

McKEEN CENTER FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Dear Community Partners,

We are delighted to inform you that Bowdoin College will again offer the Common Good Grant through the McKeen Center for the Common Good. The Common Good Grant provides over \$30,000 to local non-profits that serve Mid Coast Maine and who collaborated on Community Immersion Orientation Trips 2025 with our office. With the intent of maintaining current programs as well as funding new initiatives that serve local communities, the grant is made possible by a group of donors interested in providing students the opportunity to learn about the field of philanthropy while developing relationships with non-profit organizations. Additionally, the Common Good Grant Development Committee works to supplement these initial funds by soliciting support from community members. In the past, the Development Committee has increased our grant base by as much as 200 percent.

Grants will be awarded by the Common Good Grant Committee, a group of twenty-four Bowdoin students advised by the staff of the McKeen Center. **We are requiring a Letter of Intent (LOI) from interested organizations as the first phase of the application.** [This LOI must be submitted by Wednesday, November 26th at 5 PM.](#) You will be notified by mid-December regarding your status and, should you advance, be invited to submit a full grant application electronically in January. This grant is intended for use during the time period between April 2026 and April 2027.

Sincerely,

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COMMON GOOD GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who May Apply?

We welcome applications from organizations that meet one of these parameters:

- Nonprofit, charitable organizations tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Municipalities
- Public schools
- Public agencies working for the State of Maine
- Indian tribal governments (or political subdivisions) recognized by the Department of the Interior
- Groups without any tax status may apply with a fiscal sponsor that is an eligible organization as described above.

Geographically, we invite organizations to apply that meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Work within or serve communities within 20 miles of Bowdoin College (including Lewiston/Auburn).
- Have partnered with Bowdoin College Community Immersion Orientation Trips in fall 2025.
- Work within or serve communities in Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, or Waldo counties.

What CAN'T We Fund?

We are unable to fund capital efforts and contribute to endowments. Individual grants will not exceed the amount of \$4,000. Funding requests must have relevance to the program and organization size. We cannot fund organizations that received a grant from the Common Good Grant Committee last year, or who have received a *total of three* within the *last eight years*.

What Must be Included in Your Letter of Intent (LOI)?

Your organization's letter of intent (LOI) should be no more than one page, single spaced, and written, if possible, on the letterhead of your organization. In the letter, addressed to the Common Good Grant Committee, we ask you to provide the following information:

- A brief history of your organization and its programs;
- How much funding you are applying for (\$4,000 or less) and what your objectives are with the funding;
- What outcomes you expect from the grant;
- Additional support, financial or programmatic, your organization has for the grant;
- Contact information for your organization's grant steward.

[Here is a helpful guide to writing a LOI.](#)

How are Requests Evaluated?

Requests will be reviewed by the student members of the Common Good Grant Committee. All applications will be considered on a competitive basis. Programs will be judged on several criteria, including:

- realistic funding and implementation plans;
- accessibility and ability to address a clear public need;
- clarity and organization of the proposal and program goals.

What are the Committee's areas of emphasis this year?

Over the last few years, the Common Good Grant Committee students have identified certain areas of need that they wish to emphasize in a given year. This year, the committee has made a commitment to fund at least one organization providing services in each of the following five areas. Please refer to the final pages for a definition created by the committee for each of these areas of emphasis.

- Health and Basic Needs
- Adult and Youth Education and Development
- Environment, Agriculture, and Sustainability
- Arts and Culture
- Equity and Justice

The committee will likely fund more than one grant from some of these areas, but this commitment is based on the committee recognizing the importance of diverse groups of non-profits that do many different types of important work.

The LOI Submission Deadline is *Wednesday, November 26th at 5 PM EST.*

All applications must be submitted via this form on the date listed above. Organizations will be notified of next steps to the process in mid-December. Organizations invited to formally apply for the grant will submit their applications in January. Common Good Grant committee members will set up site visits with all finalists in February with final funding decisions made by early March. Final grants will be awarded in the last week of March at Bowdoin's Common Good Grant 25th Anniversary Gala and Awards Ceremony.

Areas of Emphasis Descriptions for 2025-2026

Health and Basic Needs

We are looking for proposals that support healthcare access, mental health services, food security, housing assistance, and resources that promote physical and mental well-being for vulnerable populations.

Examples of previously funded work include:

- Free or low-cost healthcare clinics that provide medical services, preventive care, and health education to uninsured and underserved community members, removing financial barriers to essential healthcare.
- Housing stability and homelessness prevention programs that offer emergency shelter, transitional housing, case management, and wraparound services to individuals and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Adult and Youth Education and Development

We are looking for proposals that invest in local educational, literacy and vocational training, workforce development, mentorship, and skills-building initiatives that expand learning opportunities and prepare individuals for meaningful participation in society.

Examples of previously funded work include:

- Youth-led justice programs that engage young people in developing and implementing restorative approaches within their communities, building their conflict resolution and leadership skills.
- Language acquisition and cultural integration programs that provide English language instruction and other support to help newcomers build communication skills and navigate their new community.

Environment, Agriculture, and Sustainability

We are looking for proposals that promote environmental sustainability in Maine. Possible focuses include conservation efforts, sustainable farming, natural stewardship, renewable energy, environmental education, climate action, and other projects addressing ecological challenges.

Examples of previously funded work include:

- Coastal ecosystem monitoring and documentation projects that track critical marine habitats and measure changing climate conditions impacting Maine's coastline.
- Youth environmental leadership programs that provide hands-on field experiences and educational opportunities for students to develop skills as researchers, advocates, and changemakers for environmental sustainability.

Arts and Culture

We support initiatives that expand access to art experiences and celebrate the diverse creative expressions within our community. Possible focuses include projects or organizations that remove barriers to participation in the arts, preserve cultural heritage, and position artists as essential contributors to community wellbeing and economic development.

Example Projects:

- Providing free community art programming in an after-school setting to youth community members that would not be able to access it otherwise.
- Developing a theatre performance to raise awareness about a social change issue.

Equity and Justice

We are committed to advancing systemic change that addresses root causes of inequity and promotes justice. Possible focuses include initiatives or organizations that center community voice in decision-making, dismantle barriers to opportunity, and build inclusive systems that ensure all residents can thrive.

Example Projects:

- Supporting an existing program that addresses the unmet needs of New Mainers including: comprehensive services that meet basic needs; help people achieve and maintain stability; and support people in their work towards self-sufficiency.
- Establishing a fund for survivors of domestic violence in the community and providing financial support for participants of a victim support group.