



2025

Outdoor Equity Fund

Funding Opportunity Announcement



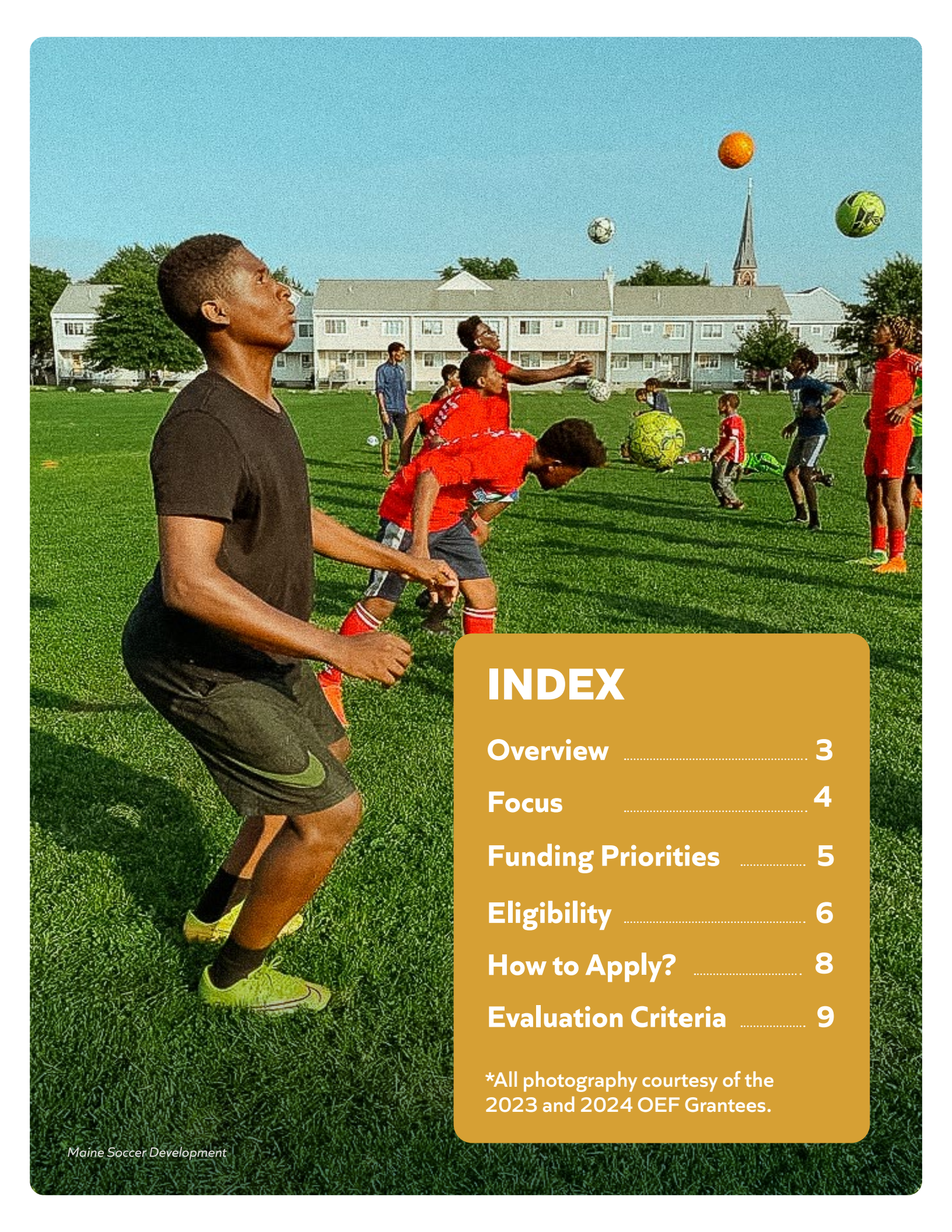
Presented by Maine

Maine Initiatives is accepting applications for the 2025 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.

APPLY HERE
for eligible organizations

Applications due by
March 28, 2025
11:59 PM ET



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*All photography courtesy of the 2023 and 2024 OEF Grantees.

OVERVIEW

The 2025 Outdoor Equity Fund is a participatory grantmaking program that provides three (3) years of general operating support (2025, 2026, 2027) to a cohort of five (5) nonprofit 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.



OEF grants are administered and disbursed by Maine Initiatives, and informed, advised, and guided by a dedicated Community Advisory Committee and Working Group.

The Nature Based Education Consortium proudly co-developed and continues to support this funding opportunity offered by Maine Initiatives.

GRANT DETAILS

AMOUNT & TERMS

\$30,000

paid annually over 3 years
\$10,000 each year

GRANTS AWARDED

5

selected by the 2025 OEF
Grantmaking Advisory Committee

DEADLINE

March 28, 2025

11:59 PM ET

FOCUS

The **Outdoor Equity Fund** supports access to the outdoors for the 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.



FUNDING PRIORITIES

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 in this country is anti-Black racism and settler colonialism;
- the legacies of genocide, colonization, and chattel slavery are foundational injustices that continue to inhibit our collective ability to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice;
- 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
- work led by and in support of Black and Wabanaki communities has been and continues to be systematically undervalued and underfunded in Maine, across the region, and nationally.

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
- Environmental justice, policy, and advocacy
- 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. If the applicant is unsure if they meet the eligibility requirements, please contact the Outdoor Equity Fund staff at oef@maineinitiatives.org.

ELIGIBILITY

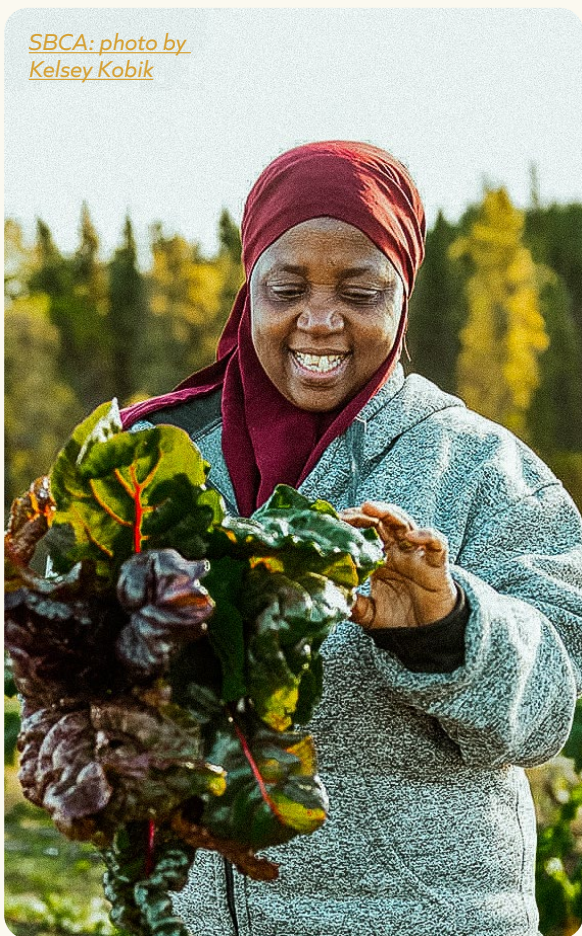
TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2025 OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND, APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD:

- have programming that primarily serves and supports BIPOC communities;
- identify as a Black-, Brown-, Indigenous-, Latinx-, Asian-, or People of Color-led and -serving (BIPOC) organization, group, or coalition;
- work exclusively or primarily in Maine communities;
- and satisfy all eligibility criteria listed below on page 7.

NOTE

- 2023 & 2024 grantees do not need to apply again. 2023 & 2024 grantees will receive funds April 2025.
- We do not fund LLCs or for-profit work.

*SBCA: photo by
Kelsey Kobik*



Maine Afro Yoga



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR BIPOC-LED AND -SERVING ORGANIZATIONS:

To be eligible for a 2025 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*:

- **BIPOC key staff leaders of the organization:** 50% or more of the total in leadership roles
- **BIPOC members on the Board of Directors:** 50% or more in governing decision-making roles
- **BIPOC organizers:** 50% or more of on-the-ground, community interfacing staff/volunteers

* If applicants serving BIPOC communities do not meet two-out-of-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, group, or a coalition/alliance of groups (we do not fund individuals).
- Be a registered non-profit, or fiscally sponsored by a registered non-profit, applying for funding for 501(c)3 eligible activities only. If your group is - or is sponsored by - a Wabanaki Tribal government you may apply without additional IRS designation.
- 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 May 2025.
- Have an organizational operating budget, including administrative and programming budget, of \$1,500,000 or less. Organizational operating budget is defined by operating expenses for the most recently completed fiscal year. (Not required for groups applying with sponsorship from a Wabanaki Tribal Government or other tribal entity.)

HOW TO APPLY?

Applications are being accepted for the 2025 Outdoor Equity Fund until March 28, 2025. Please follow the process below to apply:

1. Check your eligibility: Please confirm that your group meets the eligibility criteria listed above. Contact [oef@maineinitiatives.org](mailto: oef@maineinitiatives.org) with any questions.
2. Read the Application: Prior to starting your application, you are strongly encouraged to read the entire OEF Application, including the Evaluation Criteria that will be used by application readers. You can find a PDF with the full application questions [here](#).
3. Apply: Submit your application using our [Google Form](#).

Application deadline
March 28, 2025
11:59 PM ET

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OPTIONAL:

- **Attend the Applicant Information Session on February 25, 2025 from 10:30-11:30am.** [Click here](#) to register for the applicant information session. If you are unable to attend, you can reach out to [oef@maineinitiatives.org](mailto: oef@maineinitiatives.org) to request a recording.
- **Request language accommodations:** If you would like translation assistance or an interpreter to complete an application, please make a request by emailing [oef@maineinitiatives.org](mailto: oef@maineinitiatives.org) **by March 1, 2025**. 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.



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 review each proposal.

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?

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?

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 28, 2025 11:59 PM ET

Khmer Maine



APPLY HERE

for eligible organizations

Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition

