

Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
2023 Guidelines and Application Instructions
Revised: May 2023

The Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust was established in 1988 by Joan Morton Kelly and her mother, Mildred Duncan Morton, to facilitate their philanthropic activities. This information, and more details about the Trust’s grantmaking are available at www.morton-kelly.org.

A Special Message for 2023 Applicants

During the pandemic, Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust made a special commitment to help our grantees get through a difficult and uncertain time. We focused our grantmaking on prior grantees, providing operating support and flexible funding. Going forward, we will continue to be responsive while expanding eligibility to respond to the larger community of applicants.

For the 2023-2024 grant cycles, we have updated our guidelines, outlined in detail below and on our website. Our priorities emphasize arts and culture, elevating the diverse and rich cultural heritage of Maine, and continuing to support historic preservation and environmental initiatives. **We will no longer be limiting eligibility to past grantees and expect the 2023 cycle to be particularly competitive.**

Important Changes to our Guidelines

Please note that we will no longer be funding Education as a separate program Area but will support arts, culture and environmental education efforts that fall within the updated program priorities. programs, except those that fall within the updated program priorities below (arts, environment, cultural heritage, etc.). We are transitioning out of direct funding of immigrant and refugee programs, and instead will support the Immigrant-Led Organizations Fund managed by Maine Initiatives. We invite organizations to explore that option [here](#). Lastly, we will no longer be funding social service programs unless the program meets our new program priorities.

We hope that the revised guidelines will bring more ease and transparency to the grantmaking process for all, while we focus on programs that align with our goals for positive impact. Please reach out if you have any questions about these changes.

Foundation Program Areas

The overarching interest of the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust is to connect people and place through the arts, culture and the natural environment in Maine. Program Areas reflect how communities, organizations and individuals can cultivate creative expression and a sense of responsibility towards one another and to the lands and waters around us. Proposals may be for operating support or specific projects and may be of local or statewide benefit. Details and priorities for the two broad Program Areas are outlined below.

Across all programs, community connection is paramount. We will give preference to organizations and programs that demonstrate:

- Equitable access for Maine residents
- Community representation in program design and delivery
- Expanded community connections and vibrancy through program activities
- Responsiveness to new voices and the less visible histories of Maine
- Deepening connections between people and place

Program Areas of interest to the Trust are Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation and Environmental Initiatives. The Trust welcomes operating support and project support requests. The Program areas are described in more detail below with an overview of the kinds of programs we wish to support.

Arts, Culture and Historic Preservation (or Arts, Cultural Resources and Historic Preservation).

The Trust is interested in community arts and cultural programs, cultural facility improvements, historic preservation projects and celebration of the diverse cultural heritage of Maine.

Arts and culture programs and organizations help foster vibrant communities, creative expression, inspiration and build community connections. Community cultural centers and preservation of historic sites and resources can enhance downtown and community revitalization efforts and be a cornerstone of community arts and cultural life. The Trust is also interested in programs that expand cross-cultural understanding of the unique and layered histories of Maine and contemporary expressions of culture and heritage.

The Trust’s Arts and Culture Program Area welcomes operating support or project proposals that meet any of the following goals:

1. Access to the arts, creative expression and community cultural programs

Priorities include:

- Access to arts experiences of all kinds, arts education for all ages, and performances and programs that serve Maine communities and residents.
- Visual and performing arts programs in Maine museums, public libraries, historical societies and other cultural organizations.
- Both urban and rural programs that reflect local needs and bring community members together, including lectures, exhibits and special events.
- Projects and programs that serve diverse populations and cultural experiences including Black, Indigenous and people of color in Maine.

2. Facility improvements for community cultural centers and historic preservation projects that contribute to community vitality.

Cultural facility improvement priorities include:

- Structural, health, safety, public access or energy efficiency improvements.
- Technology upgrades and other renovation needs.

- Small venues in rural or underserved areas where few other resources are available, and which contribute to community revitalization.

3. Historic preservation projects that contribute to community vitality:

Priorities include:

- the restoration and conservation of significant historic structures such as those listed on the National Register, or have documented importance through Tribal Historic Preservation Departments or are a known community landmark. The Trust will support structural improvements and building systems (such as electrical service) rather than maintenance, painting or short-term repairs.
- Preservation projects may also include restoration of significant material cultural resources.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a letter indicating that the Maine Historic Preservation Commission or appropriate Tribal Historic Preservation Office is aware of the project, and that work is being conducted to appropriate preservation standards.

4. Celebrate the diverse cultural heritage and multiple histories of Maine.

Priorities include:

- Programs that build community connection, celebrate the diverse cultural heritage of Maine communities and elevate the unique experiences of Black, Indigenous and other under-represented groups.
- Efforts that build bridges within communities to elevate cultural histories of place, expand awareness, cultural connection and share learning.

Environmental Initiatives

The Trust is interested in environmental initiatives that protect ecological values, water quality and ecosystem health through land conservation, stewardship, education and research programs. The Trust is interested in supporting organizations that promote positive relationships with nature including scientific, ecological and cultural perspectives. The Trust is also interested in expanded efforts to conserve culturally significant lands for Wabanaki communities.

The Trust’s Environmental Initiatives Program Area welcomes proposals for operating support or projects that meet any of the following goals or related priorities:

1. Provide equitable access to outdoor experiences and nature-based education

Priorities include:

- Programs that offer outdoor experiences and nature-based education for youth and community members to inspire care and responsibility for the environment.
- Programs that provide safe, inclusive spaces for youth and others to develop appreciation for nature, science and the social and cultural dimensions of land and place.

- Programs that benefit BIPOC and underserved communities.

2. Enhance environmental stewardship.

Priorities include:

- Support of the growing stewardship responsibilities of conservation groups in light of development pressures, climate change and greater public use of conserved lands and waters.
- Support of staffing, programs and partnerships for stewardship, education and community engagement.

3. Advance new approaches for land conservation

Priorities include:

- Partnerships, tools and relationships for conservation that emphasize equity and inclusion.
- Land conservation that protects biodiversity or provides access to lands and waters for recreation, education and restoration. Organizations requesting funding for land acquisitions should include a funding plan for the project.
- Building capacity for the protection, stewardship and management of culturally significant lands for Wabanaki lifeways and culture.

4. Promote restoration and improvement of water quality in coastal and inland watersheds.

Priorities include:

- Applied science and research for the restoration and management of ecosystems, especially the coastal and inland waters of Maine.
- Relevant research and education for water quality and habitat improvement.
- Addressing climate change impacts on coastal and aquatic resources.
- Initiatives that use science, policy and community engagement to improve and restore natural resources and ecosystems.

How to Apply

Eligibility:

Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust supports organizations throughout Maine and aims to respond to emerging needs and developments through its priority Program Areas. Please note that the Trust has lifted the pandemic-related restriction that limited applicants to past grantees.

Types of Grants:

Applicants may request project or operating support. The same application is used for both types of grants. Operating support requests should provide information on the organization's current

strategic direction or priorities. Project grants should articulate clear goals, timelines and outcomes for the project. Projects may be for specific programs or capital expenses and may align with more than one of our Program Areas or goals.

Grant Size:

Up to \$20,000 in grant funding may be requested.

Application deadline

The Trust considers grant requests once per year. The [online grant application portal](#) accepts applications only from June 1 to October 1. All requests will be acknowledged upon receipt. The application period closes at midnight October 1 and we are not able to grant extensions.

Review process

Please note that the Trust's grants are competitive – we generally receive many more proposals than our resources allow us to fund. Typically, the Board reviews all requests in November and decision letters are sent before the end of December of each year. **We expect an expanded pool of applicants in this cycle. Organizations may apply even if they have received consecutive funding in the last 2 years. Beginning in 2024, a one-year year hiatus will be required after two consecutive grants.**

Past grants

See a list of past grants [here](#).

Grant Reports

Beginning in 2023, grant reports will not be required. The application has a space for reporting on last year's grant if you received one.

Questions?

Feel free to contact Lissa Widoff, Program Advisor at programs@morton-kelly.org if you have any questions.

Other considerations

- For capital funding requests, applicants should include a budget for the project and evidence of the fiscal and fundraising capacity necessary to complete the proposed work beyond the amount of the Morton-Kelly grant request.
- Projects or programs may include more than one Morton-Kelly Program Area or priority/
- **We do not fund:**
 - multi-year requests
 - endowments or annual campaigns
 - political advocacy
 - national or regional organizations based outside of Maine, except in cases where a project is being conducted entirely within the state;
 - organizations that provide medical services, operate medical research facilities or focus on a particular disease or condition; or
 - organizations that are primarily social service providers.

Application Submission/Grant Application Portal

The Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust accepts grant applications only from June 1 to October 1 each year using an [online grant application portal](#). The application period closes at midnight on October 1 and we are not able to grant extensions.

If it is your first time applying through our on-line system, you will need to create an account for your organization before completing an application. If you have applied previously, you can access the grant application portal using the same username and password. An application form will only be visible on the site during the application period. Finally, you will be able to save and return to your work at any time before you submit.

All submitted applications will be acknowledged via e-mail receipt. The application and registration are available [here](#).