

MAINE LAND PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM REVIEWERS GUIDE FOR BUSY PEOPLE

YOUR ROLE:	Volunteer Reviewer for the Maine Community Foundation
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact Stephanie Cesario at 412-0824 or scenario@mainecf.org if you have any questions 2. Attend a one-hour training via Zoom 3. Disclose any conflicts of interest, real or perceived 4. Activate your account in our online grant system & remember email & password used 5. Read 6-10 grant proposals as assigned, evaluate based on program criteria & priorities, and offer feedback to applicants as appropriate 6. Fill out an online form for each proposal in the online grant system with your review 7. Complete paperwork required to issue a \$350 stipend, if you would like to receive one, or indicate if you would like it sent to your nonprofit employer instead.
HOW TO REVIEW A GRANT PROPOSAL	<p>You will determine whether the organization or project fits all the program criteria:</p> <p>Projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create or increase permanent access to land and water, particularly for marginalized and historically excluded populations (such as those with low incomes, disabilities, mental health conditions, limited English proficiency; people of color or racial minority groups; immigrants and/or refugees; and those who identify as LGBTQ+) and communities with limited conservation opportunities • Involve and have support from community members and interested stakeholders, (for example, other non-profit organizations, local businesses, and municipal officials or committees, etc.) • Include a vision or plan for the future use of the land or easement, including strategies to engage people and communities in developing uses and organizational plans to care for the land over time. <p>Priority will be given to projects that will benefit most or will be nearest completion with a grant from this program. This includes if the grant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay a significant portion of the purchase price • Help secure other funds (such as through matching grants) • Complete a fundraising campaign. <p>Additional priority will be given to projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit communities and the economy, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting and providing access to cultural resources and other resources valued by community members - Supporting agriculture, fisheries, and working forests - Creating or increasing outdoor recreation opportunities • Address climate change by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping communities prepare for and respond to climate change - Reducing the impact of climate change on the communities and people who are most affected • Conserve critical habitat and sensitive ecological areas.
WRITE A REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the review form in the online portal, including any questions or concerns for staff to follow up on as well as any constructive comments, suggestions, or resources for the applicant that staff may pass along. • Rank the proposal: 1-Yes/Fund; 2- Maybe, have questions or concerns; 3-Do Not Fund.
SUBMIT	Complete your assigned reviews and submit them in the online system by the end of the day on October 25, 2023.



Equity: The Core Value for Competitive Grantmaking

Consistency

Use uniform rules, standards, and practices to evaluate all proposals submitted in a grant cycle.

Accessibility

Make it easy for all to apply by asking for information in a way that is understandable and reasonable for the least resourced. Proactively address potential barriers.

Transparency

Make standards and processes clear and obvious to all.

Grant Making Best Practices

1. **TRUST:** Begin from a place of trust; nonprofits are our partners and we give them the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their intentions
Try to avoid...Questioning whether the organization really intends to do what it says it is going to do, use the money as described, or try to deliver results
2. **OPENNESS:** Be open to learning about new people and organizations
Try to avoid...Using whether an applicant is "known" as a filter to make grant decisions
3. **RISK:** Take risks in supporting new approaches or strategies to address issues
Try to avoid...Limiting support to only strategies and practices that are familiar
4. **FAILURE IS OK:** Recognize that nonprofit programs may not meet their goals for several reasons (inclement weather or staffing partnerships) and failure can be part of the process
Try to avoid...Withholding support for an organization with a project that didn't meet its anticipated goals
5. **IDEAS:** Focus on the ideas in the proposal rather than how the application is filled out
Try to avoid...Interpreting grammatical errors as lack of care or concern and expecting applicants to use the language of the field or "professional" language
6. **ENGAGEMENT:** Look for programs and organizations with members of the community serving as staff, board, or volunteers
Try to avoid...Supporting organizations that "serve" communities but don't provide any evidence the community wanted or will use their services
7. **RESPONSIVE:** Tailor support to the needs of the community
Try to avoid...Limiting support for programs replicated in a community because sometimes more than one approach is needed, "One size doesn't fit all"
8. **LIMITATIONS:** Recognize people writing grant proposals may also run programs or have other jobs
Try to avoid...Expecting applicants to be available during traditional 9-5 business hours to talk
9. **POWER:** Be prepared for the power dynamic in conversations and expect people to be nervous talking with you and/or have difficulty answering questions. Be friendly and try to put the applicant at ease.
Try to avoid...Expecting people to answer questions in a culturally familiar way or expecting people to know what a conversation about a grant proposal will include