



Maine
Community Foundation

Community Building Grant Program Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 1/30/24

What does “be located in Maine” mean?

Your organization has a Maine address.

Are organizations able to choose to apply for project or general support depending on their needs?

No. Beginning in 2024, all applicants will only be eligible to apply for either project or general support based on their organization’s expenses.

Project Support:

- Have had **expenses AT or ABOVE \$500,000** in the most recent completed fiscal or financial year
 - Municipalities, government agencies, public schools, or faith-based organizations may apply regardless of expenses for their most recent completed fiscal or financial year
- **Total project budget not to exceed \$100,000**

General Support:

- Have had **expenses BELOW \$500,000** in the most recent completed fiscal or financial year

Are expanding projects eligible for project support?

No. Beginning in 2024, the Community Building grant program will only offer project support for **new** projects defined as with the first two years.

Why are municipalities, government agencies, public schools, and faith-based organizations not eligible to apply for General Support Grants?

- **Municipalities, government agencies, and public schools**
MaineCF funding should not replace public funding sources for general/operating support. MaineCF **does provide project grant support** to these organizations for **new** projects.
- **Faith-based organizations**
MaineCF’s eligibility and grant guidelines state we will not fund without exception religious activities, including, but not limited to, religious services, promotion of religious beliefs, or activities that are restricted to church or religious group membership.
MaineCF **does provide project grant support** to faith-based organizations for **new** projects that DO NOT include religious activities.

What if my operating expenses during the last completed fiscal year were just over \$500,000?

We know that using any cutoff amount may cause problems for some organizations on the line. We chose this level after reviewing the organizational budgets of our applicant pool

and must be firm about the amount in order to reach the smaller organizations that will see the most benefit from a general support grant. We are sorry if this causes difficulty. Organizations with operating expenses in the last completed fiscal year of \$500,000 or more are still eligible to apply for project grants for **new** programs.

Does the \$500,000 expenses cap (for general support grants) include capital expenses?

It all depends on how you define “capital expenses.” If the capital expenses are for a one-time large expenditure that really skews the operating expenses, such as purchasing land or a building, then you don’t need to include it when calculating your operating expenses. However, if you are referencing building maintenance or renovations, we would consider those expenses to be part of your operating expenses.

If applying for general support, is it okay to focus the answers to the application questions on a specific project?

No. General Support is flexible funding that can be used for new/expanding/ongoing programs and operational needs including capital expenses. General Support could fund any project you have in mind. In the application, you should focus the answers to the application questions on your **organization’s work** and how it meets the Community Building grant program’s criteria. Question 7 of the general support is “Why do you need flexible, unrestricted funding right now?” This is the only place in the application where you may choose to mention a specific project, but please remember general support is awarded to the organization for any purpose.

Please refer to Page 8 of the [guidance document](#) for General Support application information.

Is there a Word version of the application that I can use offline?

Yes! You can find a Word document with all the application questions along with some guidance on our website: <https://www.mainecef.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/community-building-grants/>. You can use this document to work offline and then copy and paste text into our online system. However, please be aware that there are word count limits so you will want to get into our online system sooner to make sure your answers fit within the space allowed. Our online system allows you to save your work so that you can enter the information in more than one sitting. It also allows you to add collaborators who can read and edit the application so more than one person can contribute information.

Please note we do not accept paper copies or PDF/Word versions of the application.

Do you have translated versions of the application?

Yes! Translated versions will be available after December 1 in Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Spanish on our website: <https://www.mainecef.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/community-building-grants/>

How do I start and navigate the online application?

Step-by-step instructions can be found here:

<https://www.mainecef.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/How-to-Start-an-Online-Grant-application.pdf>

If you still encounter difficulties, you can send an email to grantproposals@mainecf.org, or call Community Impact Associate Joey Lendaro at 207-412-0835.

What if I’m unsure if my project or my organization (in the case of general support) is eligible?

We encourage you to reach out to the staff person who covers the county in which the

project will take place, or if applying for general support, in which the organization is located. Scroll to the bottom of this page to find a list of staff by county with contact information: <https://www.maineecf.org/initiatives-impact/county-and-regional-program/>

If our organization is new, are we eligible for general support?

Yes. We encourage you to use the Word document with all the application questions along with some guidance on our website: <https://www.maineecf.org/apply-for-a-grant/available-grants-deadlines/community-building-grants/>.

Can I include administrative overhead costs in the project budget?

Yes, if you are applying for project support, you may include up to 20% of the total request as administrative costs. For example, you can request up to \$2,000 in administrative costs of a \$10,000 total request. In the project budget table, include a line labeled “administrative costs.” You do not need to list specific administrative expenses in this line.

How do I complete the Organizational Financial Information section if I have a fiscal sponsor?

You should answer all questions on the application as the applicant organization. In the Organizational Financial Information section, use your group’s financial information, not the fiscal sponsor’s information. For more information on what you need to do when using a fiscal sponsor, see our website: <https://www.maineecf.org/apply-for-a-grant/help-for-applicants/fiscal-sponsorship/>

What is the process for reviewing proposals?

All proposals received are prescreened by staff to determine eligibility. Depending on the number of proposals received, a subcommittee may also be used to assess alignment with the criteria to limit the final pool of proposals. All proposals included in the final review pool are assigned to a county advisor or staff member who will serve as the lead reviewer and follow up with the applicant contact by telephone in late March or early April. Each county/regional committee collectively reviews all the proposals included in the final review pool for their county/region and decides which proposals to fund.

How is funding allocated between general and project support?

We ensure that general support and project support proposals are treated equally by establishing target funding goals for each committee based on amounts requested for each type of funding. Last year, this approach resulted in our county and regional committees funding general and project support at similar levels to the percentage of requests received.

Will my proposal be shared with donors?

All proposals that meet the grant program criteria will be added to our online donor portal for donors to review and consider funding. Staff contacts also share proposals of interest directly with donors who choose not to use the online portal. Donors may choose to partially or fully support a proposal. Please note proposals determined by staff to be ineligible because they don’t meet the eligibility guidelines or Community Building criteria will not be shared with donors.

When a donor makes a grant, we will immediately send a letter and check by regular mail. This means that you may receive a check before the review committee meets. If your request was partially funded, the review committee will consider supporting the remaining amount. If your request was fully funded, the review committee will most likely decline further support so they may fund other proposals. Donors may also choose to support your proposal after the review committee has met, which means you could be declined by the

review committee but later receive support from one of our donors. The proposals will remain in the donor portal for approximately one year.