need and want to access outdoor spaces.
- ▶ **Advancing nature-based learning** and strengthening relationships with the outdoors in an inclusive way.
- ▶ **Strengthening connection** and collaboration among people, groups, funders, and others working in this realm to create synergy and uplift all.
- ▶ **Educating the greater community** about what groups are doing and the issues regarding outdoor access and communal outdoor activities.



The Outdoor Equity Fund (OEF) was developed by the Nature Based Education Consortium (NBEC) and Maine Initiatives (MI). OEF grants are administered and disbursed by MI leadership, and informed, advised, and guided by a dedicated Community Advisory Committee and Working Group.

The ten (10) groups selected by the 2024 OEF Grantmaking Advisory Committee for the 2024 cohort will each receive general operating grants of \$30,000 paid annually over three (3) years, \$10,000 per year. In addition, OEF cohort members will be invited to participate in a series of peer activities over the course of the three-year period.

focus

Outdoor Equity Fund

The focus of the Outdoor Equity Fund is to support access for the most marginalized communities in Maine that for historical, cultural, and financial reasons have experienced barriers to a strong and self-directed presence in the outdoors.

The living legacies of racial capitalism and settler colonialism continue to hold power over and structure the relationship to nature and place for these communities. Advancing outdoor equity requires naming these particular histories, the realities of racial injustice in Maine, and addressing how those legacies continue to impact outdoor access to communities today. In particular, The Outdoor Equity Fund seeks to name and respond to:

- ▶ the specific intergenerational effects of anti-Black racism experienced by descendants of the victims of chattel slavery in the continental U.S. & Caribbean; and
- ▶ the specific histories and contemporary realities of settler colonialism experienced by generations of Wabanaki in this land now called Maine.

The Outdoor Equity Fund supports and strengthens the ecosystem of outdoor equity organizing and activism in Maine, with Black and Wabanaki voices, visions, and leadership at the center, based on the recognition that:

- ▶ the root cause of racial inequality today in this country is anti-Black racism and settler colonialism;
- ▶ the legacy of genocide, colonization, and chattel slavery are foundational injustices that continue to inhibit our collective ability to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice;
- ▶ the pervasive and persistent realities of bias, discrimination, structural & institutional racism impact Black and Wabanaki communities in unique and acute ways, despite the extraordinary leadership and advocacy efforts of leaders from 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, across the region, and nationally.

2024 funding priorities

Groups whose work advances outdoor equity as outlined by the goals of the OEF (above) and meet all eligibility requirements are welcome to apply. The OEF understands meaningful and impactful equity efforts to be relational, intersectional, and sustainable. Activities that advance outdoor equity may include one or more of the following:

- Land-based cultural continuation & preservation
- Land-back and land return projects
- Leadership development and mentoring
- Farming, gardening, and farmworker justice programs
- Outdoor accessibility development
- Outdoor expeditions such as hunting, fishing, and hiking trips
- Outdoor learning or environmental education, including school-based experiences
- Therapeutic and trauma-informed nature programs

Note: The OEF welcomes applications from groups whose work is advancing outdoor equity in other important ways that may not be captured on the list above.



Tender Table, 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund Grantee

eligibility

If the applicant is unsure if they meet the eligibility requirements, please contact the Outdoor Equity Fund staff at oef@maineinitiatives.org.

TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2024 OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND, APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS:

- ▶ are working exclusively or primarily in Maine communities
- ▶ have programming that primarily serves and supports BIPOC communities; and
- ▶ identify as a Black-, Brown-, Indigenous-, Latinx-, Asian-, or People of Color-led (BIPOC) organization, group, or coalition.

All eligible BIPOC-led and serving organizations working to advance outdoor equity 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 Outdoor Equity Fund 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 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 outdoor equity in local communities or statewide.
- ▶ Are 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 June.
- ▶ Have an organizational operating budget, including administrative and programming budget, of under \$1,500,000. Organizational operating budget is defined by operating expenses for the most recent completed fiscal year. (Not required for groups applying with sponsorship from a Wabanaki Tribal Government or other tribal entity.)

how to apply

APPLICATIONS ARE CURRENTLY BEING ACCEPTED FOR THE 2024 OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND.

Please follow the process below:

- 1. Check your eligibility:** Please confirm that your group meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Contact oef@maineinitiatives.org with any questions.
- 2. 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](#).
- 3. Read the Application:** Prior to starting your application, please read the entire OEF Application, including the Evaluation Criteria that will be used by application reviewers.
- 4. Attend the Applicant Information Session:** on April 3, from 11:00am - 12:00 noon. [Click here](#) to register for the applicant information session. If you are unable to attend, please watch the recording available on the the [Outdoor Equity Fund webpage](#) after the event.
- 5. Apply:** Submit your application using the fillable PDF available here. You may email your completed application to oef@maineinitiatives.org.
- 6. Request language accommodations:** If you would like translation assistance or interpreter to complete an application, please make a request by emailing oef@maineinitiatives.org by April 8, 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.



access
APPLICATION
here

The deadline for applications is
Friday, April 26, 2024
by 11:59 pm

The OEF Grantmaking Advisory Committee will convene in mid- June and decisions will be made public by July 1, 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?*
- *Is this an inspiring 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?*
- *Is this organization's work clear and compelling?*

ASSESSMENT: ADVANCING OUTDOOR EQUITY

- *To what extent does this organization's work or efforts advance outdoor equity?*

ASSESSMENT: SUCCESS

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