



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Maine Initiatives, in partnership with the Nature Based Education Consortium, is now accepting applications for the 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund. The purpose of this fund is to create safe, equitable access to outdoor spaces and increased opportunities for nature-based learning in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory, by strengthening the ecosystem or sector of Black and Wabanaki-led groups advancing outdoor access, education, and experience for Wabanaki and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities in Maine.

For 2023, the **Outdoor Equity Fund is prioritizing Black- and Wabanaki-led and serving groups**, however all BIPOC groups may apply.



APPLICATIONS DUE BY
FEBRUARY 10TH, 2023



overview

2023 Outdoor Equity Fund

The Outdoor Equity Fund (OEF) is a participatory grantmaking program that funds and strengthens BIPOC, community-based nonprofit groups in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory. The 2023 OEF will provide three (3) years of general operating support (March of 2023, 2024, 2025) to a cohort of ten (10) groups who are working to create safe, equitable access to outdoor spaces and increased opportunities for nature-based learning.

Goals of the Outdoor Equity Fund:

- To bolster groups' capacities to improve access to outdoor spaces and/or create nature-based learning opportunities.
- To increase ownership and decision-making power by new and emerging leaders who have experienced barriers to accessing safe outdoor spaces.
- To strengthen connection and collaboration among people, groups, funders, and others working in this realm to create synergy and uplift all.
- To address barriers that exist for communities that need and want to access outdoor spaces.
- To advance nature-based learning and strengthen relationships with the outdoors in an inclusive way.
- To educate the greater community about what groups are doing and issues regarding outdoor access and communal outdoor activities.



The Outdoor Equity Fund has been developed and is administered by the Nature Based Education Consortium (NBEC) and Maine Initiatives (MI) and has been steered by a leadership team of four (4) and informed, advised, and guided by a Community Advisory Committee of seven (7) leaders within the nature-based learning ecosystem in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.

The Community Advisory Committee and leadership team have developed evaluative criteria and selected 11-15 BIPOC representatives for the Grantmaking Advisory Committee, who will use this criteria to select the 2023 cohort.*

The ten (10) groups selected for the 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund cohort will each receive general operating grants of \$30,000 paid annually over three (3) years, \$10,000 per year. In addition, they will be invited to participate in a series of peer learning, training, capacity-building, and community outreach activities over the course of the three (3) year grant period.

* Note that all Grantmaking Advisory Committee decisions require the final approval of the Maine Initiatives Board of Directors. To view the members of the Maine Initiatives Board, please visit <https://maineinitiatives.org/about/who-we-are>.



2023 funding priorities

Groups whose work advances outdoor equity as defined by the goals of the OEF (above) and groups doing work in one or more of the following areas are welcome to apply.

- Land-based cultural continuation & preservation
- Land-back and land return projects
- Leadership development and mentoring
- Farming and gardening 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 is also interested in groups whose work is advancing outdoor equity in new or important ways that may not be captured on the list above.

The Grantmaking Advisory Committee will make decisions based on the goals of the Outdoor Equity Fund (see above) and taking into account the following criteria:

► **Intersectional work:**

Groups who work within and among marginalized communities will receive preference. This is in recognition of the increased barriers that exist within BIPOC communities for people with disabilities, queer and trans people, women, people from religious minorities, etc.

► **Relational work:** Groups that center and prioritize relationships and people both internally and externally will receive preference.

- **Internal work:** Preference for groups demonstrating how they support or plan to support and uplift well-being for the people (staff, volunteers, etc.) doing their work. This may include creating and implementing people-centered organizational practices and policies.
- **External work:** Preference for groups demonstrating long-standing, mutual relationships with partners and within their respective community/communities.
- **Internal and external:** Preference for groups describing approaches and strategies for creating new and strengthening their existing working relationships.

► **Sustainability of the work:**

This can encompass a broad array of strategies including youth learning and leadership development, training for community leaders, etc.

- Preference for groups demonstrating that their work continues to be impactful beyond the timeframe of the programs or experiences offered.

► **Nature of the work:**

- Preference for groups who incorporate **trauma support, holistic health and healing**, both within their group and in the work they do in their community.
- Preference for groups supporting **youth**.
- Preference for groups **reclaiming and reintroducing nature connections or experiences** for those who haven't had them or wouldn't otherwise be able to.
- Preference for groups **reclaiming land and/or pursuing indigenous sovereignty** related to land and space.
- Preference for groups **creating safer outdoor spaces** for their tribe and/or community served.

eligibility

2023 requirements

To be eligible for the 2023 Outdoor Equity Fund, the applicant group must:

- Be working exclusively or primarily in Maine, unceded Wabanaki Territory.
- Be a Black-, Brown-, Indigenous-, Latine-, Asian-, or People of Color-led organization/group/coalition. All BIPOC-led and serving groups may apply. We are prioritizing Black and Wabanaki organizations for 2023.
- Be doing work that advances outdoor equity. Please see the OEF's goals and funding priorities for more specificity.
- Be a Maine-based organization, group, or a coalition/alliance of groups, (we do not fund individuals).
- Have an operating budget under \$1,000,000. (Not required for groups applying with sponsorship from a Wabanaki Tribal Government or other tribal entity or for groups with fiscal sponsors).

To establish BIPOC-led status, groups need to meet two (2) or three (3) of the following criteria for the past two (2) years:

- BIPOC directors or specific program leaders (leadership roles): 50% or more
- BIPOC board members (or governing decision-making roles): 50% or more
- BIPOC activists (on-the-ground community change makers): 50% or more



how to apply

Applications are currently being accepted for the 2023 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@nbeconsortium.com](mailto: oef@nbeconsortium.com) 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:** Please read the full application prior to starting your application.
- 4. Attend the Applicant Information Session:** on January 19, 2023 from noon to 1:00 pm. [Click here](#) to register for the applicant information session.
- 5. Apply:** Submit your application using the [fillable PDF available here](#). You may email your completed application to [oef@nbeconsortium.com](mailto: oef@nbeconsortium.com).
- 6. Request for oral application submission:**** In recognition that the written word has limitations for people and cultures, we are offering alternatives. If you would like to complete this application with us via phone, please make a request by emailing [oef@nbeconsortium.com](mailto: oef@nbeconsortium.com). *Such a request will not negatively impact your chance to receive funding.*
- 7. Request language accommodations:**** If you would like to work with a translator or interpreter to complete either a written or oral phone application, please make a request by emailing [oef@nbeconsortium.com](mailto: oef@nbeconsortium.com). *Such a request will not negatively impact your chance to receive funding.*
- 8. Request an application coach:**** If your group doesn't have a paid consultant or staff grant writer and you would like to speak to a coach who can offer advice and support with your answers to basic questions on filling out a grant application, please make a request by emailing [oef@nbeconsortium.com](mailto: oef@nbeconsortium.com). *Such a request will not negatively impact your chance to receive funding.*

**** Note that the sooner you make these requests, the easier it is for the OEF leadership team to accommodate it. Requests must be made no later than two weeks before the application deadline/ by Friday, January 27 at 5:00 pm at the absolute latest.**



The deadline for applications is

Friday, February, 10th 2023 by 11:59 pm

The OEF decisions will be made public in mid-March of 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.