Sewall Foundation Update

Over the past many challenging weeks, we have seen the limits of our current systems and arrangements and have been reminded of just how much is beyond human control. We have also witnessed shining examples of coordinated, disciplined efforts responding quickly and flexibly to community needs and have gotten glimpses of a world that could be.

I write this update from my home, which now serves as an office and a classroom with Zoom meetings and calls (and three happy and confused dogs) echoing throughout the house. This is a new world, with unknown timelines and evolving rules. The pandemic has brought a divided world together in its grasp while painfully, and without exception, laying bare the inequities and injustices that we’ve collectively created and allowed to exist for generations. It is with this candid acknowledgment that I share with you some of the highlights of what EBSF staff has been doing for the past many weeks of this very strange year.

For us, like most others, our activities and thoughts have been focused on responding to the global pandemic, with its myriad social, economic, health and cultural impacts. Staff quickly moved to institute safety and hygiene practices when news first emerged of the virus and a week later began working remotely. We moved our functions to a virtual platform, including making it possible to offer grantees electronic grant payments. EBSF moved quickly to deploy additional grant funds to the pandemic response, working with grantees and funders alike to identify best, albeit imperfect, ways to support the hard and difficult work of organizations and groups across Maine. Amidst the rush to adapt to virtual working conditions, staff made 154 Healthy People Healthy Places grants in March in an expedited process and loosening of restrictions to allow grantees to use these grants as needed considering the pandemic.

In less than 4 weeks, $980,000 in COVID-19 funds have been allocated and distributed to pooled funds and rapid response requests that went to statewide and regional efforts, county and locality-specific grants (all counties represented), population and sector-specific grants. Most of the requests have been for immediate needs (food, shelter, childcare for essential workers, pandemic-specific supplies, etc.). Increasingly in the past couple of weeks, we’ve seen growing requests for policy changes, restructuring of processes and organizations, coordination and collaboration, messaging and education, and we are hopeful for the movement to change unfair and unsustainable systems. We continue to assess the situation and will keep you updated on our evolving approaches in this unprecedented time.

Amidst the local and global sense of pain and loss, we come to you with a sense of renewed perspective and gratitude. There is a clarity that comes in times of upheaval, allowing us to quiet the noise and center on what is most meaningful. For most people, we unquestionably place family and loved ones at the center of this clarified perspective. It is my hope that our hearts and minds may open to see that we are all interconnected, interdependent and share in the responsibility for a society that is founded on love,
justice and solidarity. EBSF’s mission invites us to make this aspiration real through thoughtful and courageous action in a time of daunting need for love, justice and solidarity.

Thank you,

Gabriela

M. Gabriela Alcalde
Executive Director

---

**Now Accepting Animal Welfare and Legacy Proposals**

Applications are now being accepted for our Animal Welfare and Legacy grant programs. The deadline for submission is June 15, 2020 at 5pm. The links below will direct you to our program areas and helpful information for completing an online application. Applicants may feel free to focus their proposal on their organization’s response to COVID-19.

- Animal Welfare Capacity Building Grant Program
- Animal Welfare Reducing the Population of Unwanted Cats Grant Program
- Legacy Grant Program  *Please note that the Legacy program area is by invitation only.*

A friendly reminder for all applicants to add "mail@grantapplications.com" to their safe senders list so emails from the foundation do not land in junk mail folders. As "mail@grantapplications.com" is a no-reply email address, please do not send emails to that address.

---

**The Sewall Foundation is Hiring a Community & Food Systems Partner**

Community Partners at the Sewall Foundation apply a trust-based philanthropic approach to their work: building trusting relationships with organizations and communities related to the Foundation’s mission and program priorities. Food systems will be a primary focus of this Community Partner’s position, with the Community Partner leading the re-design and implementation of the Foundation’s work aimed at building a just, humane, and sustainable food system. As with all Sewall Foundation staff, the Community Partner will have opportunity to bring their skills and experience to multiple aspects of EBSF’s work.

The Sewall Foundation seeks self-motivated employees who value a collaborative, supportive, and warm environment. A commitment to the organization’s values and mission and those we support is critical. A good sense of humor and love for companion animals are appreciated. EBSF offers a flexible work environment, including options for remote work. This is a full-time, exempt position. *Priority will be given to applications submitted by May 31.*

[View the full job description and application process](#)

Check the News section of our website in the coming weeks as we will be announcing a Finance and Community Investment Partner position.
COVID-19 Resources for Nonprofits

Our partners at Maine Philanthropy Center (MPC) and Maine Association of Nonprofits (MANP) have a wealth of resources to support nonprofit organizations as they navigate the impacts of COVID-19. **We encourage you to explore their resource pages and sign up for their e-newsletters.**

MPC's COVID-19 Response Funds page provides a list of available grant programs to support your organization’s response to COVID-19.

MANP’s resource page offers information on COVID-19 for Maine nonprofits organized by categories including: Reopening, Tools & Technology, Staff & Volunteers, Leadership & Boards, and Equity & Justice, among many more. At the bottom of the page you can submit your own stories or questions.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARE) Act provides for numerous loan programs for nonprofit organizations. Information on these programs is rapidly evolving. For updated information on SBA loans and the Payroll Protection Program (PPP), visit [https://www.nonprofitmaine.org/blog/loans-available-for-nonprofits-in-the-cares-act/](https://www.nonprofitmaine.org/blog/loans-available-for-nonprofits-in-the-cares-act/).

Maine Equal Justice advocates for Maine communities and populations most at risk, including those with low income and the underserved, to ensure they are receiving the attention and services they need and deserve, and to offer a path to help if they need one. Learn more on their COVID-19 Resources page.

Maine Center for Economic Policy released a report on policy priorities for the federal response to COVID-19’s economic fallout. Read the report [here](https://).  

---

Social Justice and Racial Equity Resources

COVID 19 has made more visible the long-standing inequities that undergird our society. We are already seeing disproportionate mortality rates and economic impact on communities of color and indigenous communities across the U.S. The record-levels of economic inequality in the US are putting many households at risk, as decades of inequitable policies have left so many without protection or reserves.

While we are all doing our best to respond to a rapidly changing and unprecedented situation, it is now more important than ever that we consider how we can intentionally and actively work to mitigate the effect of and transform existing injustices in our communities. Inequities harm all of us and it is painfully apparent that, as a society, we are only as safe, healthy and resilient as the most vulnerable among us. Efforts and policies that don’t account for historical injustices and long-standing inequities will inevitably compound suffering and perpetuate disparate and cruel conditions. The list of tools and resources available at the Racial Equity Tools website can help inform and guide our emergency and longer-term responses to the pandemic. A recent webinar with movement leaders discussed some key challenges and possibilities with COVID 19 from an equity perspective. You can see the recording, some highlights of the webinar and related resources [here](https://).
Sharing a Funding Opportunity for Organizations Responding to the Pandemic

The Momentum Fund will be awarding grants of up to $100,000 to 501(c)(3) organizations managing funds explicitly devoted to providing COVID-19 relief to communities of color, low-income populations, and others being disproportionately impacted by the crisis. Applications for the Momentum Fund will be accepted through Thursday, June 18, 2020.

Environmental Education and Outdoor Learning COVID-19 Impact Survey

The Maine Environmental Education Association (MEEA) is conducting a survey of organizations providing environmental and outdoor education in Maine to gain a deeper understanding of COVID-19's impacts on the field. If your organization is engaged in environmental education and/or outdoor learning, you are encouraged to complete the short survey by June 1st. You can learn more and take the survey on MEEA's website.

Helpful Tips for Cleaning

With all the cleaning and disinfecting we are doing to combat the spread of COVID-19, we may be
increasing our exposure to harmful chemicals in our homes. The Environmental Health Strategy Center developed a quick guide to help you avoid toxic chemicals when cleaning. Check it out here!

---

**Mental Health Resources**

The global pandemic is having obvious and far-reaching health and economic impacts on our communities; less visible are the mental health impacts of isolation, uncertainty and anxiety that the virus and its consequences are having on all of us. Loneliness and anxiety can have serious effects on our overall (and physical) health. As the situation evolves, the ways in which we are all affected also changes. Taking care of our mental and emotional health is as important as addressing our physical health.

Whether it is needing help with grieving, anxiety, loneliness or other emotional and psychological situations, there are virtual resources (many free of cost) available. The National Council on Behavioral Health and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) have compiled lists of useful resources. We encourage you to pay attention to the mental health impact on yourself, your loved ones, your organization and communities as we all adapt to this newly evolving reality.

---

**EBSF Staff Picks**

---
Any Octavia Butler book! Octavia Butler was an African-American science-fiction novelist (1947-2006) who tackled issues of race, gender, class and power in her sci-fi novels. Her views and analysis of humanity and U.S. culture are eerily apropos to our current global pandemic situation.

The Lord of the Rings Trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien. The epic high-fantasy sequel to Tolkien's 1937 fantasy novel, The Hobbit (read that too), follows Frodo Baggins and his comrades on his quest to destroy the One Ring to Rule them All. With themes of friendship, courage, and hope, it is a wonderful escape in these trying times.

In unprecedented times of crisis, we must begin our work with immediate, rapid response interventions. When a short-term crisis becomes a long-term reality, it can be helpful to merge rapid-response planning tools with strategic thinking to plan for the short, medium and long term simultaneously. Building on the work of Erik Peterson’s VAST framework for campaign planning, as well as Leslie Sholl Jaffe and Randy Alford’s POP model, Up With Community has compiled this map of questions to support strategic thinking in a long-term crisis.

On Being: A Peabody Award-winning public radio show and podcast. What does it mean to be human? How do we want to live? And who will we be to each other? Each week a new discovery about the immensity of our lives. Hosted by Krista Tippett.

Love a good book, or know of a great article or blog, please email Laura your recommended reading list! We’d love to put together a list of your recommendation’s for our next e-news!