E is for Equity

Distinguishing Equity from Diversity, Inclusion and Equality

As part of our internal equity journey, staff will be writing equity blogs on the lessons we shared through our first equity blog entry. We have asked each of our “pods” to take on some of the lessons shared in the first equity blog entry so that a diversity of voices and perspectives will be included in our blogs. In this installment, our equity pod shares some reflections on distinguishing between equity and the related concepts and practices of diversity, inclusion and equality.

Rapid Response Fund Grants
We are now accepting applications for our Rapid Response Fund Grants. These grants support emergency and/or time-sensitive needs of organizations and communities whose work aligns with Sewall’s mission: To improve the wellbeing of people, animals and the environment in Maine while fostering equity and centering community voices. $210,000 in funding is available. The application deadline is September 15, 2021. Decisions will be announced mid-October.

Please visit our Rapid Response Fund Grants page to learn more about our review considerations and application process.

Food Systems

Fond Farewell and Gratitude to Slow Money Maine!

In July, Slow Money Maine announced that they were ending their work as a network after 11 years of helping to grow a sustainable food system in Maine. We want to express our gratitude for the incredible and transformative work of Bonnie Rukin and Slow Money Maine. The Sewall Foundation has supported Slow Money Maine’s work for many years, and they have been a key partner in building collaboration within the funding and financing community and helped launch several initiatives including the Maine Harvest Credit Union and No Small Potatoes Lending Club. Bonnie Rukin, the founder and network coordinator, has been a long-time champion and supporter of social and economic justice and has been a strong proponent of foundations and individuals investing directly into the local food system. While Slow Money Maine will no longer exist as a network, Bonnie and many others involved will stay active in new ways in growing a more equitable, just and sustainable food system.

Somali Bantu Community Association Featured on Elevating Voices!

The Somali Bantu Community Association’s Liberation Farms was recently featured alongside Indigo Arts
in a special series from Greenlight Maine called Elevating Voices. You can watch the segment here:


Check-Out the Lewiston-Auburn System Mapping Report

We’re excited to share the report on the L-A systems mapping process facilitated (virtually) by Tamarack Institute earlier this year! This document includes insights from over 80 organizations in Lewiston and Auburn on the current state of work in each of the five priority areas – Equitable Civic Systems, Workforce & Economic Development, Health & Wellness, Affordable Housing, and Food Systems – as well as guidance about what needs to happen in order to advance the goal of building resilience in L-A. Together with the report on last year’s co-design process, the systems mapping document will guide the development of a 3-year work plan for Healthy People Healthy Places in L-A. Many thanks to Lisa Attygale and Susan Foster, and to the many community leaders and organizations from Lewiston and Auburn, that are working together to make these plans a reality!
Maine Philanthropy Center 2020 Foundation Giving in Maine Report:
MPC has released its 2020 foundation giving report; according to the report, Sewall was the 4th largest funder in the state (following Alfond Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, and the Libra Foundation) and one of only 5 foundations who gave in all 16 Maine counties.

One Maine Group: Cohort One Application:
Black Owned Maine has partnered with Providentia Group to develop a pilot BIPOC-business incubator. This program is seeking BIPOC-identifying individuals who would be interested in joining our first cohort of programming. Perhaps you are interested in joining yourself! They are specifically looking for people who have newly opened a business (within the last year) or are fostering an amazing idea but need guidance. Artists are encouraged to apply!

Workshop Dates
Tuesday, August 24: 6-7:30 PM
Tuesday, September 28: 6-7:30 PM