

VISION:

Through Opportunity 2028 we imagine a community where no one struggles to meet their basic needs. Where ALL people are fed, housed and financially stable. Everyone is safe. There are no barriers and no stigma when it comes to accessing treatment and recovery services. All parents and caregivers can enroll their children in high quality care settings and have the support they need to be strong parents. Our youth are engaged and resilient. A community where we are all making a difference and leading the charge, TOGETHER.

Opportunity 2028 is a ten-year community change initiative set by, YOU, the community and led by United Way of Eastern Maine. Through an extensive process which included reviewing existing needs assessments, interviewing key stakeholders, facilitating community forums, and conducting public surveys UWEM has gathered the input of thousands of individuals to identify the issues that matter most to our community. The result is a focus on Basic Needs, Substance Use Disorder and Early Childhood Development. UWEM is uniquely positioned to impact these issues and has incorporated the Opportunity 2028 Bold Goals into every aspect of our work.

Issue: Over 107,000 people, including 1 in 3 children, in Eastern Maine are living in poverty.

Our focus: Meet basic needs and promote self-sufficiency for all

Expected result: 10,746 people move out of poverty by 2028.

Over the next year:

- 20,652 Families and individuals have access to resources and assistance to address food insecurity
- 993 Families and individuals obtain or maintain safe, affordable, stable housing
- 1,107 Individuals have an effective support system when faced with violence or abuse
- 651 Individuals have access to opportunities to improve financial stability and achieve self-sufficiency.

Initiatives

- Answering the call of 5,517 people seeking information and referral services through 211 Maine
- Leading Community Partners for Social Needs to provide 86 area basic needs focused nonprofit professionals with resources and education to enhance collaboration and service to those in need

Issue: More than 100 people died of overdoses in Eastern Maine in 2017.

Our focus: Prevent, treat, and support recovery from Substance Use Disorder

Expected Result: Eliminate deaths due to Substance Use Disorder by 2028.

Over the next year:

- 6,547 Increase access to the full spectrum of accessible and affordable treatment and recovery resources
- 2,000 people increase access to health care services
- 1,700 people will develop skills and knowledge that will allow them to support people in recovery

Initiatives

This is an emerging issue area for UWEM and we do not currently have a specific initiative under this issue area at this time. We are identifying the ways UWEM can be most impactful and supportive in this area beyond the funding we are providing programs under this goal. We expect to learn more after our Grantee Convening in the fall of 2019.

Issue: Only 48% of children are reading proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Our focus: Ensure all children have quality early learning experiences

Expected Result: Increase the percent of children reading proficiently at the end of third grade to 58% by 2028.

Over the next year:

- 160 Increase access to preschool and quality early childcare programs
- 1,105 Parents and caregivers are informed and engaged in their child's development
- 475 K-3 children have access to before and after school activities
- 119 Providers and professionals deliver quality educational experiences

Initiatives

In Piscataquis County where 31.4% of children are living in poverty we are working with a grassroots collaboration Helping Hands with Heart to improve Early childhood development outcomes for all children in the community. With UWEM's leadership and support over the last year the group has created a community profile that has effectively solidified the group's buy-in and commitment to advancing long term, sustainable change. UWEM has secured implementation funding that will allow this group to implement concrete strategies to improve the outcomes identified in the planning phase.

What's next for 2028?

1. Build collaboration among grantees through a series of convenings.

To enhance relationships and break down barriers as well as identify opportunities for shared work, improve communication and data-sharing, gauge interests for participating in working groups and set the stage for a future shared community needs assessment.

2. Develop detailed profiles of the issues behind the bold goals.

We will create a baseline profile for each bold goal based on data collected from grant applicants, community partners and research. This will identify existing resources, leverage points and potential gaps in service to guide strategies.

3. Expand and strengthen community engagement with and capacity to advance Opportunity 2028.

UWEM will offer people concrete, easy, ways to get involved as donors, advocates and volunteers. We will produce an annual training calendar to address grantee and community needs. All the while collecting and capturing stories to better connect all members of the community to this initiative.

4. Establish working groups to advance strategic action plans.

UWEM will facilitate working group(s) that are action oriented and results driven. UWEM will generate resources (funding, volunteers, advocates and more) that support implementation of identified strategies.

To achieve the goals of this large-scale community change initiative, UWEM is committed to a cycle of continuous improvement, learning and sharing what we learn to support meaningful and lasting change throughout Eastern Maine. We welcome you to join us on this effort. This change can't happen without YOU!