Available funding in 2023: up to $1,475,000

General description
Sewall Foundation supports organizations that work together to improve the health and well-being of people and the environment in Lewiston and Auburn (L-A). Currently we are doing this through a 3-year pilot process (2022-2024) to implement an L-A Systems Approach Workplan that was co-designed with community organizations in L-A in 2021. The goal of this pilot is to develop processes and structures that support organizations working collectively over the long term to address complex systemic issues identified by the community. L-A’s systems approach is designed to strengthen collaboration, build capacity, deepen equity, and center community leadership, particularly by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and youth.

Sewall grants support work in L-A that has been prioritized through a broadly participatory, community-based, collaboration-building process. In addition to grants, multiple strategies – including capacity building and technical assistance, impact investment, convening, and shared learning opportunities – will be used to advance collective work in partnership with the Lewiston-Auburn community and other L-A funders.

Priorities
Grants and other strategies will support collective work in Lewiston-Auburn that addresses one or more of these five Priority Areas:

- Equitable Municipal Systems
- Workforce Access and Economic Development
- Community Health and Wellness
- Healthy, Affordable Housing
- Healthy, Local Food Systems

Preference will be given to organizations:

- that participate in the collaboration-building process introduced in the L-A Systems Approach Workplan
- that promote equitable civic leadership, especially by Black, Indigenous and People of Color and youth
- that support resilience for people, land and waters in Lewiston and Auburn

2023 Grants
Starting in 2023, Sewall grants in the Lewiston-Auburn Focus Area will be allocated through L-A’s community-based collaborative structures. In January, L-A organizations will meet by priority area to determine how to equitably distribute available resources to advance their collective work. We anticipate that most of the L-A grant dollars will support collective work, with some portion made available as operating grants for smaller organizations addressing unmet priority needs. Grants in L-A will also include multi-year funding commitments starting in 2023, especially for collaborative efforts that address longer-term goals.
All applicants to the Lewiston-Auburn focus area are asked to participate in one of the collaboration-building sessions in January BEFORE STARTING A GRANT APPLICATION! The purpose of this request is to lower competition, increase transparency and trust, and respect the shared decision-making processes which so many organizations in Lewiston and Auburn are working hard to design.

The January sessions will be 10am-noon via Zoom on:
- Healthy, Affordable Housing: January 10
- Community Health and Wellness: January 11
- Workforce Access and Economic Development: January 12
- Equitable Municipal Systems: January 19
- Healthy, Local Food Systems: Organizations working in L-A’s food systems are invited to join one of the other four sessions.

Given L-A’s priority of support for collective efforts over individual organizations, it is unlikely that organizations that have not previously participated in the collaboration-building process will receive funding in the next grant cycle. However, those organizations are encouraged to contact Lauress Lawrence (LLawrence@sewallfoundation.org) for guidance about funding options.

Organizations in Lewiston and Auburn that are not being funded by Sewall are still welcome to participate in the quarterly sessions, and some organizations (regardless of funding status) may wish to contribute to shaping the collective work in more than one priority area. In addition, several funders, including Sewall, will continue to meet quarterly in 2023 to explore how to work more closely together to support collective work in Lewiston and Auburn.

2023 Updates and Activities
Throughout 2022, over 80 organizations working in Lewiston and Auburn participated in quarterly collaboration-building sessions facilitated by consultants from Tamarack Institute and S. E. Foster Associates. Through those sessions, organizations working in each of the priority areas listed above identified shared goals and priorities, existing collaboratives doing that work, and gaps where more collaboration is needed. Each priority area has designed a collaborative structure and process to support their work and shared decision-making over the next two years of the systems approach pilot.

Contact
Please contact Lauress Lawrence (LLawrence@sewallfoundatton.org) if you have any questions or want to discuss focus area alignment and grant request guidance.