

Maine Head Start & Early Head Start Annual Snapshot Report 2022

A look at the work, accomplishments,
and impact of Head Start in Maine in
2022



HEAD START

From the Maine Head Start Directors Association and the Maine Head Start Collaboration Office

Dear Maine Community and Respected Stakeholders,

The Maine Head Start Directors Association (MHSDA) and the Maine Head Start State Collaboration Office (MHSSCO) are pleased to share our 2022 Annual Snapshot Report on Maine's Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

For over 55 years, Head Start has provided comprehensive, multi-generational services to support Maine's most vulnerable children and families and helped to build healthier, more resilient communities. Developed in 1965 to provide preschool children with a "head start" on their learning and school readiness, the Head Start model allows grantees to self-design programs that not only meet Head Start's rigorous and data-backed performance standards, but also best meet the specific, evolving needs of the children and families in their communities as well.

Maine currently is the home to 11 Head Start grantees and 3 American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Head Start grantees that operate a combined total of 113 centers, 238 classrooms, and serve 2,989 children statewide. This report contains data from our 2022 Maine State Program Information Report (PIR), the National Head Start Association (NHSA), and our Maine partners at Maine's Office of Child and Family Services. You will find links to relevant resources and references both within and at the end of this report.


The Maine Head Start Directors Association is made up of dynamic directors and representatives from all 11 Head Start grantees, Maine Community Action Partnership (MECAP), and our Maine Head Start Collaboration Office. Together we work diligently to build and maintain a variety of local and statewide early care and education systems and partnerships that allow us to provide unique, comprehensive services that benefit Maine's most vulnerable populations.

We are proud of the role Head Start's programs and standards play in helping to build, expand, and improve Maine's early care and education systems. It is our hope that this report will give readers an insightful snapshot into our work, collaborations, challenges, successes, and accomplishments in 2022.

Sincerely,



Cristina Salois, Director
Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation
Chair, Maine Head Start Directors Association



Stacie McCoy, Director
Head Start State Collaboration Office
Maine Department of Education

The Head Start Model

Head Start programs use a comprehensive, compassionate, multi-generational model to reach and serve the diverse needs of Maine's young children and families. Across our state, in our 238 classrooms, our program works every day to ready Maine's children for school while strengthening their families, our communities, and our State.

Head Start's programs are based on the following four pillars:

Early Education: Learning experiences that support intellectual, social, and emotional growth

Health Services: Immunizations, dental, medical, mental health support, nutritional services, and early screenings to ensure healthy development

Family Involvement: Opportunities for parents and caregivers to be involved in decision making, participate in classes, and volunteer in our programs

Wraparound Support: Tailored services that meet local and individual needs and link children and families to community supports

Head Start programs are:

- **Tuition-free** and targeted to families least likely to be able to afford child care. **Nearly 70% of enrolled families live in poverty.**
- **Aligned with other Maine state systems** that provide support for families experiencing issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, foster care, and social/emotional challenges.
- **Welcoming to New Mainers**, providing compassionate support and meeting the needs of our communities as they become more racially and ethnically diverse.
- **An important part of Maine's communities**, providing federal funding directly to our local community agencies, non-profits, and our community action programs.



All photographs of children and classrooms featured in this report are shared with permission from Head Start and Early Head Start programs throughout Maine.

2022 at a Glance...

\$43,094,677

FY22 Federal Funding

2,989

Federally Funded Slots for Children

2,105

Funded Head Start Slots

824

Funded Early Head Start Slots

60

Funded American Indian/Alaska Native
Head Start Slots

113

Centers Statewide

238

Classrooms Statewide

1,390

**Total Head Start and
Early Head Start Employees**

40

**Public School Administrative Unit (SAU)
Pre-K Partnerships**



\$3,087,734

FY22 Additional State Funding


360


State Funded Slots for Children


Our Grantees and Service Areas:




Maine's American Indian/Alaskan Native Head Start Programs


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Maliseet Head Start
 Area served: Houlton
 1 Maliseet Drive, Houlton, Maine 04730
 (207) 521-2410
 Tracie Botting, Director
tbotting@maliseets.com
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Little Feathers Head Start Aroostook Band of Micmacs
 Area served: Houlton and Presque Isle
 13 Northern Road, Presque Isle, ME 04769
 (207) 768-3217
 Tammy Deveau, Director
tdeveau@micmac-nsn.gov
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Passamaquoddy Head Start
 Area served: Perry
 16 Day Care Road, Perry, ME 04667
 (207) 853-4388
 & (207) 454-2128
 Betty Lewey, Director
passamaquoddyheadstart@roadrunner.com


 [Click here for an interactive map of Maine's Head Start Center locations](#)


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Aroostook County Action Program
 County served: Aroostook
 P.O. Box 1116, 771 Main Street
 Presque Isle, ME 04769
 (O) 768-3045 (F) 768-3022
 Megan Barnes, Director
mbarnes@acap-me.org
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DownEast Community Partners
 Counties served: Hancock & Washington
 P.O. Box 648, Ellsworth, ME 04605
 (O) 610-6163
 (F) 667-2212
 Melissa Mattes, Director
Melissa.Mattes@DowneastCommunityPartners.org
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Community Concepts, Inc.
 Counties served: Oxford & Franklin
 17 Market Square, South Paris, ME 04281
 (O) 739-6516 (F) 739-6672
 Dianne Nelder, Director
DNelder@Community-Concepts.org
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Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
 Counties served: North Kennebec & Somerset
 97 Water Street, Waterville, ME 04901
 (O) 859-1616 (C) 514-6446
 Tracye Fortin, COO of Child & Family Services
tracyef@kvcap.org
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Midcoast Maine Community Action
 Counties served: Sagadahoc, Lincoln & Greater Brunswick
 34 Wing Farm Parkway, Bath, ME 04530
 (O) 442-7963 ext. 214 (F) 443-7447
 Andrew Slater, Child & Family Services Director
andrew.slater@mmcacorp.org
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The Opportunity Alliance
 County served: Cumberland
 50 Lydia Lane, South Portland, ME 04106
 Debra Flynn, Director
 (O) 553-5917 (F) 874-1181
debra.flynn@opportunityalliance.org
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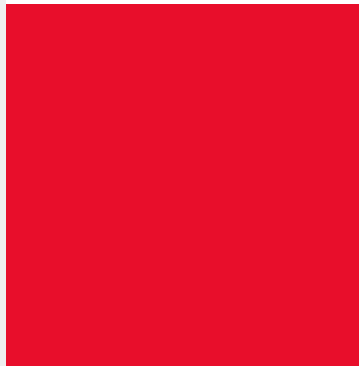
Penquis Community Action Program
 Counties served: Penobscot, Piscataquis & Knox
 P.O. Box 1162, Bangor, ME 04402
 (O) 973-3616
 (C) 745-2082 (F) 973-3699
 Mary Kay Hallett, Director
MHallett@penquis.org
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Promise Early Education Center
 County served: Androscoggin
 269 Bates Street, Lewiston, ME 04240
 (O) 795-4040 ext. 316
 (C) 713-8445 (F) 795-4044
 Betsy Norcross Plourde, Director
bpourde@promiseearlyeducation.org
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Southern Kennebec Child Development Corporation
 County served: Southern Kennebec
 337 Maine Avenue, Farmingdale, ME 04344
 (O) 582-3110 ext. 101
 (C) 462-9459 (F) 582-3112
 Cristina Salois, Director
cristina.salois@skcdc.org
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Waldo County Community Action Partners
 County served: Waldo
 P.O. Box 130, Belfast, ME 04915
 (O) 338-3827 ext. 203
 (C) 200-6474 (F) 338-4437
 Mary Lynn Hersey, Director
mhersey@waldocap.org
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York County Community Action Corporation
 County served: York
 6 Spruce Street
 P.O. Box 72, Sanford, ME 04073
 (O) 459-2979 (F) 324-4197
 Cecily Silva, Director
cecily.silva@yccac.org



Collaborations, Partnerships, and Oversight



Maine's Head Start programs and Collaboration Office fall under the supervision of Head Start's Region 1 Office in Boston, which serves Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The Region 1 Program Office funds awards and provides technical assistance, guidance, and overall supervision to each grantee in Maine and our region.



Maine's Head Start Collaboration Office is housed within Maine's Department of Education as part of its Early Learning Team. The HSCO Director is responsible for supporting national, regional, and state priorities and facilitating collaboration among Maine's Head Start programs and the State entities that carry out initiatives designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry and their families.



All 11 of our Head Start grantees are involved in some design of Pre-K partnerships. In 2022, we partnered with a total of 40 School Administrative Units in Maine to provide high quality education, family support services, and shared professional development opportunities. Thanks to additional State and federal funding opportunities, we anticipate the number of Public Pre-K partnerships will grow in 2023.



Our Head Start programs and Collaboration Office Director partner and collaborate with a wide variety of state and local departments and initiatives including, but not limited to:

- Federal and Regional Offices of Head Start
- Department of Education
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Office of Child and Family Services
- New England Head Start Association
- National Head Start Association
- Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Network
- Rising Stars for ME QRIS
- Physical Activity and Nutrition (PAN) in Early Care and Education Coalition
- Children's Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council
- Children's Cabinet Early Intervention Workgroup
- Preschool Development Grant B-5
- MJRP PreK Expansion Grants
- Early Childhood Consultation Partnership
- First4ME Early Care and Education Program
- First 10 Community Pilots
- Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network
- PreK for ME
- Help ME Grow



Meeting Our Challenges

Workforce Shortage

In 2022, Head Start programs across our nation continued to struggle with a workforce shortage, and Maine was no exception to this issue. Programs continued to address the many issues impacting workforce shortages, prioritizing support and retention of their current staff, while working to attract new employees to fill remaining vacancies. Head Start programs not only continued to experience a shortage in teaching staff, but in many other positions pivotal to providing Head Start's comprehensive programming. This included nutrition staff and cooks, transportation providers, family advocates, and home visiting staff. 2022 also saw several changes in program leadership including the HSCO Director position, and the Maine Head Start Directors Association responded by offering guidance, support, and helping to build capacity for new directors and program leaders.

How Maine is Responding

Exciting Efforts to Secure and Enhance State Supplemental Funding for our Early Education and Child Care Workforce

In April of 2022, Governor Mills signed Maine's supplemental budget which included salary supplements to increase pay for early childhood educators employed in licensed child care programs. The budget provided more than \$12 million in ongoing General Fund dollars to increase wages for staff and help strengthen Maine's Early Care and Education system. In September of 2022, Maine's Office of Child and Family Services announced open registration for the Early Childhood Workforce Salary Supplement Program, administered by Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) through the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and the first supplemental payments of \$200 per month were issued for Maine's direct care and early education staff in October of 2022. Programs also receive 7.65% in additional funds to help cover the costs of administering these payments.

This program has helped Head Start programs in their efforts to pay competitive wages, stabilize the workforce, and to ensure that Maine's most vulnerable families have access to high-quality programs.

Maine is boldly seeking to go a step further, with efforts underway to enhance this supplemental funding by transitioning to a 3-tiered system of support to be awarded based on the experience and education of the early childhood educators and child care providers. These efforts are ongoing, with a goal to establish this new system in July of 2023.

How Head Start and the Nation Are Responding

Support For a Funding Increase

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) continues to advocate for the Head Start workforce and solutions—especially around wages and salaries fueled by the fact that the early learning workforce, including Head Start employees, continues to rank in the lowest 10% of professions for compensation. "The Head Start workforce has faced decades of neglect and underfunding. Poverty-level wages—compounded by the complexity and emotional strain of this important work—has made recruiting and retaining qualified professionals incredibly difficult," said NHSA Executive Director Yasmina Vinci. The current federal budget proposes an increase to Head Start Programs by over 9% for a total of \$13.1 billion dollars, with initiatives designed to support the workforce, including a COLA, and Quality Improvement /Expansion dollars and the development of a new Workforce Initiative.



Making the Head Start Enrollment and Eligibility Process Easier for Maine Families

Using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits to Ease the Administrative and Eligibility Burden

On April 2, 2022 the Administration for Children and Families released an Information Memorandum clarifying the definition of "public assistance" in the Head Start Act to include eligibility for families participating in their state's SNAP program. This was a helpful step to simplify the eligibility and enrollment process and reduce the administrative, documentation, and emotional burden for both our Head Start program staff and Maine families.

The Maine Head Start Directors Association advocated for this change, signing off on a letter to the Secretary of Health and Human Services that requested the Administration use its existing authority to enable enrollment in the SNAP program to count towards eligibility for all Head Start programs.

Head Start programs continue to develop and update all memorandums of understanding with all related partners to help increase awareness and understanding of this eligibility change, improve the referral process, and to share resources and newly-developed implementation tools related to this important change.



[Click here to read the announcement regarding expanding Head Start services to SNAP recipients](#)

A Look Ahead...

As we make our way through the end of the Public Health Emergency, Maine Head Start Programs have much to be thankful for:

- Strong partnerships in our local communities that allow Head Start programs to fully support children and families.
- Federal and State funding which allows us to maintain the highest quality and continuity of care.
- Collaboration with early care and education colleagues, public schools, and our higher education programs.
- Visionary, hardworking Head Start leaders and dedicated staff doing the work every day.

Amongst all of the challenges faced over the last few years, Maine's Head Start staff strive to keep our focus on the mission: serving the families who put their trust in Head Start to educate, support and nurture their children.

Onward...



References and Resources:

Click to visit and learn more:

[Head Start Partnerships With Public Schools](#)

[Maine's Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement Program](#)

[Maine Legislature's Revised Statute on the Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplements](#)

[Connecting Families Facing Food Insecurity to Head Start](#)

[NHSA 2023 Maine Head Start and Early Head Start Profile \(based on 2022 PIR Data\)](#)

[NHSA 2023 American Indian/Alaskan Native Head Start and early Head Start Profile \(based on 2022 PIR Data\)](#)

[New England Head Start Association](#)

[Confronting Head Start's Workforce Crisis](#)

[NHSA Head Start State and Regional Impact Report September 2022](#)

[OHS - National Services Snapshot for All Programs \(2021-2022\)](#)

For more information contact:

Stacie McCoy - HSSCO Director

 (207) 816-2334

 23 State House Station, Augusta , Maine 04333

 [Maine Head Start Collaboration Office](#)

 stacie.mccoy@maine.gov

