Healthy People Healthy Places

Food Systems Focus Area

Available funding in 2023: up to $1,900,000

General Description
The goal of Sewall Foundation’s Food System focus area is to grow healthy, just, regenerative, equitable, and cooperative food systems. Our vision is a Maine food system that supports people, communities and the planet and is aligned with the emergent strategies, vision, and broader goals of existing food justice networks. Specifically, the Ending Hunger by 2030 Initiative, the Maine Food Convergence, the New England Food Vision, efforts around tribal and food sovereignty, and the national HEAL Food Alliance inform and guide our work in food systems. Now is a critical time for us to deepen and strengthen our collaborative work to end hunger, grow resilient food systems in the face of the climate crisis, secure threatened farmland and working waterfront, deal with toxins in our soils and water, and address systemic racism and inequity.

We support Maine and Wabanaki communities, organizations, farmers, fishers, and food producers through grants, impact investments, capacity building, and convenings to foster networks, collaborations, communications, policy advocacy, innovation, and access.

2023 Grants
- **Organizational Project and Operating Grants:** Grants to organizations are a backbone of our food systems work. In 2023 these will mostly be in the $10-$40,000 range for general operating expenses or project grants.
- **Collaborative Grants:** In 2023 we are offering funding for planning and implementing collaborative projects.
  - Planning grants of up to $50,000 will be available to build relationships, conduct outreach, and strategic planning.
  - Implementation grants of up to $200,000 will help launch a small number of projects and grow the collaboration. Collaborative grants must include at least three organizations.

For 2023, we are accepting 2-year and 1-year grant applications for the Food System Focus Area. We will have $1,745,000 available for 2-year grants and $155,000 available for 1-year grants. In total we are investing $1,900,000 in this Focus Area in 2023.

Priorities
We take an integrated approach to food system work to break down silos across sectors and that recognizes the interconnectedness and complexity of our food system. Through collaborative and cooperative approaches, we support work in food and land justice and sovereignty; food access and ending hunger; food and farm business development support; fisheries and aquaculture; access to capital and markets; food network development; healthy soils and clean water; and food policy.

We apply climate, racial and economic justice lenses to our work, and prioritize support for organizations and efforts that are led by Black, Indigenous, People of Color, rural Mainers, and women. We seek to support work that addresses the climate crisis and supports farmers, fishermen and food producers in ways that reduce negative environmental impacts and moves us towards regenerative systems of production. We further seek to
support work that creates healthy and equitable food access for all and fair working conditions and living wages for people working in the food system.

We seek to support, amplify, and fund work that furthers these priorities in an integrative, interconnected and collaborative way and that centers equity. We don’t expect any one organization or collaborative to address all these priorities or be engaged in all these collaborative initiatives, but rather want to support a broad range of organizations who are collectively working towards these broader visions, goals, and strategies.

In 2023, the following review considerations will be prioritized in our Food Systems grants.

- **Cooperative, collaborative, and integrative approaches** that build bridges across sectors and systems and engage stakeholders in decision-making and ownership
- **Transforming Systems**
  - Efforts, either at the local or statewide level, that align with goals and strategies in the Ending Hunger by 2030 plan, the Maine Food Convergence, Food Solutions New England and HEAL Food Alliance (note: your work does not need to align with all these goals and strategies to be considered for funding)
  - Efforts that work through Racial Justice, Climate Justice, Economic Justice approaches
- **Relative access to other funding**: Recognizing that larger and more well-endowed organizations often have greater access to other funding sources, preference will be given to newer and smaller organizations.
- **Relationships and trust**: As part of our trust-based approach, we work to create balance between sustaining existing relationships and building new ones.

**Updates and Activities**

In 2023, we will host a Community Food System Convening: Celebrate, Connect, and Collaborate on January 17. It will be a time for people and organizations in the food system to come together to celebrate our collective work over the past year, connect together in small group discussions, listen to inspiring speakers (TBA), and explore new or deepen existing collaborations. We are also supporting the Maine Food Convergence in the fall of 2023 which will bring food system organizations, farmers, fishers and others together for an in-person gathering. We will be supporting other convenings and capacity building work in the food system throughout the year.

**Contact**

Please contact Jonah Fertig-Burd at jfertigburd@sewallfoundation.org with any questions or if you want to discuss focus area alignment and receive the Healthy People Healthy Places grant application link.