

Program Statement

Funding Opportunity

Volunteer Maine **ConSERVE Maine** Grant Opportunity

Issued by:

Maine Office of Community Affairs
Volunteer Maine
Marquardt Building, 3rd floor
32 Blossom Lane
Augusta ME, 04330
Issue Date: May 29, 2026

PROPOSAL DUE DATE:

WEDNESDAY July 29, 2026; 5 P.M.

All communication regarding this Program Statement should be sent to
Lucy Martin, Program Officer Special Volunteer Initiatives, lucy.martin@maine.gov

Informational webinar: June 24, 2026 12-1 P.M.

Zoom registration link:

https://mainestate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wtgML_r_SMWs7hazdlQoYQ

A recording will be posted at: [Grant Competitions | Volunteer Maine](#)

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SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

Communities in rural Maine are on the front lines of climate impacts — facing flooding, infrastructure damage, and energy insecurity — yet often lack the workforce, expertise, and resources to implement local climate solutions. Volunteer Maine seeks to address this capacity gap by providing funding for rural communities to build resilience against climate impacts while advancing conservation, well-being, and civic engagement.

Volunteer Maine is inviting applications for a series of Betterment Fund and Maine Volunteer Foundation supported **ConSERVE Maine** grants of up to \$10,000 to support conservation projects that build community action through service and volunteerism to address needs related to energy efficiency, environmental education, flood resilience, and community health in Oxford, Franklin, and Somerset counties.

Volunteer Maine & the Maine Climate Corps

Volunteer Maine is Maine’s State Service Commission and part of the Maine Office of Community Affairs. Volunteer Maine’s mission is to foster and inspire community service and volunteerism to address critical needs in the State of Maine. Established in 2022, the Maine Climate Corps, a program of Volunteer Maine, supports organizations engaging in service-related projects that prioritize climate issues such as transportation, energy, housing, coastal impacts, public health, land and freshwater preservation, community resilience, and education. The Corps offers a cost-effective, community-centered approach that strengthens local climate response infrastructure and closes capacity gaps by mobilizing Maine Climate Corps service members and partner organizations to support conservation and resilience efforts. The Maine Climate Corps is an integral part of Maine’s Climate Action Plan *Maine Won’t Wait* and helps advance the state’s 10-year economic plan by developing a skilled workforce, expanding community engagement, and accelerating locally led resilience initiatives.

The Maine Volunteer Foundation

The Maine Volunteer Foundation is Volunteer Maine’s nonprofit support organization. Through its Board of Directors, Maine Volunteer Foundation provides critical support to Volunteer Maine through fundraising and engaging with stakeholders. As fiscal sponsor for this initiative, the Maine Volunteer Foundation will receive and administer grant funds and distribute grants to selected community partners in accordance with program requirements and funding priorities.

The Betterment Fund

The Betterment Fund is a grantmaking foundation that primarily invests in projects that focus on small communities in Western Maine. Specifically, they prioritize communities in Oxford, Franklin, and Somerset Counties with some focus on the top rim of the state and into the Downeast region. Their areas of interest include community, conservation, education, health, and economic development.

1.1 Eligibility

Eligible applicants must:

- Be a municipal government, non-profit organization, tribal government, individual community, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Oxford, Franklin, or Somerset Counties
- Have a community-centered conservation project that focuses on energy efficiency, environmental education, flood resilience, and community health
- Promote service and volunteerism as a component of that project to increase sustainability of the project. All funded projects must have at least two individuals engaging in service which can be a combination of any of the following: interns engaged in service-based projects or service learning, volunteers that commit to specific tasks whether or not they are stipended, fellows that engage in service projects, and/or Corps members from other Corps programs.

NOTE: Non-profit organizations must include, as a supplementary document, a letter of support from the municipality where the proposed project will be implemented.

1.2 Grant Size and Duration

Volunteer Maine plans to allocate up to \$30,000 this grant round. The maximum award amount is \$10,000. Grants are anticipated to be awarded by mid-August with start dates as early as September 1, 2026 and as late as November 1, 2026. Projects can be up to nine months in duration.

1.3 Future Grant Rounds

The next grant round is anticipated to have a deadline in May of 2027, subject to change.

1.4 Cancellation Notice

Volunteer Maine reserves the right to cancel this Program Statement at any time.

1.5 Final Action on Grant Awards

Awards made through this program are considered final and are not subject to internal agency appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision may pursue judicial review according to the provisions of 5 MRS§§ 11001 – 11008 within 30 days of the award announcement.

1.6 Contact Information

Questions about this Program Statement should be sent via email to lucy.martin@maine.gov

SECTION 2. GRANT PROGRAM DETAILS

2.1 Description

Volunteer Maine is inviting applications for a series of Betterment Fund and Maine Volunteer Foundation supported **ConSERVE Maine** mini-grants of up to \$10,000 to support conservation projects that build community action through service and volunteerism to address energy efficiency, environmental education, flood resilience, and community health in Oxford, Franklin, and Somerset counties. All funded projects must have at least two individuals engaging in service which can be a combination of any of the following: interns engaged in service-based projects or service learning, volunteers that commit to specific tasks whether or not they are stipended, fellows that engage in service projects, and/or Corps members from other Corps programs.

Examples of potential projects include but are not limited to:

- a. Creating a Community Garden
- b. Coordinating a site clean-up that includes volunteers from the community
- c. Developing and leading a series of workshops on climate education such as green energy, composting, plastic reduction, native species planting, etc.
- d. Community art installation that brings awareness to climate issues
- e. Using nature-based solutions to build climate resilient infrastructure along river or lake shorelines
- f. Engaging in invasive species removal or management

This document provides instructions for submitting proposals, the procedure, criteria for selecting award recipients, and requirements that the award recipients must fulfill.

2.2 Eligible Uses of Funds

Expenses must be related to the implementation, management, and support of conservation projects that build community action through service and volunteerism to

address energy efficiency, environmental education, flood resilience, and community health in Western Maine counties of Oxford, Somerset, and Franklin.

Project expenses must support the conservation project and engagement of volunteers in the implementation, management, and support of the proposed conservation project. These may include supplies, travel, indirect costs, venue rental fees, and volunteer support. These cannot include staff salaries, fringe benefits, land purchases, or equipment such as vehicle or computer purchases.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize **ConSERVE Maine** grants as match to leverage other federal, state, or philanthropic grant funds as allowed by those programs. **ConSERVE Maine** grants may also be used to close project funding gaps for other state funding programs, in accordance with the criteria above. It is the applicant's responsibility to consult the rules for the federal or state funding programs if the **ConSERVE Maine** grant will be designated as cost-share or match. If applicable, applicants should explain any anticipated use of **ConSERVE Maine** grant funds as match for another funding program.

2.3 Community Access and Engagement

Volunteer Maine is committed to making climate solutions accessible to communities throughout Maine especially focusing on those areas that are under-resourced. Funded projects should be developed through community collaboration, including Indigenous collaboration, ensuring solutions are created with and for local residents. The impacts of climate change disproportionately affect low income and marginalized communities so it is important to promote solutions that will benefit those that will be most affected. Applicants should include potential benefits and how accessibility to those benefits will be managed in their project proposals.

2.4 Participation in the Maine Climate Corps

As part of this grant award, recipients are expected to participate in the Maine Climate Corps Network for the duration of the grant. Participation includes required quarterly meetings and four mid-quarter meetings that are not required. Before each quarterly meeting the program is required to send a brief (1 page or less) quarterly update on successes and challenges that the program is currently facing. Additional benefits from participating in the Maine Climate Corps Network include eligibility for Technical Assistance and Professional Development funds through a separate process.

2.5 Application Guidelines and Required Format

The following components are required for an application to be considered complete and scoreable:

- A. Criteria 1: General Information, Eligibility, and Applicant Information
 - a. Applicants must complete the following document as part of their application:
 - i. Application Cover Page & General Assurances
 - ii. Eligibility and Applicant Information
- B. Criteria 2: Community Characteristics *(250 words or less)*
 - a. Applicants should identify which of the identified target counties (Oxford, Franklin, Somerset) the community that their proposed project will serve and the population characteristics of those communities
- C. Criteria 3: Grant Focus Area Priorities *(250 words or less)*
 - a. Volunteer Maine recognizes that climate issues are intersectional and applicants are encouraged to think broadly about how their projects relate to these categories: energy efficiency, environmental education, flood resilience, and community health.
- D. Criteria 4: Promotion of Volunteerism *(250-500 words)*
 - a. Applicants should identify how volunteerism will be promoted or utilized to attain the goals of the project and how the funds will be used to support that strategy
- E. Criteria 5: Scope of Work *(500-1000 words)*
 - a. Project Description: Describe the proposed project. Number and break down each specific task including the steps needed to complete each task and the outputs and outcomes that will result from each task.
 - b. Project Timeline: Describe the timeline for completing the project outlining different task and their expected completion – this can be a range such as (1-2 weeks)
 - c. Need for the Project: Describe the need for the project – why is it a community priority
 - d. Project Outcomes: Describe the expected outcomes from the project such as number of volunteers engaged (required), events planned, climate or conservation efforts completed, etc.
 - e. Project Management: Describe the roles and responsibilities that will be assigned to project participants
 - f. Approach To Community Access and Engagement Considerations: Describe how the project will engage with community members during the development of the scope of work and continue to collaborate with them during the project implementation. Identify any specific stakeholders or community partners that you would be interested in working with, including underrepresented populations and those vulnerable to climate impacts.

F. Criteria 6: Budget Proposal

Applicants *may* provide a Budget Narrative where descriptions of each of the line items and/or justification for the associated costs is necessary however it is not required.

Eligible costs are limited to those incurred during the grant period. Expenses incurred prior to or after the grant period are not eligible to be included in the budget.

Budget worksheet example:

PROPOSED PROJECT COSTS	
Item	Anticipated Cost
Supplies	
Venue	
Volunteer Support	
Total Project Cost	

G. Supplementary Materials

Requirement for nonprofit organizations: a letter of support from the municipality that the non-profit organization will be serving that indicates the municipality is aware and in agreement with what the non-profit is proposing.

Additional optional supplementary materials (all applicants): may include pertinent maps, imagery, estimates of costs from vendors or project partners, or other essential (brief) supporting documents.

2.5 Selection and Award Process

An evaluation team will judge the merits of the project proposals received in accordance with the criteria below:

Scoring Criteria	Points Available
Criteria 1: General Information and Eligibility	Pass/Fail
Criteria 2: Community Characteristics	Pass/Fail
Criteria 3: Grant Focus Areas of Priority	Pass/Fail
Criteria 4: Promotion of Volunteerism	40 points
Criteria 5: Scope of Work	50 points total:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Description, Timeline, Need, Outcomes, and Project Management (30 points) - Approach to Community Access and Engagement (20 points)
Criteria 6: Budget Proposal	10 points
Total Points	100 points

For applications that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Criteria 1, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score the remaining criteria.

2.6 Proposal Deadline and Submission

A. Application Submission:

Proposals are due by the time and date listed on page 1. Project proposals must be submitted via the application here: [SurveyMonkey Link](#)

B. Submitting Questions about the Program Statement

Questions about this program statement and the application process may be directed to lucy.martin@maine.gov. Include in the subject line “ConSERVE Maine – Questions”

Responses provided by program staff should be considered advisory and are not a guarantee of a successful application.

Any responses deemed substantive and binding will be summarized and posted on the Volunteer Maine website on a rolling basis here: [Grant Competitions | Volunteer Maine](#). It is the applicant’s responsibility to consult this summary.

C. Informational Meeting

Volunteer Maine will host a virtual informational meeting concerning the **ConSERVE Maine** Program Statement. See the Program Statement cover page for the date, time, and web link for the meeting.

The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to answer and/or field questions, clarify aspects of the Program Statement requirements, and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in applying.

SECTION 3. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF GRANT AWARDS

3.1 Grant Agreement

Grant recipients must enter into a written agreement with Volunteer Maine

3.2 Pre-Award Costs

Volunteer Maine is not liable for any cost incurred by the Grantee or any Grantee subcontractor(s) prior to the effective date in the agreement. Volunteer Maine will not authorize any payments for work completed prior to the effective date of a fully executed agreement.

3.3 Reporting Requirements

Volunteer Maine will conduct a baseline and end of service survey with grant recipients.

This is an Advance Payment Grant. Within thirty (30) days after the end of the grant period of performance the recipient must provide Volunteer Maine with a final report that includes the following documentation:

1. Summary of eligible expenses with receipts and justification
2. Summary of the project
 - i) What was done including where, when, and how much was accomplished
 - ii) How many volunteers were engaged and/or recruited
 - iii) What climate issue did the project help address
 - iv) What impact the project had on the issue

3.4 Public Records

Following announcement of an award decision, scoring and review notes for all submissions will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) (1 M.R.S. § 401 et seq.).