

Human Services and Strengthening Families

What are our aspirations for an inclusive and equitable Maine?

- Affordable and safe housing
- Addressing poverty especially among women and children
- Child Care
- Addressing adverse experiences and trauma among children
- Fair wages
- Transportation
- Strength-based approach vs. deficit-based
- Bridging political and social divides
- Changing the perception, language and construct of poverty

Why isn't it like that today?

Problems Related to Government

- Lack of education and shortfalls within public education
- Divisive political leadership
- Political climate of distrust, lack of transparency and bully mentality
- Misguided social safety net policies
- Both fiscal and economic policies that disenfranchise the impoverished

Division and Lack of Collaboration

- Social and geographic isolation
- Classism
- Lack of agreement on solutions
- Bureaucratic hurdles that impede progress

Fear of Change

- Fear and blame of newcomers
- Many are afraid of a changing Maine
- Rigidity of thinking
- Unwilling to change agenda
- Gated communities

Lack of Understanding and Awareness

- Lack of understanding
- Difficulty in raising awareness
- Lack of understanding toward the issues
- Not understanding root causes

Other

- Generational poverty
- Bias
- People in need lack political and social capital

- Lack of will, not a priority for most
- Profit above people
- Gender bias
- Restrictive funder practices
- "The way life should be" myth
- Downsides of a small population (little diversity, fewer resources, some things are magnified and some are overlooked)
- Family/parenting is not adequately supported
- Failure to look past one's own needs/agenda
- Lack of constructive use of privilege
- Current institutions create poverty
- Those with money can create systems that advantage themselves
- Income disparity
- Equal access to services
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Cost of living higher than wages
- Graduates leaving Maine

What can we begin to do about it?

Promote Advocacy

- Engage the community
- Advocate for issues/policies
- Be willing to speak out against lack of awareness and injustice
- Advocate/vote/encourage formal and informal leaders
- Listen to each community's stories
- Help individuals tell their stories and the stories of their communities
- Use those stories to influence lawmakers and others in power
- Vote

Promote Collaboration

- More connections
- One on one contact with those who can ameliorate the situation
- Coordinate effort to achieve greater impact
- Encourage non-profits all over the world to cooperate among themselves and with corporations

Consider Marginalized Groups

- Listening, engaging and building skills of marginalized groups
- Owning privilege and discerning what must be given up
- Make leaders out of those who are in marginalized groups
- General culture awareness
- Remove stigma toward poverty
- Not leaving behind those who don't migrate to urban areas
- Be more welcoming to: immigrants, refugees, employers, "out of staters," and young people
- Bring in many perspectives

Emphasize Learning

- Learning readiness
- Learning about health and nutrition
- Reading proficiency
- Financial literacy
- Basic life skills
- Maximize technology solutions
- Support workplace policies that strengthen children and families

Other

- Financial and volunteer support
- Efforts to depolarize arguments
- Improvements in technology (broadband, telemedicine, etc.)
- Oral health
- Reduce ignorance and apathy about cause and effects
- Exposure to wider ideas
- Reform institutions and policies
- Change regulations/laws
- Individualized responses to problems
- Don't demonize
- Combat generational poverty
- Healing root causes
- Understanding trauma better at all ages
- Transportation infrastructure
- Gradual welfare reform to incentivize work
- Policies to support families (paid family leave, childcare prek, etc.)
- Job training as a part of recovering from trauma
- Political reform
- Creative public education campaign
- Work with media to humanize
- Reframe as investment in future rather than handout
- Encourage transparent and personalized presence on social media