



Position: Community & Food Systems Partner

About the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation

The Elmina B. Sewall Foundation (EBSF) is a private foundation with a long-term commitment to improving the well-being of people, animals, and the environment of Maine while fostering equity and centering community voices. The Foundation is committed to supporting efforts that promote healthy and whole lives for all people; protect and enhance the environment; ensure the humane treatment of animals; and stimulate long-term development while building local opportunity.

Since 2011, EBSF has awarded over \$84 million in grants to support communities and organizations working to empower, advance and protect Maine’s most crucial resources – people, animals, and their environments. Over the past few years, EBSF has gone through an intentional transformation to ensure that all internal and external efforts are mission- and values-aligned. This new position is part of this intentional transformation.

Position Overview

The Community & Food Systems Partner is an integral member of our small team administering the philanthropic programs of the Foundation. The ideal candidate will share a deep commitment to the Foundation’s mission and values.

Community Partners at the Sewall Foundation apply a trust-based philanthropic approach to their work: building trusting relationships with organizations and communities related to the Foundation’s mission and program priorities. They listen to the needs and solutions of community partners, serve as thought partners, and guide the Foundation’s programmatic decisions – including grant making, impact investing, capacity building, policy and advocacy, as well as internal and external process development and implementation.

EBSF staff work collaboratively in a team approach, using pods of staff organized around needs of the work and the skills and interests of staff. Each pod has a staff lead and all pod members bring experience and voice to the work.

Food systems will be a primary focus of this Community Partner’s position, with the Community Partner leading the re-design and implementation of the Foundation’s work aimed at building a

just, humane, and sustainable food system. The work will require relationships across the food sector. It will be informed by government, business, and nonprofit partners and from recent and ongoing collaborative work in the sector including the New England Food Vision, the Maine Food Strategy, Network of Food Councils and others. The work will focus on supporting systems-level changes that produce positive outcomes including increased access to affordable, healthy food; economically viable food business; environmental health; fair and safe treatment of workers; and humane treatment of animals.

The Community Partner will also serve as lead for other program areas as needed. This may shift over time. Initially, the Community Partner will lead the Foundation's existing Nature-Based Education Program. As with all Sewall Foundation Staff, the Community Partner will have opportunity to participate in a variety of pods, bringing their skills and experience to multiple aspects of EBSF's work.

The Sewall Foundation seeks self-motivated employees who value a collaborative, supportive, and warm environment. A commitment to the organization's values and mission and those we support is critical. A good sense of humor and love for companion animals are appreciated. EBSF offers a flexible work environment, including options for remote work. All Sewall Foundation staff are currently working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will remain doing so as necessary for the health and safety of employees and our communities. This is a full-time, exempt position.

Primary Functions

Grant Making

- Lead refinement of food systems philanthropic strategies, approaches, and structures to support desired systems-level change
- Engage in continuous refinement of grantmaking strategies, approaches and structures to meet the evolving needs of communities served in support of Foundation's mission and goals
- Participate in co-design of and support for internal structures necessary to implement grantmaking and evaluation programs
- Participate in grant review, due diligence, and ongoing support to staff, board, consultants, and nonprofit partners
- Work with EBSF staff and community partners on appropriate grant reporting approaches
- Provide support to applicants to assess their alignment with EBSF's mission and values and help grantees best leverage EBSF's full suite of resources.

Values-aligned Investments (VAI)

- Source investible opportunities for consideration by the Foundation's Values-Aligned Investment Committee from primary focus areas, with a strong focus on Food Systems
- Orient nonprofit and for-profit partners to EBSF's VAI criteria and process
- Coordinate with EBSF staff, board, and consultants on deal flow and due diligence review

Relationship & Field-building

- Build authentic relationships with nonprofit partners and other key stakeholders across focus areas
- Deepen EBSF understanding of the internal and external context of our nonprofit partners and key stakeholders, inclusive of policy and systems impacts
- Connect partners to resources that help them advance their missions or leverage existing investments, capacity, and assets
- Support skill-building, leadership development, convenings, exchanges/trips, conferences or trainings, and technical assistance opportunities for partners
- Identify policy and other systems-level changes necessary for attainment of desired outcomes
- Work with partners and EBSF staff to develop and support strategies for change.

Study and practice

- Work with partners to identify data and research needs and gaps that inform decision-making, policy/advocacy, strategic planning/initiatives, or investments and facilitate the connection of community partners to appropriate resources and expertise
- Participate as a member of the EBSF evaluation pod to help measure EBSF's approaches and desired impacts in focus areas and course correct as needed
- Support nonprofit partners to develop and fully resource their own evaluation to measure impacts, identify leverage opportunities, and course correct as needed
- Research effective philanthropic models and initiatives for use in ongoing program design

Communications

- Clearly communicate EBSF's interests, mission, and values to external audiences
- Elevate stories, key learnings, and investible opportunities in our focus areas
- Support implementation of EBSF's communication plan
- Provide regular storytelling and general updates on grantees within primary portfolio to EBSF staff, board, and consultants and external audiences as appropriate
- Communicate with other grant makers and private donors about how their missions and priorities might align with grant and non-grant related opportunities in our focus areas

Operations and culture

- Uphold EBSF values in all aspects of work, inclusive of development and implementation of equity-informed policies and procedures
- Commit to continuous personal growth and learning as it relates to EBSF mission, values, and programs
- Work as a part of a cohesive, collaborative team with an emphasis on trust-building and transparency
- Work with staff team members in different configurations to address EBSF priorities through pod approach
- Provide staff support to board and board committees as needed, helping to plan and prepare for meetings and carry out work as needed between meetings in coordination with staff and board members

Skills and experience

Required

- ✓ A minimum of 10 years' experience in equity-informed, policy and systems change work
- ✓ Working knowledge of, and experience working with, Maine and/or New England food systems
- ✓ Self-starter
- ✓ Ability to connect community-based solutions to policy and systems-level change
- ✓ Exceptional relationship-building skills, with the ability to develop productive working relationships and make connections across a diverse spectrum of stakeholders (including policymakers, business-owners, grassroots groups, and researchers)
- ✓ Collaborative approach to designing and implementing programs and solutions
- ✓ Ability to work independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- ✓ Ability to thrive in a fluid environment
- ✓ Strong communication skills

Preferred

- ✓ Experience working within the nonprofit sector
- ✓ Understanding of economics, environmental impacts, and humane production as it relates to food systems
- ✓ Understanding of the nuances of working with both funders and nonprofit organizations, including grassroots, community based, and large institutions
- ✓ Experience with advocacy efforts

Attributes and mindset

- ✓ Aptitude for applied learning
- ✓ Commitment to mission and organizational values
- ✓ Collaborator
- ✓ Demonstrated interest in philanthropic, or mission-oriented fields of practice
- ✓ Flexibility and comfort navigating ambiguity
- ✓ High level of intellectual curiosity
- ✓ Sense of humor
- ✓ Sound judgement

Cultivating a diverse and inclusive team is an essential component of Elmina B. Sewall Foundation's commitment to advancing equity internally and externally. Candidates of all backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply.