

On the Horizon:
Trends Shaping the Landscape of Philanthropy in Maine

**Prepared for the Maine Philanthropy Center
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Maine
Philanthropy
Center

Executive Summary

The Maine Philanthropy Center is embarking on a strategic planning process to inform its future efforts to increase the awareness, effectiveness and impact of philanthropy in Maine. This environmental scan identifies eight emerging trends that will change the philanthropic field in Maine and shape the decisions of individual and institutional donors, their partners, and the Maine Philanthropy Center. The report addresses the impact of these trends on both the substance and practice of philanthropy in Maine. It also includes a list of resources and quick links to help the leadership of the Maine Philanthropy Center assess the threats and opportunities on the horizon.

This scan looks at the impact of the trends in three dimensions: (1) as cross-cutting trends that can be applied to many funders in Maine; (2) as trends that stand to have a significant impact on the future work of the Maine Philanthropy Center, and (3) as trends that will impact the important relationships between funders and their partners in Maine. The report does not address evergreen trends, i.e. those issues that have already been well documented like climate change or the role of technology. It does not include trends in international philanthropy though recognizes that there is a growing interest in global giving among some donors in Maine. It also excludes issue-specific, programmatic trends. A short list of these issues can be found at the end of the report for future discussion.

Some of the trends discussed below derive their significance from the profound shifts in the composition and structure of the population in Maine that will usher in much larger numbers of older people, especially older women, and a shrinking base of younger people that is becoming slowly but increasingly diverse. Other trends follow broader national conversations in the field of philanthropy. The eight trends include:

1. **An aging Maine demands even more of our time, voice, and resources.** Funders will face growing pressure to prioritize the needs of Maine’s older population over other longer-term investments. Seeking input from older Mainers and their caregivers will require thinking differently about how to reach and engage them. Funders should think now about the advocacy platform(s) needed to secure more resources at the state and national levels.
2. **The “people gap” in Maine’s workforce becomes a binding constraint to programmatic success.** With fewer people to develop and shepherd the ideas funded and seeded by philanthropy, funders will need to be creative in order to retain Mainers and attract long-term settlers from other states and countries. Drawing some of these people into the nonprofit sector will build the talent bank for the future, and offset the impact of retirements and leadership transitions across the social sector.
3. **Diversity, equity, and inclusion become critical performance measures.** This trend suggests that funders will need to be much more public, explicit and strategic about their efforts and that funders will be expected to be more vocal about their positions, working with and learning from their grantees
4. **An array of new ways to give changes how we think about partnerships and funding.** The growth in funders, including more relatively smaller family foundations, presents opportunities to share our strategies and to help new funders leapfrog up learning curves. It also challenges

the funding community in Maine to think differently about engaging individual donors and to link to crowd sourcing models that could capture those people outside of Maine who have roots or an interest in the state.

5. **New philosophies of asset management expand our paths to impact.** The trend is bending toward a closer pairing of mission and asset management. Funders have more financial tools at their disposal beyond grantmaking budgets. This includes impact investing, proxy voting, and asset screening. Beyond these specific tools, the trend suggests new parameters for determining the life span of a foundation, which matches the form and longevity of a foundation with its mission. Thus, foundations created “in perpetuity” and “giving while living” efforts become points along a spectrum of options.
6. **We get smarter about sustaining the critical organizations in our strategies.** This trend builds on “the fallacy of overhead” conversation, and will push funders harder to consider project budgets as building blocks for institutions and ideas not simply for accountability and reporting. It will also pave the way for bolder conversations about mergers and acquisitions, for general operating funds, and for other kinds of investments that help to solidify organizational strength.
7. **The minimum wage debate has ripple effects across philanthropy.** New national regulations surrounding overtime pay and state and municipal campaigns to increase the minimum wage may be especially advantageous for workers but challenging for nonprofits, many of which are working within narrow financial margins. Organized philanthropy may increasingly be asked to help with transitional funding to adopt these new policies and with research to assess the overall cost and impact on Maine nonprofits and funders. This is area where foundations may want to use their communication and advocacy capabilities to more publicly define a position and a political pathway on these issues.
8. **Design-thinking opens up new ways for Mainers to create their futures, faster.** This trend highlights a methodology that builds on practices now common in the private sector. The approach seeks to improve outcomes by building empathy and understanding between those developing interventions and those who stand to benefit. Design-thinking is characterized by the creation of many potential solutions, followed by a period of rapid “prototyping” which quickly discards the solutions that fail and builds on those that show promise. Such an approach may open up new solutions to long-standing challenges in Maine.

Introduction

The Maine Philanthropy Center is embarking on a strategic planning process to inform its future efforts to increase the awareness, effectiveness and impact of philanthropy in Maine. This environmental scan identifies eight emerging trends that will change the philanthropic field in Maine and shape the decisions of individual and institutional donors, their partners, and the Maine Philanthropy Center. The report addresses the impact of these trends on both the substance and practice of philanthropy in Maine. It also includes a list of helpful resources to support the leadership of the Maine Philanthropy Center as it assesses the threats and opportunities on the horizon. Each section also includes one or two quick links that are particularly helpful in illustrating the trend.

The universe of trends affecting philanthropy is large and, in some ways, unknowable. To narrow the field, we've sifted through a wide range of resources, including trade journals that support the philanthropic field, articles in social sector journals, metastudies of trends written by other experts, conversations with funders and leaders in the Maine philanthropic community, and local newspaper articles. Certainly, the upcoming elections—both state and national—will impact the work of philanthropy in the Maine. Ongoing discussions about charitable deductions and the status of foundations will continue to percolate. Indeed, foundations and funders as a whole are likely to encounter more scrutiny as more and more wealth is transferred across generations over the next decades and as debates about income and opportunity inequality intensify.

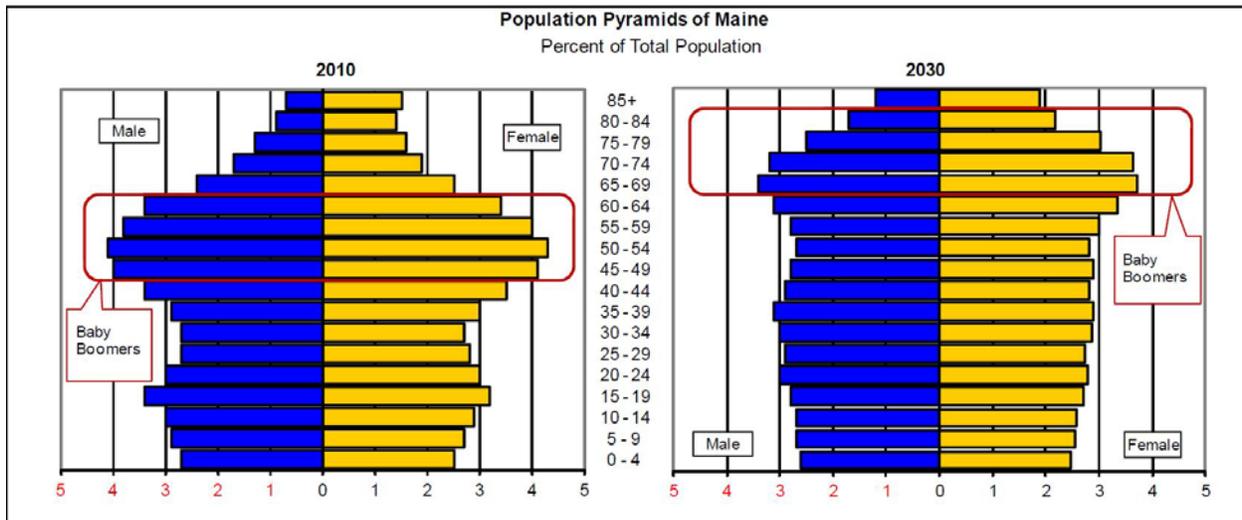
We focused this paper on three areas: (1) on cross-cutting trends that can be applied to many funders in Maine; (2) on trends that stand to have a significant impact on the future work of the Maine Philanthropy Center, and (3) on trends that will impact the important relationships between funders and their partners in Maine. The report does not address evergreen trends, i.e. those issues that have already been well documented and will continue to inform investment strategies, like climate change or the role of technology. It does not include trends in international philanthropy though we recognize that there is a growing interest in global giving among some donors in Maine. It also excludes issue-specific, programmatic trends. A short list of these issues can be found at the end of the report for future discussion

The Tectonic Shift of Aging in Maine

It would have been easy to focus this study on the many ways that the changes in the composition, age, structure, and morbidity patterns of the population in Maine will affect the social, economic, and cultural fabric of philanthropy. Some of the trends discussed below are, in fact, directly related to these demographic changes. Others, however, are not directly related but may be influenced in their interpretation or application by these shifts.

Without a doubt, the changes in the structure of the Maine population are one of the defining characteristics of this state. Table 1 below illustrates the astounding shifts taking place over the next fifteen years.

Table 1: Changes in the Structure of the Population in Maine (2010-2030)



Source: Rector, A. Maine Population Outlook to 2030. February 2013.

The chart shows more older women because women tend to live longer. It also shows a growing number of people entering or living in retirement, underscoring the profound shift in leadership positions happening in the sector. The trailing “boomlet” of young people moving into their economically productive years suggests opportunities to focus on reskilling and retention. By imagining this chart 25 years hence, one can also envision a great contraction in the population as many of Maine’s elderly pass away. This raises interesting questions about rapidly scaling services for a large number of elderly only to dismantle that same structure in subsequent decades.

What this chart doesn’t provide is any information about where people will live in Maine, how they’ll make their livelihoods, the quality of the environment in which they live, and how innovation and invention will change their lives and our work—all issues relevant to this environmental scan.

Quick Resource: [Maine Population Outlook to 2030](#) by Amanda Rector, Maine State Economist

Trend One: An aging Maine demands even more of our time, voice, and resources.

The fact that Maine is the oldest state in the country, with a median age of roughly 44 years, is well baked into collective funder conscience and funding strategies. It is worth emphasizing nonetheless that the changes in Maine’s population structure are more than mere atmospheric surrounding grantmaking in Maine.

The JT Gorman Foundation recently commissioned a report on aging in Maine. It concludes by saying, “...questions abound about the quality of life that a new generation of seniors will have as they enter retirement age”. With the 65 and older population estimated to compose 25% of the population by 2030, this shift will profoundly change who funders in Maine are responsive to, how funders work together to address the range of issues facing seniors, and the partnership between the state and the philanthropic sector to meet the financial costs to help seniors and senior communities thrive.

This trend means ongoing recalibration in funding strategies and in the way funders engage with communities. Funders will be especially under pressure from local governments, from communities, and from the state to help deal with immediate social service needs for an older population, indicating potential tradeoffs among services for the elderly and other important issues like conservation and the environment, education and workforce development, and job creation. The trend also suggests some urgency to move from pilot projects that serve older people today to those that can rapidly scale. Embedded in here are interesting programmatic questions about older women's health, housing and finances, and certainly about attitudes about the role of older people in their communities, in the workplace, and in funding and grantee organizations.

Aging in Maine is also the kind of issue where funders working together can use their policy and advocacy expertise at the national level to ensure that Maine's older population is factored into national decisions about funding and services. Working together, funders can also bring pressure to bear at the state level about the allocation of resources and about successful models.

At the highest level, this trend underscores the stark framework for discussions about the philosophy of giving: should funders be responsive to the largest number with the greatest need or look around the corner to what's next. Choosing the latter path may become increasingly difficult as the demands to support Maine's older population become louder.

Quick Resource: [A Portrait of Wellbeing: The Status of Seniors in Maine](#) from the JT Gorman Foundation

Trend 2: The “people gap” in Maine’s workforce becomes a binding constraint to economic growth and programmatic success.

Local news is filled with stories about the need to reskill Maine workers, to retain and attract more Mainers, and to improve match-making between employers and employees. The so-called “war for talent”, coined by McKinsey in the late 1990s, is not just a reality for the private sector. It also has implications for the social sector and for funders. Cultivating and retaining human capital in Maine will be a critical factor for the success of nonprofits and other partner agencies, especially as more and more Mainers move into retirement and cadres of volunteers shrink.

The hole left by young people who leave the state during their prime workforce years is not easily filled. Strategies to shrink the gap include encouraging young people born in Maine to stay and enticing those born in other states or countries to make a long-term home here. None of this is likely to radically change the structure of the population. Encouraging more people to stay, however, is one of the first steps to accelerate economic prosperity and to strengthen the link between jobs and skills.

This trend suggests that funders may need to lean into nontraditional areas to change the dynamic around attracting and retaining young people. For example, the Maine Tourism Bureau's endeavor to increase tourism to Maine through “The Maine Thing” campaign generated a 6.7% increase in tourism to the state, according to BVK, the Milwaukee-based firm that led the work. Could funders further leverage this effort and encourage more people to make Maine a permanent destination? Similarly, as

Focus Maine pushes its big bets on agriculture, biopharmaceuticals, and aquaculture, can funders develop the strategy to strengthen the talent attraction component?

This trend also suggests that comparables from other cities and states which have successfully launched efforts to retain and attract immigrants will increasingly be valuable. The Welcoming America effort, for example, is documenting and building partnerships with local governments and nonprofits to create communities that welcome immigrants. There are many parallels to draw with Maine, and with cities such as Portland and Lewiston-Auburn.

Funders might also tap colleges and students in and from Maine to understand the kinds of things that would keep young people here, or draw them back once they have built skills elsewhere.

Quick resource: [The Maine Thing](#) from BVK Milwaukee and [Welcoming America](#)

Trend 3: Diversity, equity and inclusion become critical performance measures.

Most funders in Maine strive to be inclusive and to create the environment where all Mainers, and new Mainers, can thrive. The national dialogue about diversity, equity and inclusion, however, has heightened the scrutiny on foundations regarding their approach, their internal policies, and their public statements on these related issues.

Going forward, there will be greater expectations that funders, as institutions and important community members, reflect in their actions and their words an understanding of the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda. The increased attention is only partially driven by changes in demographics across the country. It's also underpinned by a growing body of research that demonstrates that diversity elevates us all and makes our institutions stronger. The good news is that there are more tools to help funders and models to draw on. [The D5 coalition](#)—perhaps the most expansive approach by philanthropy yet to these issues— has left behind a wealth of resources for funders to put into action.

This increased attention also raises questions about unfinished agendas—like the civil rights movement punctuated more recently by Black Lives Matter, and the Women's Rights movement, with an important overlap between women and race. While the struggle for rights, recognition, and opportunity is not new, the trend suggests that foundations will need to be much more public, explicit and strategic about their efforts and that funders will be expected to be more vocal about their positions and visible in communities, working with and learning from their grantees.

Funders and grantees will also need to track progress through stronger measures, disaggregated data, and internal policies that reflect a deep philosophical commitment.

Quick Resource: [Policies, Practices and Programs to Advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) by Just Partners for the D5 Coalition

Trend 4: An array of new ways to give changes how we think about partnerships and fundraising.

It's astounding how many different ways individuals now have to make charitable donations—from frequent flier miles to bequests, through online platforms, donor advised funds, expert advisors, community foundations, and more. The growth in ways to give parallels what many call “the greatest transfer of intergenerational wealth” we've ever seen—an estimated 30 trillion from the baby boomers to their children—peaking around the year 2045. This trend is ushering in a remarkable growth in family foundations, individual philanthropy, and an overall interest in philanthropy.

There has been quite a bit written on this trend. For funders in Maine, with relatively modest funding compared to some other states, this trend is an opportunity--albeit one wrapped in some big challenges.

Consider that 70% of family foundations have been created since 1990 and that they generally have less than \$10M in assets. Funders with more capacity in Maine are well placed to help these new funders leapfrog along learning curves related, for example, to early childhood education in Maine, immigrant integration, or aging in place. Faster learning can crowd in new donors, reduce duplication, and eliminate what some call “pilotitis”—endless testing of new ideas without ever getting to scale.

New models of giving—like Kickstarter campaigns and other crowdsourcing models—can help tap those people outside of Maine who have roots or an interest in the state. Such an approach effectively breaks down the geographical and legal borders around the state of Maine and creates a much larger giving opportunity to fund Maine-based efforts.

Relatively little is known about the motivations behind individual donors but that body of work is growing and becoming more nuanced and actionable. This is likely to remain a noisy space but the opportunity for funders and nonprofits cannot be denied.

Quick Resource: [Money for Good](#) from the Camber Collective

Trend 5: New philosophies of asset management expand our paths to impact

The trend in philanthropy is bending toward a closer pairing of asset management and mission. While a firewall still exists for many foundations between what they fund and how they are funded, that wall is beginning to break down.

The Heron Foundation's paper on the 21st Century Foundation is a great example of thinking at the cutting edge of this trend. It paints an evocative picture of what's possible if funders deploy all their resources—including their investments—to fulfill their mission. For Heron, along with a few other funders, foundations have the opportunity and, perhaps, the obligation to bring all of their assets to bear on solving the world's toughest problems. In this scenario, program officers and asset managers alike are all part of the solution.

In practice, this conversation broadly includes impact investing, using proxy voting to influence the governance and investments of companies which do not comport with mission; screening the assets in endowments for those that harm or detract from mission, and redefining the business model of a

foundation by collapsing the program work and the investment management work into a common team unified by a common mission.

There is another interesting expression of this trend, which reflects the 20th century modern architecture adage that “form ever follows function”. It suggests that the lifespan of a foundation should be determined by a well-defined mission. Thus, “giving while living”, existing in perpetuity, or even ending certain programs should derive from a well-articulated mission rather than a philosophical position.

For Maine funders, it is useful to reflect on the different approaches to asset management given the anticipated needs in Maine over the next 25 years. In particular, do the missions of Maine-focused foundations require that they continue to exist in perpetuity, especially knowing that so many more family foundations are being created? What issues would give rise to a spend-down strategy? When is the right time for the board to discuss these issues?

Together, these are important issues. They are also fairly technical, highly regulated in some cases, and not necessarily easily implemented, especially for small foundations. This is an area where learning together and jointly hosting foundation colleagues on the forefront of new asset management strategies could be efficient and transformational.

Quick Resource: [Building a Foundation for the 21st Century](#) by Clara Miller, Heron Foundation

Trend 6: We get smarter about sustaining the critical organizations in our strategy

This trend recognizes an opening in the field to redefine the grantee and funder relationship—from one that is negotiated over project budgets and short time frames to one that builds institutions and ideas that have staying power. An extensive study by the Bridgespan Group outlines a new “Pay-What-It-Takes” approach to philanthropy that challenges funders and grantees alike to think differently about overhead rates, general operating support, and other forms of funding titrated to specific organizational needs and longer term impact.

Although the discussion often focuses on meeting the true cost of overhead and expanding general operating support, the opportunities to support grantees in ways that support long-term impact are numerous. For this trend to lead to meaningful changes in the field, there will need to be a stronger partnership between funders and grantees.

Program officers and others on the front lines of grant negotiations, for example, will need to know much more about strong nonprofit management and financials. In this regard, the budget becomes a springboard for talking about impact, not simply a money management and accountability tool. This kind of sophistication should better position grant negotiations in the context of strategy discussions, it should also facilitate conversations about strategy and institution building that are not obscured by fuzzy numbers and driven by fear of failure by funders or fear of underfunding by grantee partners.

General operating support has a role to play in this regard. As Queenen et al note, however, “greater general operating support does not necessarily lead to better, stronger organizations”. Nonprofits,

themselves, need to have a much clearer understanding of how they plan to achieve longer term impact, and need to be able to articulate the real operational costs of such an endeavor. Helping nonprofits arrive at a true cost of doing business may also change the kind preparation and support that Maine nonprofits need *in advance* of submitting a grant request.

Mergers and acquisitions, often a highly polarizing topic for boards and executive directors, also fall within this trend. Mergers and acquisitions have the potential to expand capabilities without creating duplication, increase financial stability, and expand brand awareness. Smart support from funders could include grants that cover merger costs, supporting confidential conversations among grantees, and rewarding M&A behavior in the sector by increasing support.

Lastly, funders will need to back up aspirations for innovation in the field with funds that provide flexibility for learning, experimenting and innovating. Generally, nonprofits have few resources to make big bets—and perhaps fail—even if this leads to an important learning and course correction.

Quick Resource: [A New Sophistication in Considering How to Support Nonprofits Effectively](#), by Phil Buchanan, The Center for Effective Philanthropy

Trend 7: The minimum wage debate has ripple effects across philanthropy.

Of the eight trends, this is the one that could have the greatest immediate and direct impact on non-profit partners, both in terms of the administrative, advocacy and policy time required to engage in this conversation and the rubber-hits-the-road reality of implementing potential new requirements.

There are two prongs to this trend—the first is the living wage movement in Maine, part of a larger national effort to increase minimum wages across the country. The second is the now approved changes to the Fair Labor and Standards Act by the Department of Labor, which will see more than 4.2 million Americans now qualifying for overtime pay. Among other things, the new regulations increase the salary level at which white collar workers are exempt from overtime from \$23,660 to \$47,476.

Progress on increasing the minimum wage and increasing overtime for those who merit it, while aligned with the vision of many funders, will be a challenge to implement. Together, these are profound changes for workers and employers in general and especially profound for nonprofits, many of which are working within narrow financial margins and rely on volunteer hours and overtime to get the work done. For some individuals given the nature of their work and for some nonprofits which exist to provide purely charitable services and derive little or no commercial benefit, the rules do not apply. Understanding who's in and who's out is complicated—so complicated, in fact, that the Department of Labor issued special guidance for nonprofit organizations.

There are several exemptions for certain nonprofits and nonprofit workers, and this will take some time to sort out. For funders, it's worth thinking now what kind of transitional funding grantees will need to adopt these new policies and what the overall cost and impact will be for Maine nonprofits and, by extension, their funders. Funders might also consider increasing support to cover legal costs related to employment law. The discussion also raises an array of fair labor issues in the context of other

discussions about inclusive economic growth. It will also test the limits of how far funders are willing to support nonprofits which are unable to comply with the changes, and whether funders, themselves are willing to be early adopters of both minimum wage and overtime changes.

Quick Resource: [Guidance for Nonprofits on Paying Overtime Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#) from the Department of Labor

Trend 8: Design-Thinking opens up new ways for Mainers to create their futures, faster.

Most of the trends discussed above fall in the “*what* funders do” category. This trend speaks instead to “*how* funders do their work”. Methodological innovations are creating new avenues to bring about lasting, grounded, and tested social change more quickly. The “collective impact” movement, the municipal budget transparency movement, and the effort to move from sector-specific to integrated models of community development are three such examples. More recently, funders have also been turning to human centered design as a way to upend beneficiary feedback and engagement in program, project, and product development.

For those unfamiliar with “design thinking”, it has been widely hailed as the new frontier in bringing the secrets of the creative professions, e.g. advertising, design firms, technology companies to bear on tricky social issues. It brings with it a mindset and set of practices and principles that promise to arrive at better set of solutions more quickly through directly engaging the lives of people, by building deeper empathy with them, and by rapidly prototyping, testing, and discarding solutions.

Although the approach has a long history, its application to business was largely led by the firm IDEO. The practice of and training in design thinking has been taken up by the likes of M.I.T. and Stanford, which now has a d.school (design school) to help students in business launch their ideas. Toolkits and trainings abound on-line, including virtual crash courses on YouTube and short courses like those offered by [IDEO U](#) and through [Acumen](#).

Design thinking is increasingly being applied to social issues—as diverse as water quality and organ donations. As a new methodology, it is an area where foundations and nonprofits in Maine can partner to become expert users of this new technique.

Of course, design thinking is not the solution to all problems and it risks becoming the next interesting, shiny fad if positioned that way. For the right problem, however, this could be a new way to change thinking and behavior in the sector.

Quick Resource: [Design Thinking for Social Innovation](#), from IDEO in the Stanford Social Innovation Review

Conclusion

These eight trends together describe a landscape that is changing slowly and profoundly, and quickly. For the Maine Philanthropy Center, this scan suggests changes in the business model of philanthropy. It also highlights growing tensions between the here-and-now needs and those yet to come. The trends point to very specific opportunities for funders to use their voice and policy/advocacy tools together to bring more resources to Maine and to stand more visibly for and speak more clearly about the issues they fund.

Perhaps most significantly, the trends open up a broader discussion about philanthropic resources—are funders using everything at their disposal, are they crowding in new funders, and do they have a vision for working with private sector resources to meet the challenges of the next decade?

This scan has not explored issue-specific trends that are crucial to some funders given their unique missions and defined lines of grantmaking. Any one of the following topics merits greater discussion and, in some cases, strong shared problem solving among funders. These issues include:

- The Arctic and Northern trade routes to grow the Maine economy
- Innovation in education and healthcare at the intersection of aging and rural communities
- Increased speed and access to broadband
- More international funding from Maine donors
- Growing connections between Maine and the rest of the world through immigration and through Maine's own diaspora communities
- Opiate addiction, treatment, enforcement, and prevention
- Obesity and related health risks in rural communities
- Climate change, health, and local livelihoods

This snapshot of the threats and opportunities ahead for philanthropy in Maine shares many characteristics with other funding communities across the country but retains features unique to the Maine environment. Hopefully, this will help MPC and its partners point their resources toward those issues that will make Maine an even better place for all people to live, work and play.

Additional Helpful Resources:

Bridgespan. [Nonprofit Overhead Costs Resource Center](#)

Lucy Bernholz: [Philanthropy and the Social Economy: Blueprint 2016](#).

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