Solving Child Poverty is Everybody’s Business

Too many Maine families are struggling to get by. Almost 1 out of every 5 kids in Maine faces the daily challenge of growing up in poverty.

At the same time, Maine's businesses and economy are at risk because we are facing a workforce crisis. Creating economic opportunity and solving child poverty will benefit all of us.

A diverse group of stakeholders from around the state are working together to leverage opportunity for Maine families, our workforce and economy.

Guided by data, we are developing key strategies to make the biggest difference. The Invest in Tomorrow stakeholder group will publish policy recommendations and a “scorecard” to measure Maine's success when it comes to creating more economic opportunity for children and families.

In 2017, we learned a lot

We convened forums in parts of Maine hard hit by child poverty: Aroostook, Piscataquis, Androscoggin, Washington, and Hancock counties. Discussions used regional and statewide data to identify the primary contributing factors to child poverty and the best ways to increase economic opportunity.

Through this process we have identified the following factors that must be addressed to make a meaningful and lasting difference:

• **Basic needs must be met**, including food, housing, and health care.

• **Employment opportunity** and support to get and keep good jobs. Families need reliable and affordable transportation; quality, affordable childcare and early learning; a smooth transition from public assistance to employment (reduce welfare cliff); and access to education and training.
In 2018, we will:

✔ Work with the **Data Innovation Project** (DIP) to identify indicators to measure the primary contributing factors to child poverty and economic opportunity for families;

✔ Identify and propose **attainable shared results** (goals) and benchmarks for each contributing factor;

✔ Develop and propose a scorecard that will enable policymakers, stakeholders, and the public to **track progress** using identified indicators, benchmarks, and goals;

✔ Seek additional input from stakeholders and groups on **key strategies** to create the most economic opportunity for families with children in Maine;

✔ Use what we learn through this process to develop and propose a set of policy recommendations of key strategies to **increase economic opportunity for Maine families**.

✔ We will be poised to make **big changes** in 2019!

**A Ten Year Trend**

Child poverty and deep child poverty have trended up over the last 10 years in Maine. That is unacceptable. Let’s work together to reverse this trend so that ten years from now, we can tell a very different story.

![Trend in the Percentage of Maine Children Living in Poverty](chart1)

![Trend in the Percentage of Maine Children Living in Deep Poverty](chart2)

According to the 2018 federal poverty guidelines, a **family of three** with household income of **less than $20,780/year** is living in **poverty**. A **family of three** with household income of **less than $10,390/year** is living in **deep poverty**.

**We cannot do this alone. Many organizations across Maine have come together to get this done:**

- Aroostook County Action Program
- Bates College Harwood Center
- Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce
- Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
- Child and Family Opportunities (CFO)
- Coastal Enterprises Inc. (CEI)
- Community Caring Collaborative
- Community Concepts
- Eastern Maine Development Corporation
- Healthy Homeworks
- Helping Hands with Heart
- Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
- Machias Savings Bank
- Maine Chamber of Commerce
- Maine Children’s Alliance
- Maine Community Action Association
- Maine Community Foundation
- Maine Education Association
- Maine Equal Justice Partners
- Maine Health Access Foundation
- Maine Seacoast Mission
- Maine Women’s Lobby
- Mano en Mano | Hand in Hand
- Northeastern Workforce Development Board
- Piscataquis Chamber of Commerce
- Sunrise County Economic Council
- United Way of Androscoggin
- United Way of Eastern Maine
- United Way of Aroostook
- Washington Hancock Community Agency
- Witham Family Hotels