

People of Color Fund



Photo: John Ewing

What are the tools to achieve racial equity in Maine?

For teens in Lewiston, it's coaching to become leaders and role models for a growing immigrant community. On Indian Island, young Native Americans are renewing traditional skills with help from their elders, while students from around the world are learning a new language from volunteer tutors in Portland. In Downeast Maine, Latinos are making homes in the region thanks to advocacy and enhanced community services.

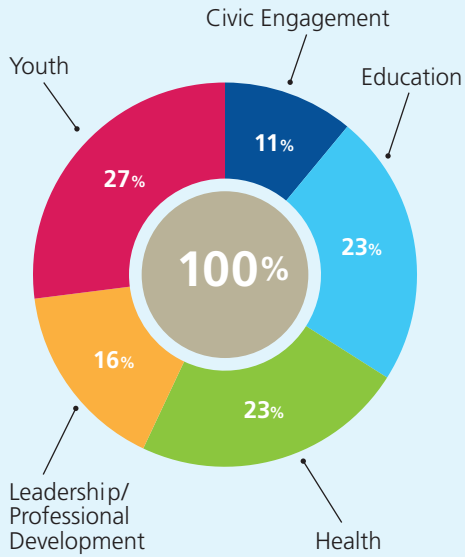
The quest for racial equity in Maine advances programs like these that help communities grow from within. They're supported by the Maine Community Foundation's People of Color Fund, the first fund in Maine dedicated to addressing needs of communities of color.

Help us celebrate the People of Color Fund's outstanding record of grantmaking, which began with a \$1-million endowment gift from the River Rock Foundation. With the right tools—leadership development, civic engagement training, and community support—Maine's people of color are gaining opportunities and skills for the future.

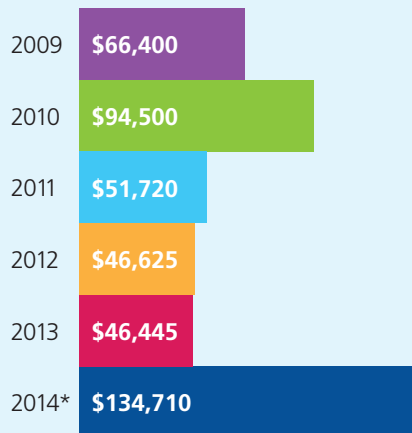


High school StreetLeaders at Lewiston's Tree Street Youth are role models and tutors for younger students in the center's after-school program.

People of Color Fund Awards by Priority Area



Annual Awards by Year



* Additional funding support from the Maine Health Access Foundation

Gedakina

Kyle Lolar and his students in the Nature's Garden initiative enjoy trekking through Maine woods, tapping trees and collecting sap for maple syrup.

"They say it's the best kind of learning," Lolar, a youth educator, says of the days spent in the fields, woods, and waterways. Through the program, Native American youth learn about traditional food systems, indigenous gardening, wild edible plant identification, and sustainable harvesting and preparation.

"They realize now that food comes from somewhere other than the supermarket," Lolar says. The program also builds leadership skills and self-sufficiency as participants learn to provide healthy food for their families.

Launched in 2013, Nature's Garden is a program of Gedakina, a multi-generational endeavor to strengthen and revitalize the cultural knowledge and identity of Native Americans across New England.

Last year Gedakina launched PathFinders, a professional/economic development initiative that prepares youth and young adults to lead outdoor education activities, and for jobs in ecotourism, outdoor adventure, guiding, and wilderness medical professions. "We're expanding opportunities to learn," says Lolar, "and that's exciting."



Photo: Bill Drake



Photo: Ana Blagojevic

Mano en Mano

In a quiet but vibrant corner of Downeast Maine, Mano en Mano is busy removing barriers and bridging communities.

In the Milbridge area, home to more than 600 Latinos, Mano en Mano envisions a world *donde quepan muchos mundos*—a world in which many worlds are possible.

"We provide a sense of stability, a sense of being welcome in a very rural part of the state, and a sense of hope and opportunity," says Ian Yaffe, executive director.

Mano en Mano is constantly evolving to meet the needs of residents. It provides educational and affordable housing opportunities, helps remove barriers to social services, and advocates for social justice for Latino immigrants and migrant workers.

At community potlucks and workshops, people from the area build bridges to different communities and celebrate their varied cultures and heritages.

"Everything comes back to providing opportunities to help empower people," Yaffe says. "We are creating spaces of meaningful communication and understanding to help community members learn together."



Photo: John Ewing

Multilingual & Multicultural Center

As the first generation of multilingual students from Make It Happen! collect their diplomas and head off to college this year, they'll leave behind the coaches who helped them navigate the path from middle school to higher education.

"The academic coaches are role models for our students," explains Timothy Cronin, coordinator of the program of Portland Public Schools' Multilingual & Multicultural Center. "They're a wealth of information."

The program, which serves 330 students, helps them achieve language equivalency, become competitive for college admission, and secure financial aid.

Many students are the first in their families to attend college and need their coaches' help to overcome language and cultural barriers. Together they tour colleges, fill out applications, and find financial aid.

And it wouldn't be possible, Cronin says, without support from the People of Color Fund and the dedication of four AmeriCorps members and more than 40 volunteer coaches.

"For so many students, this program has created a sense of belonging," Cronin notes. "Students come and feel they have a home base in the school."



Photo: John Ewing

Tree Street Youth

Simply put, being a StreetLeader at Tree Street Youth is a big deal.

"Everyone knows who [the StreetLeaders] are and strives to be like them," says Julia Sleeper, co-founder of the youth center in Lewiston that unites youth through academics, the arts, and athletics. "People respect them because they know how hard they had to work to get to that point."

The job-training program provides high-school students the opportunity to work as tutors and become role models in their community. The program cultivates leadership, giving students the tools to achieve their goals.

This year, the program will expand to include "The Squad," a group of middle-school students who aspire to be StreetLeaders.

StreetLeaders make powerful connections with younger children in the community.

"They're growing up in the same neighborhood and facing the same challenges," Sleeper says. "And nothing is cooler to a kindergartener than a high-schooler who wants to hang out with them."

People of Color Fund By the Numbers*

Maximum grant award:

\$7,500

Applications for grants:

185

Grants awarded:

70

Dollars requested:

\$1.3 million

Funds distributed:

\$440,400

Average each year:

\$74,645

* For 2009-2014

To Learn More

If you'd like more information about the People of Color Fund, please contact Lelia DeAndrade, director of grantmaking services for the Maine Community Foundation, at Ideandrade@mainecf.org or 877-700-6800.

People of Color Fund Helps Communities Lead

Grants from the People of Color Fund focus on three areas: leadership development, civic engagement, and youth. Here are examples of programs from the past six years that have benefited from funding:

Somali Bantu Community Mutual Assistance Association of Lewiston/Auburn (photo at right), to support weaving and selling traditional Somali Bantu baskets through the Women's Basket Weaving Project

Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, to support youth mentors and the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to increase civic engagement in disenfranchised communities

Portland Police Department, to support paid summer internships for two youth of color

Hand in Hand/Mano en Mano, to provide immigrant students with four weeks of intensive English study at the University of Maine

Four Directions Development Corporation, for an impact evaluation of lending and financial education services on Indian Island

Tree Street Youth, to support the Intercultural Community Exchange Intern program

Maine Access Immigrant Network, for a new website to increase access to, and awareness of, programs and events, and to share multilingual health and Affordable Care Act resources



Photo: Jill Brady Photography

Somali Bantu Youth of Maine, to educate immigrant and refugee parents and youth about the juvenile justice system

Community Financial Literacy, to train and mentor staff in grant research and writing

Friends of Portland Adult Education, to provide a contextualized English health course for new Mainers who wish to pursue a career in health fields

American Friends Service Committee, for Native American youth to participate in Maine's Truth and Reconciliation process

Portland Public School Department, to support Make It Happen! Raising and Realizing Academic Aspirations of English Language Learners

Gedakina, Inc., to promote sustainable food systems for Native American people through programs led by traditional ecological knowledge keepers and elders

Our Advisors

Advisors to the People of Color Fund have knowledge about and connections to Maine's communities of color as well as expertise in issues of equity and the fund's focus areas.

Lisa Sockabasin, chair, Office of Health Equity

Pious Ali, Muskie School of Public Service

Edgar Anderson, UPS, retired

Catherine Besteman, Colby College

Edwige Charlot, Engine

Gloria Aponte Clarke, HealthInfoNet

Barbara Ginley, Maine Migrant Health Program

Fatuma Hussein, United Somali Women of Maine

Stefan Jackson, Natural Difference, LLC

Jenna Vendil, Portland Board of Public Education

Past Advisors

William Burney, Department of Housing and Urban Development

Blanca Gurrola, Community Counseling Center

Susan Hammond, Four Directions Development Corporation

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