



Welcome! My name is Laura Reed and I'm Maine Community Foundation's Director of Resources and Community Engagement.

I'm joined today by two colleagues that will be assisting me with this presentation: Katie Howard, Community Partner, and Joey Lendaro, Community Impact Associate.

If you have questions during the presentation, please add them to the Q & A. However, please note that we will not answer questions posted to the Q & A or call on those who have raised their hand until the end of the presentation. Katie will monitor the Q & A and interrupt me if she feels the question should be answered during the presentation. We find it's more efficient to wait until the end of the slide presentation as many questions will be answered during the presentation.

Within two weeks, we will also send you a follow up email with links to the slideshow and today's recording, so you don't need to feel pressured to write everything down.

About Maine Community Foundation

Vision: Maine is a vibrant and equitable place where people and communities thrive.

Mission: Maine Community Foundation brings people and resources together to build a better Maine.

Values:

Integrity: We earn trust by being honest and open in everything that we do.

Respect: We treat everyone with dignity and civility.

Stewardship: We manage the resources entrusted to us responsibly.

Equity: We promote just and fair access to opportunities for all people.

Collaboration: We work with others to achieve common goals.

To learn more about the foundation, visit mainecf.org.



A community foundation is a public charity, dedicated to improving the lives of people in a certain geographic area by combining financial resources with issue expertise and community partnerships.

Founded in 1983, MaineCF is a statewide community foundation, working with all 16 counties. There's no part of Maine we don't reach and embrace with open arms.

Our vision is that Maine is a vibrant and equitable place where people and communities thrive.

MaineCF's mission or purpose is to bring people and resources together to build a better Maine.

We've been working at this for over 40 years and our commitment to working and partnering locally is what sets us apart.

MaineCF's county funds and committee work gives voice to our

communities' aspirations, and challenges, as we work on building a better Maine.



Maine
Community Foundation

Community Building Grant Program

Purpose:

to support projects and organizations focused
on making communities stronger

BUILT FOR THE BIG STUFF

MaineCF's Community Building Grant Program is a grassroots grant program that makes grants across the state.

Funding comes from dedicated, permanent county funds but also from other related funds.

Applicants don't apply to a specific fund, but rather to one of our competitive grant programs, in this case the Community Building grant program.

Proposals are reviewed by a committee of local community members who either live or work in that county or region.

We have 15 review committees: 12 single county committees; 2 regional committees (Western Mountains: Franklin and Somerset; Southern Midcoast: Lincoln and Sagadahoc); and one statewide committee seated solely for grantmaking purposes.

Throughout the presentation, I will answer some of the most frequently asked questions by applicants.

One of the most frequently asked questions is...

Who is eligible to apply?

More information is available on our website. It includes...

- Nonprofit, charitable organizations tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and also classified as an organization described in sections 509(a)(1) or 509(a)(2)
- Municipalities
- Public schools
- Public agencies working for the State of Maine
- Tribal governments (or political subdivisions) recognized by the Department of the Interior

Note: Groups without any tax status may apply using a fiscal sponsor. Please also visit our website for additional information on fiscal sponsorship agreements.

Another frequently asked questions is...

Will my proposal be shared with donors who have donor advised funds at MaineCF?

- All proposals that meet the grant program criteria will be added to our online donor portal called Giving Together 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 and grant guidelines, or Community Building criteria will not be shared with donors.

Community Building Stats for 2024

Proposals received: 594

Total amount requested: \$5.5M

Total amount awarded: \$2.3M

Number of grants awarded by
committees: 232

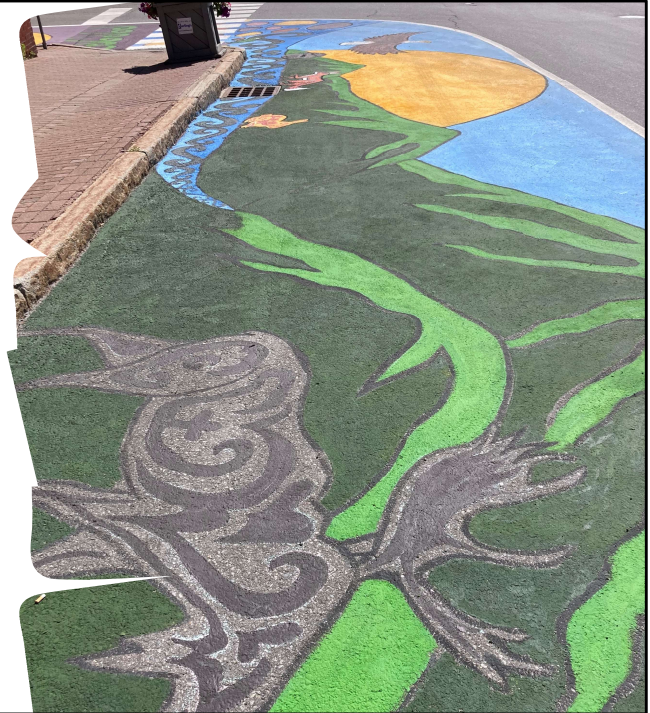
Grant dollars awarded by committees:
\$2M

Number of grants awarded by donors:
63+ grants

Grant dollars awarded by donors:
\$343K+



Maine
Community Foundation



Community Building is our largest grant program. It receives the most proposals and supports the broadest range of projects and organizations across the state including arts, education, environment, economic development, and human services.

In 2024, we received 594 proposals from across the state.

Our Donor Portal or Giving Together program allows us to fund more which is why the slide breaks down the 295 total awards made by committee and donors.

In 2025, the application deadline is Friday, February 14 at 11:59pm.

Max grant award is \$10,000.

In 2024, 39% of applicants overall received grants. HOWEVER, this varies by county (25% to 75%) as the number of proposals received and the funding resources available vary by county. Some county funds have

existed since 1986, and our newest fund was established in 2018. Check out the county web pages for more detailed county specific information.

A frequently asked question is...

May my organization apply in consecutive years?

Yes, one proposal per grant program per year (regardless if you received funding in the previous year).

For example, you could submit one proposal to the Community Building grant program and one proposal to the Maine Expansion Arts grant program.

Our Community Building webpage provides a link to a list of recent awards by county. Joey will drop the link in the chat at the end of the presentation.

- View a list of the last three years of awards by county.
<https://www.mainecef.org/apply-for-a-grant/recent-grants/community-building/>

What we will not fund, without exception...

Applicants must meet the MaineCF's grant eligibility requirements.

Please read our eligibility & grant guidelines before submitting a proposal.

What we will not fund without exception includes:

- Expenses already incurred
- Regranting to a secondary grantee through a competitive process
- Political campaigns
- Lobbying in the form of calls to action on a specific vote
- Religious activities, including, but not limited to, religious services, promotion of religious beliefs, or activities that are restricted to church or religious group membership.



Please note MaineCF's eligibility and grant guidelines apply to ALL of our competitive grant programs.

Included in these is a list of "What we will not fund without exception" including...

- Expenses already incurred
- Regranting to a secondary grantee through a competitive process
- Political campaigns
- Lobbying in the form of calls to action or a specific vote
- Religious activities, including, but not limited to religious services, promotion of religious beliefs, or activities that are restricted to church or religious group membership.

Community Building Criteria

Organizations or projects must...

Invest in people

by increasing skills/abilities, knowledge, and/or well being

Engage the people you serve

in the design, delivery, and/or evaluation of the work

Strengthen community resources

including organizations, partnerships, and built and natural environments



These are the same three core criteria we have used in recent years, and we will continue to offer both general support and project support this year.

Invest in people by increasing skills/abilities, knowledge, and/or well-being

The review committee will try to understand how people will benefit from the work you do or the proposed activities.

Engage the people you serve in the design, delivery, and/or evaluation of the work

The review committee will evaluate the breadth and depth of engagement with the population served.

Strengthen community resources including organizations, partnerships, and built and natural environments

While people are a community resource, here we are asking you to explain how you are strengthening your organization, partnerships,

buildings, or natural environment.

Responses could focus on a resource that everyone in the community would have access to such as a community park or it could be a unique program that your organization provides or a partnership between your organization and a municipality that offers a critical service to certain members of the community.

The review committee will look to see how a community resource might be improved, used more, or made more accessible.

A frequently asked question is...

How do I figure out if I'm eligible to apply based on the criteria?

If you are an organization applying for general support, think about how your organization meets the criteria. How do you as an organization invest in people, engage the people serve, and strengthen the community?

If you are an organization applying for project support, think about how specific proposed project meets the criteria. Does this project invest in people, engage the people served, and strengthen a community resource?

Types of Funding

General Support

for flexible funding of any type such as new/expanding/ongoing programs and operational needs including capital expenses

Project Support

for NEW projects with in the first two years including capital expenses

General Support and Project Support MUST meet the Community Building Criteria.



In 2022, the Community Building grant program began offering general support to organizations with annual expenses below \$500,000.

However, one of the most frequently asked questions we received from applicants eligible to apply for either general or project support was which one should I apply for?

As there is one source of funding, in 2024 we decided to simplify and tie the eligibility for each type of funding to the applicant's annual expenses.

Applicants look at their most recent completed fiscal or financial year expenses.

If you are BELOW \$500,000 OR AT/ABOVE \$500,000 determines if you are eligible for general or project support.

To clarify, applicants are now only eligible to apply for one type of support.

This may seem like a big change. However, those eligible to apply for only

project were never eligible to apply for general. Those organizations eligible to apply for only general support may chose to use this flexible funding to support a project.

The focus of this grassroots grants program is on supporting smaller organizations. However, we know larger organizations are also meeting unmet needs in their communities, so we have retained project support as a funding option for larger organizations.

When we started offering general support grants, we were concerned that our review committees might favor project grants because they have clearly stated goals, activities, and budgets. We ensured that general support and project support proposals were treated equally by establishing target funding goals for each committee based on amounts requested for each type of funding. We encourage committees to make awards that maintain the general percentage balance between the two types of requests.

Types of Funding

General Support

for flexible funding of any type such as new/expanding/ongoing programs and operational needs including capital expenses

- **Be located in Maine**, defined as your organization has a Maine address
- Have most recent completed fiscal or financial year **expenses BELOW \$500,000**, and
- **NOT be a municipality, government agency, public school, or faith-based organization.** (These organizations may be eligible for NEW project grants only.)



Review details included in the slide.

Keep in mind MaineCF **MAY STILL provide project grant support** for all of the applicants noted as ineligible for general support grants.

Here is some advice about how to fill out your proposal correctly for General Support.

DO talk about...

All the work that your organization does.
Mention past successes and future plans.

DO NOT talk about...

How you plan to spend the grant.
Or focus on one aspect of your work or a specific project.
If you are applying for general support, we want to learn about your organization.
What you do to make a difference in the lives of the people you serve?

A frequently asked question is...

Why aren't these organizations eligible to apply for general support?

- ***Municipalities, government agencies, and public schools***
MaineCF funding should not replace public funding sources for general/operating support.
- ***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.

Types of Funding

Project Support

For NEW projects within the first two years including capital expenses

- **Be located in Maine**, defined as your organization has a Maine address
- Have most recent completed fiscal or financial year **expenses AT or ABOVE \$500,000**
 - Municipalities, government agencies, public schools, or faith-based organizations may apply regardless of expenses
- **Total project budget does not exceed \$100,000**, and
- Project expenses DO NOT to include endowments, annual appeals, or scholarships.



New projects only! Expanding or ongoing projects are not eligible to apply for funding.

Applicants must have a Maine address.

Expenses AT or ABOVE \$500,000; HOWEVER, municipalities, government agencies, public schools, or faith-based organizations may apply regardless of annual expenses.

Total project budget does not exceed \$100,000. **As a grassroots grant program with a maximum award of \$10,000, the grant program is not intended to support larger scale projects.**

Stated another way, a \$10,000 award would only make up 1/10 of a \$100,000 project budget.

Although large and broad, this VERY competitive grant program is not designed to provide support to all projects.

The project proposals most likely to be funded will be discreet projects

that meet the Community Building criteria.

- Invest in people
- Engage the people you serve
- Strengthen community resources

Community Building grants do not support endowments, annual appeals, or scholarships.

Here is some advice about how to fill out your proposal correctly for Project Support.

DO talk about...

The specific project you need funded including:

- goals,
- activities, and
- budget.

DO NOT...

Generalize.

If you are applying for project support, we want to know...

Why this project is important?

What activities are included?

How you will spend the grant?

Another frequently asked question is...

May I include indirect or administrative costs in the project budget?

The Project Budget may include up to 20% of the total amount requested from MaineCF for administrative costs.

These funds may be used for overhead or operating expenses (examples: rent, utilities, bookkeeping) and can be a line item labeled as “administrative costs” (no need to specify how the funds will be used).

You may calculate this amount based on a percentage of the total requested (not more than 20% or \$2,000 of a \$10,000 request).

Primary County Served

Identify the ONE county that will most directly benefit from funding requested in this proposal

Note: This will determine which committee reviews your proposal and how it is sorted in our Giving Together donor portal.



A frequently asked question is...

How do I determine this if I serve more than one county?

Applying for a general support grant and serving TWO counties, select the county in which your organization or main office is located.

Applying for project support and serving TWO counties, select the county for the primary population served by the project.

Applying for general support or a project support and serving THREE counties, select Statewide.

Another frequently asked question is...

Why does the “primary county served” matter?

1. Any funds awarded must be spent within the county selected because of funding requirements.
2. This will determine which committee will review your proposal.
3. It will also determine how your proposal will be sorted in our Giving Together donor portal.

Community Building Timeline

Date	Activity
Feb 14	Application deadline
Late Feb	Due diligence
Early Mar to Mid Mar	Eligibility reviews, assignments, donor referrals
Mid Mar until Apr Mtg	Proposal review by county advisors & phone calls to final pool
Apr	Grant decision meetings
Early May	Process decisions & award letters
Mid to Late May	Notifications go out electronically to all applicants, noting only grantees receive letters



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 review pool.

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 April.

NOTE: You will not receive a telephone call if your proposal is not included in the final review pool.

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.

The committee's goal is to identify the strongest proposals that meet our

criteria, represent diverse sectors, geography, and populations to have the greatest positive impact on strengthening communities.

Previously I noted our Donor Portal or Giving Together program allows our donors to participate as well. Donors may view and fund proposals submitted to our competitive grant programs.

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 by a donor, the review committee will consider supporting the remaining amount.

If your request was fully funded by a donor, the review committee will 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 (noting proposals stay in Giving Together until the end of the year).

*Something less likely, but still possible, is receiving funding over the requested amount by a donor.

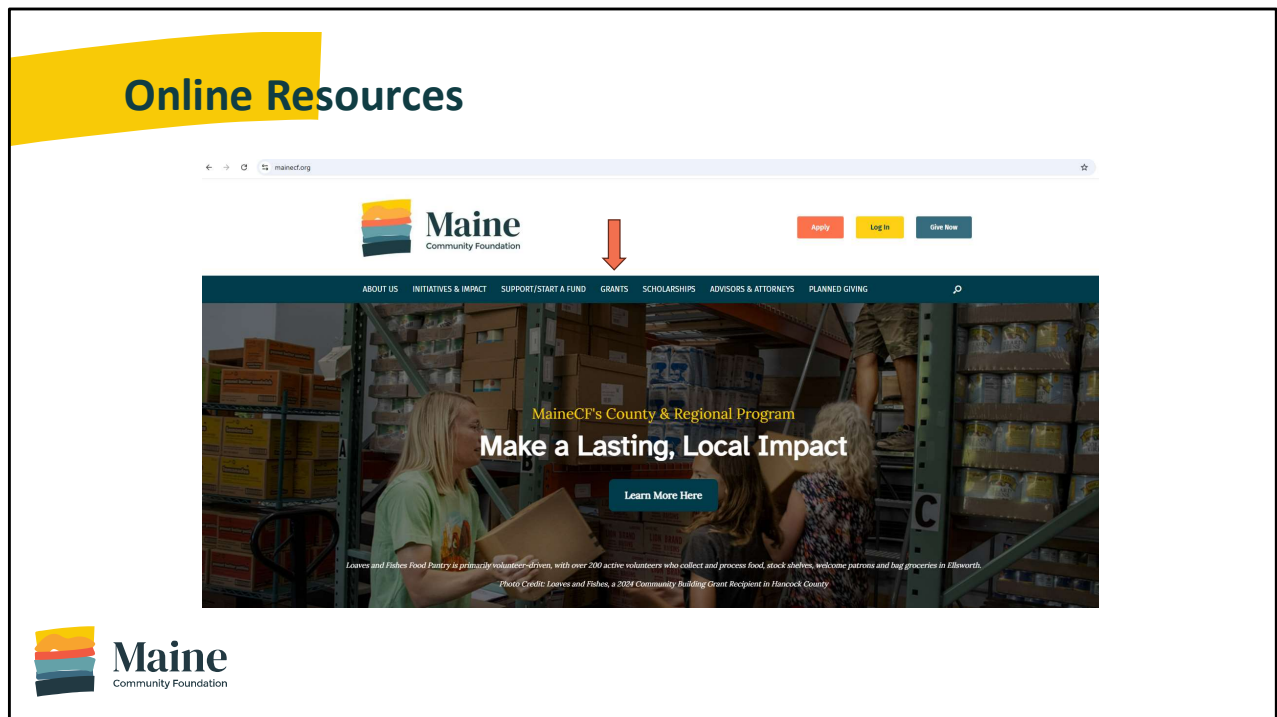
Notifications (both awards and declines) will be emailed through our online system. It will come from the grantproposals@mainecf.org address.

Joey is adding the email address to the chat. Please add this to your list of accepted addresses to avoid your notification going to spam or junk email.

You will only receive a hard copy letter if you receive an award and check or ACH payment.

Now let's transition to discussing MaineCF's Online Resources and the Online Grant System.

Online Resources



If you search for mainecf.org, it takes you to Maine Community Foundation's homepage.

To view our grant programs, click on the word "GRANTS" noted here with an orange arrow. Then, select "Available Grants & Deadlines".

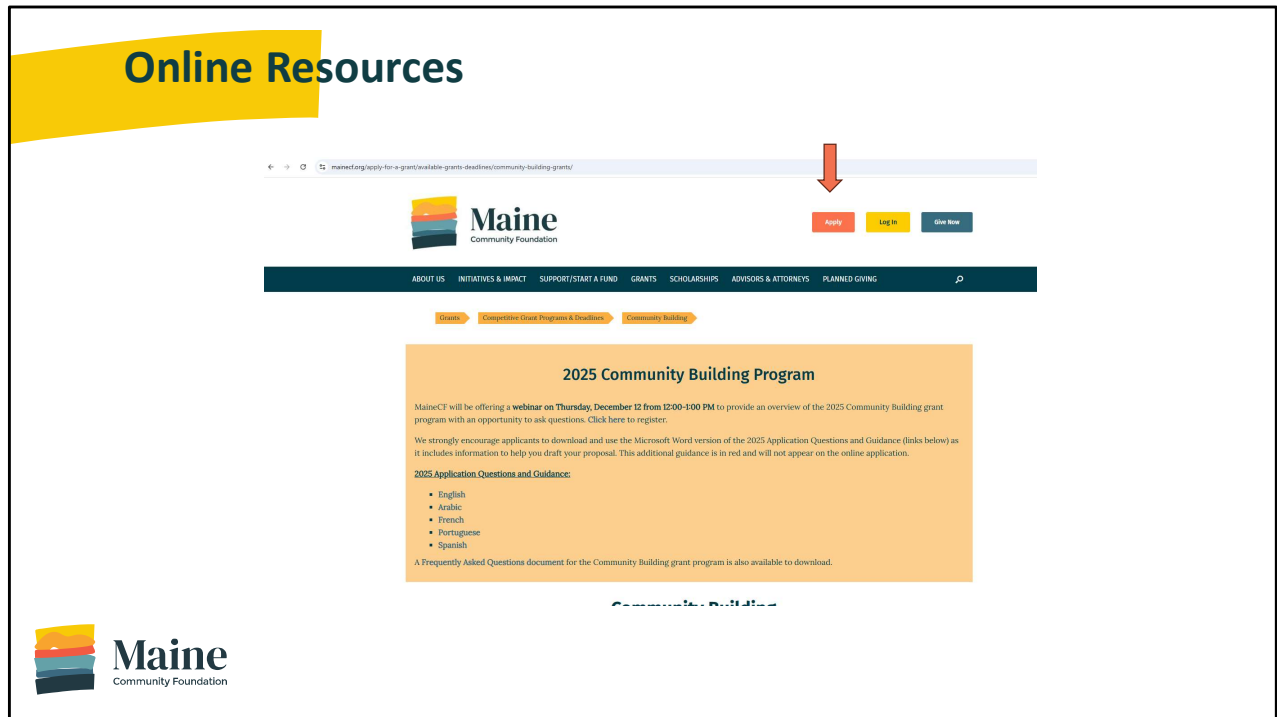
Online Resources

The screenshot shows the website for the Maine Community Foundation. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and the text 'Maine Community Foundation'. Below this is a dark blue navigation menu with links for 'ABOUT US', 'INITIATIVES & IMPACT', 'SUPPORT/START A FUND', 'GRANTS', 'SCHOLARSHIPS', 'ADVISORS & ATTORNEYS', and 'PLANNED GIVING'. A search icon is also present. Below the navigation menu, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Grants > Competitive Grant Programs & Deadlines'. The main heading is 'Competitive Grant Programs & Deadlines'. Below this is a section titled 'Competitive Grant Programs' with a minus sign icon. The text in this section reads: 'All competitive grant programs only support work being done in Maine and benefiting people and communities in Maine. To start a grant application, please use the APPLY button on the top right of this page. For more information, visit our Online Application Information page. Deadlines for grant applications are listed at the bottom of this page.' Below this text is a list of programs: 'Animal Welfare supports organizations and projects that advance animal welfare in Maine.', 'Belvedere Historic Preservation Fund proposals for 2024 will go through the Community Building program with a Feb. 15 deadline. Click here to review changes to this grant program.', 'Belvedere Traditional Handcrafts will not accept applications in 2023-2025.', 'Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Fund provides two-year general support grants to organizations helping people of color achieve greater equity across Maine.', and 'Community Building supports projects and organizations focused on making communities stronger.' An orange arrow points to the 'Apply' button in the top right corner of the page. Another orange arrow points to the 'Community Building' link in the list of programs.

Once you select “Available Grants & Deadlines”, it takes you to this page with a listing of ALL of MaineCF’s competitive grant programs.

Select “Community Building” noted here with an orange arrow.

Online Resources



We will also drop the link for the Community Building webpage in the chat at the end of the presentation.

This page includes all the Community Building information as well as a button to apply online.

Here you will find several links to additional resources.

For example, from here you can download a Frequently Asked Questions document as well as a Word document with guidance on how to complete the 2025 application questions.

The guidance document has also been translated into Arabic, French, Portuguese, and Spanish noting the online application only appears in English.

Within the next two weeks, this page will be updated to include a link to the recording for today's webinar.

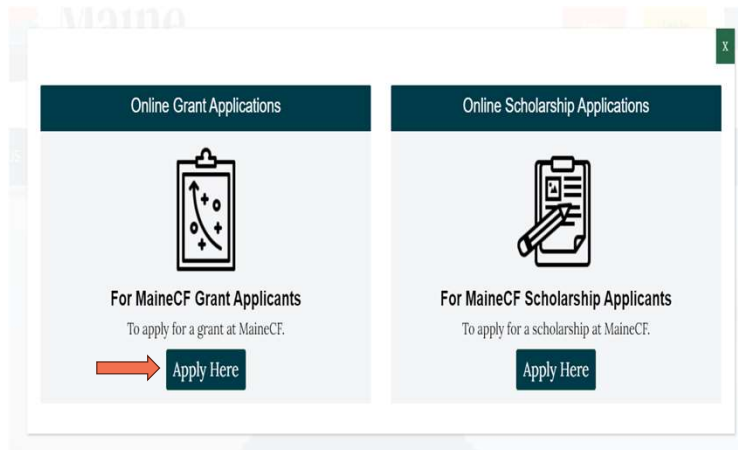
This page also includes a section called Quick Overview which includes critical program information, including the staff contact information.

The staff contact information slide will be the last slide in today's presentation.

Again, at the end of the presentation Joey will drop several links in the chat.

Before we review staff contacts, I want to make sure you know how to apply. The Community Building page and the home page have an orange or coral colored "Apply" button in the upper right corner.

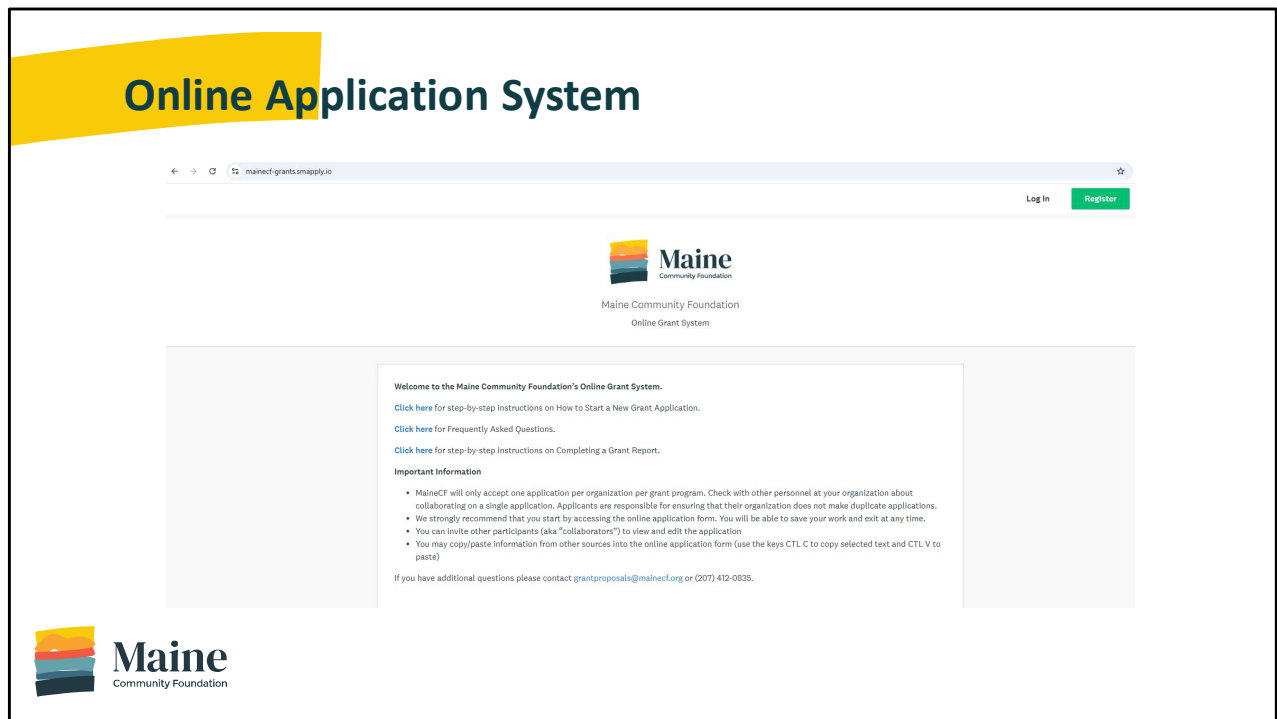
Online Application System



Once you select the orange/coral colored “Apply” button, you will arrive at this landing page.

Select the “Apply Here” button for the Online Grant Applications in the left section.

Online Application System



You will arrive at this page to Log In or Register.

Log In - If you've previously used our online grant system, type in your login information.

If you forgot your password, click on the link "Forgot your password?" to reset it.

Register - If this is your first time using our online grant system, you will need to create an account.

You can create an account using your name and email address or by using one of your social media accounts.

You can also find step-by-step instructions on how to start a new grant application.

Note that you can save your work and come back to it later. You can also add collaborators who can read and edit the proposal.

Staff Contacts By County

County	Staff Contact	Email	Phone
Androscoggin	John Ochira	jochira@mainecf.org	412-0837
Aroostook	Erica Shaw McCrum	emccrum@mainecf.org	227-7678
Cumberland	Katie Howard	khoward@mainecf.org	412-0832
Franklin	John Ochira	jochira@mainecf.org	412-0837
Hancock	Tracey Hair	thair@mainecf.org	412-2006
Kennebec	Stephanie Cesario	scsario@mainecf.org	412-0824
Knox	Lane Sturtevant	lsturtevant@mainecf.org	412-2019
Lincoln	Stephanie Cesario	scsario@mainecf.org	412-0824
Oxford	Katie Howard	khoward@mainecf.org	412-0832
Penobscot	Caitlyn Barker	cbarker@mainecf.org	412-2029
Piscataquis	Laura Reed	lreed@mainecf.org	412-2006
Sagadahoc	Stephanie Cesario	scsario@mainecf.org	412-0824
Somerset	John Ochira	jochira@mainecf.org	412-0837
Waldo	Lane Sturtevant	lsturtevant@mainecf.org	412-2019
Washington	Tracey Hair	thair@mainecf.org	412-2002
York	Gloria Aponte C.	gaponteclarke@mainecf.org	412-0847
Statewide	Caitlyn Barker	cbarker@mainecf.org	412-2029



Please note staffing assignments have recently changed. We added three new Community Partners to our team in 2024.

Another frequently asked question is...

When would it be helpful to speak with a staff member?

Applicants may contact a staff member **before submitting a proposal** if you have questions or want to determine if your funding request is aligned with the criteria. **However, you are not required to speak with a staff member before applying.**

Applicants who **receive a decline email** may also want to speak with a staff member to learn more about how to strengthen your proposal in the future.

Be prepared that sometimes staff may have several suggestions but other times it is simply how competitive the proposal pool was during a given grant cycle.

Grantees may also contact staff members to ask follow up questions **concerning your award** if something significant changes.

Before we move on to the Q and A, **I want to encourage folks to use the additional resources available on our Community Building web page including the Word version of the application. It has lots of guidance included that you will not find in the online application. It will help direct you as you draft your responses and provide insight to what the reviewers will be looking for when they read your proposal.**



Given some folks may choose to drop off this webinar during the Question and Answer time, I want to thank you all for joining us today.

If you have basic or simple questions about the information shared, please use this time to ask your question.

If you have specific or detailed questions that relate to your project or organization, please contact the appropriate county staff member by email or telephone following this presentation.

We will begin by answering question placed in the Q & A and then answer questions for those folks with their hand raised.