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, somethings 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