

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th century, an American psychologist created a theory that humans everywhere experience five levels of needs. This psychologist, Abraham Maslow, described these needs as a hierarchy, suggesting that human needs are met one level at a time. Each level moves an individual closer to becoming “self-actualized;” i.e. the best version of his or herself (Abraham Maslow, 2017). There are many versions of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs that exist today. However the levels and themes are transcendent, represented in Chart 1.

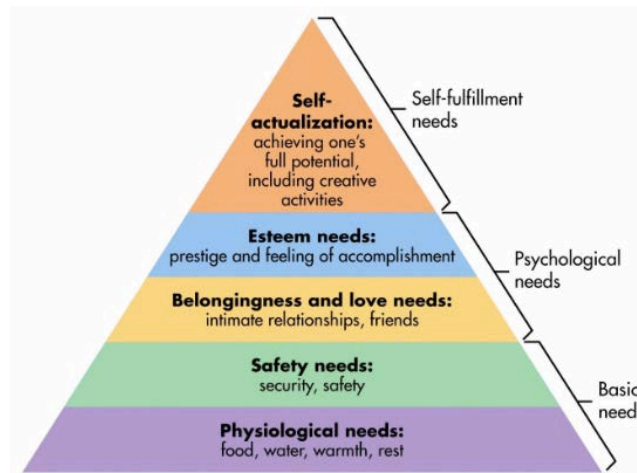


Chart 1: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, 2016

Physiological needs are the requirements your body needs to survive: food, water, warmth, shelter, and rest. Without these basic needs, a person is in crisis, unable to focus on “higher” needs until these are fulfilled. These basic physical survival needs must be met before a person can be productive or a contributing member of society. “A person who is cold, sick, or hungry will not be interested in socializing, learning, or working,” (Maslow’s Hierarchy, 2011).

The second level is safety needs. This is the need to feel safe and in the world from personal danger and threats. Lack of physical safety and security results in fear, which consumes a person’s energy. For a person to continue to progress along the hierarchy toward self-fulfillment, he or she must experience freedom from fear of personal attack. This is especially important at home, a person’s place of refuge from the world (Maslow’s Hierarchy, 2011).

Each additional level of need, once met, helps to move individuals up the continuum. However, despite the sequential nature of the levels of need, in his earliest writings, Maslow described human needs as relatively fluid with many being present simultaneously (Abraham Maslow, 2017).

STRATEGIES

In discussing basic needs, this paper will focus on the first two levels of Maslow's hierarchy: physiological and safety needs.

PHYSICAL SURVIVAL NEEDS

The body needs food, water, warmth, shelter, and rest to survive (Sleight, 2014). For the purposes of this paper, the basic needs will be defined as will be on shelter and food. In discussing shelter, the discussion will be split into addressing homelessness and decent, affordable housing. Food is discussed in terms of food insecurity.

HOMELESSNESS

Each year the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts an Annual Point in Time Survey: a snapshot of homelessness on one night a year as assigned by HUD. On a given night in January 2016, over half a million people, 549,928, were experiencing homelessness nationwide (Henry et al, 2016); 1,192 of whom were in Maine, 120 of whom slept out in the cold that night. And, 182 individuals experiencing homelessness that night identified their last known residence within the five-county region (Annual Point in Time Survey, 2016).

It is estimated that 7,020 people experience homelessness in Maine each year (Maine's Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness, 2016). To address this, Maine has created a Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness, created in 2008 and amended in 2011 and 2017. The Plan calls for "everyone who is homeless to secure permanent housing with an adequate support network," (Maine's Plan, 2017). To this end, there are two effective homeless initiatives currently happening in Maine: Long Term Stayers and Coordinated Entry.

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- Maine's Plan to End and
Prevent Homelessness, 2016

Long-Term Stayers

Data indicates that up to 55% of adults and families pass through shelters quickly, staying less than two weeks. This population tends to solve their temporary bout with homelessness with little or no additional assistance. A second group stays for two weeks to six months. Once assessed, this population is provided assistance in locating housing and other services as needed, (Maine's Long Term Stayers, 2014).

The majority of homeless resources are targeted to 5% of the population, a group who stays in shelters 180 days or more within a 365-day period. These individuals or families are called Long Term Stayers (LTS). When shelters prioritize housing for Long Term Stayers, they free up space for other individuals and families that could not previously be accommodated due to capacity restrictions (Maine's Long Term Stayers, 2014).

The initiative began in 2013, and continues to be the focus of shelters and homeless providers statewide. Each locale creates a by-name list and works strategically to locate affordable, stable housing with the appropriate level of support for individuals staying for the longest period of time in the shelters (Maine's Long Term Stayers, 2014).

To address homelessness in all populations, the Statewide Homeless Council and the Board of Directors for the Continuum of Care, have approved Maine's Ending Homelessness Prioritization Chart. The chart was created in 2015 and is updated annually and is used to assist in locating

housing and housing resources for the most difficult to house populations. Resources have been identified for each target population, appropriate for their needs (Maine's Ending Homeless Prioritization Chart, 2017). Across the state, this approach has increased capacity and minimized overcrowding in shelters. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of Single Adult LTS has dropped from 249 to 70 and family LTS has dropped from 50 to 29, two top priority populations (Maine's Ending Homeless Prioritization Chart, 2015 & 2017). The numbers are significant considering each LTS occupies beds within shelters for more than six months of each year. Once LTS attain safe, stable, permanent housing, shelter capacity improves, reducing overcrowding and allowing shelters to serve others who are in need.

[COORDINATED ENTRY] PRIORITIZES THOSE WITH THE HIGHEST VULNERABILITY AND SEVERITY OF NEEDS... TO ENSURE RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.

- Coordinated Entry Brief, 2015

Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry is a federal initiative, implemented locally, to prioritize the allocation of homeless and housing resources according to need, regardless of where a person presents as homeless. Communities are encouraged to prioritize those with the highest vulnerability and severity of needs, including length of time homeless, to ensure that resources are allocated to those who need it most, and that assistance is delivered in a timely manner. In order to prioritize those with the highest need, Coordinated Entry incorporates a standardized assessment that helps to identify each person's needs and connect him or her to appropriate resources (Coordinated Entry Policy Brief, 2015). Maine has already begun the process of prioritizing the most vulnerable through its Long Term Stayers Initiative.

Coordinated Entry is a person-centered approach to ending homelessness that includes fair and equal access and consumer choice. It increases communication among providers, requires data sharing, tracks overall system performance, and can be a tool used to improve the overall homeless service delivery system in Maine (Coordinated Entry Policy Brief, 2015).

A Coordinated Entry pilot was launched in Penobscot County, by shelters and homeless providers, and has expanded to Region 3, including much of the five-county region. It continues to expand throughout the rest of the state and will be live statewide by the end of January 2018 (Maine Coordinated Entry Work Plan, 2017)

Possible Actions:

- Increase awareness and support for persons experiencing homelessness;
- Support programs serving those experiencing homelessness or who are at-risk;
- Assist in educating the public, providers, and local government about the role they can play in Coordinated Entry;
- Get involved in the Maine Continuum of Care to plan a coordinated and inclusive system to help Maine people avoid, quickly resolve, and address the causes of homelessness; and
- Assist individuals to obtain and maintain housing, including short and long-term rental subsidies and/or services.

DECENT AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

“Decent and affordable shelter is intricately woven into better opportunities... better health, more financial freedom, independence, stability and security.” (Why is affordable housing..., Habitat).

In Maine, rental housing is unaffordable for many households. Statewide, 57% of households are unable to afford the average two-bedroom rental. As shown in Chart 1, affordability in the five counties in the region is worse than the state average.

Individuals and families who struggle to pay rent or their mortgages are forced to make difficult choices. Often, they decide to scale back on other important items, such as healthcare, groceries, utilities, or education in order to maintain housing. In the last three years 53% of Americans have made a sacrifice to pay for housing. Chart 2 summarizes the percent of households and the types of sacrifices they have made to pay for housing. They have stopped saving for retirement, amassed credit card debt, cut back on healthcare, and in the end decided to move to a less desirable area.

Researchers have found stable housing is an important determinant in a person’s well-being. Housing instability can be defined as frequent moves, overcrowding, threat of eviction, or foreclosure. Over time, chronic residential instability is linked to lower emotional and behavioral functioning, specifically in children (Levine CoLey, 2013).

In addition to struggling with affordability, poor quality housing contributes to household stress, causing elevated levels of emotional problems, depression, and anxiety (Levine CoLey, 2013). It affects everyone in the household. According to research by the MacArthur Foundation, “poor housing quality is the most consistent and strongest predictor of emotional and behavioral problems in low-income children and youth.” Children living in unsafe housing, with exposed wiring, peeling paint, broken windows, leaking roofs, and lack of heat, were more likely to experience emotional and behavioral problems. It is also linked to poor school performance in older children (Levine CoLey, 2013).

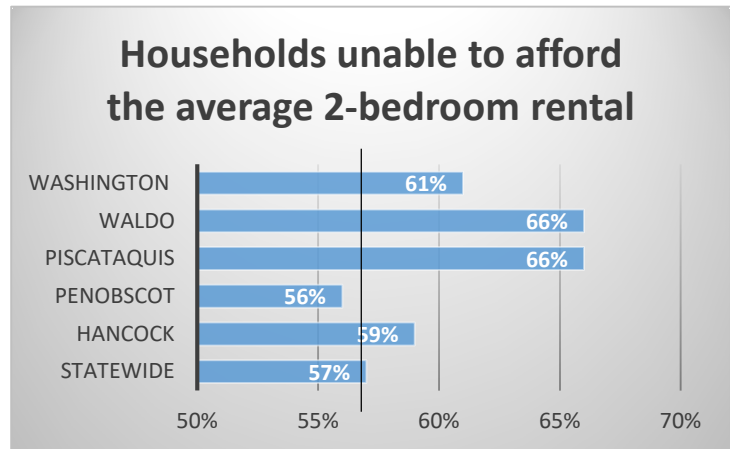


Chart 1: Households unable to afford the average 2-bedroom rental (U.S. Census, ACS v2014).

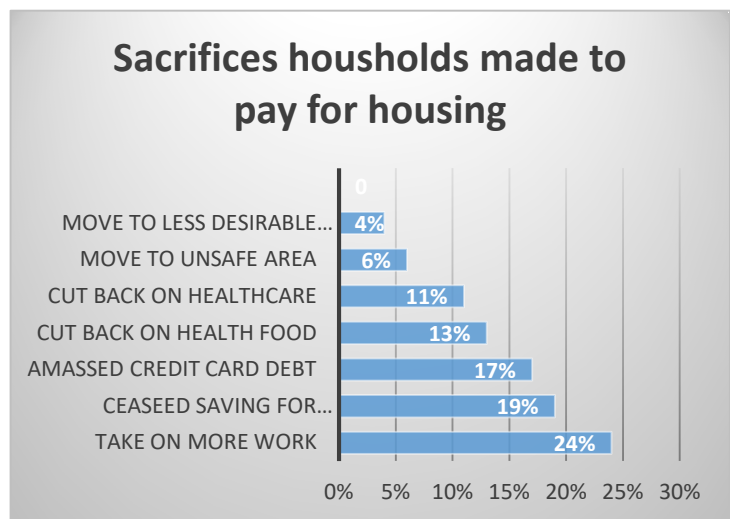


Chart 2: Sacrifices to Pay for Housing, (Badger, 2016)

Poor housing quality can be tracked nationally under a term called “severe housing problems,” defined as housing units that lack a complete kitchen or plumbing facilities, are severely overcrowded, or cost burdened. Data indicates that 15-17% of housing units in the five county region are defined as having severe housing problems (County Health Rankings, 2009-2013).

Possible Actions

- Increase awareness regarding existing resources that are available to renters and homeowners to assist them in obtaining and maintaining decent, and affordable housing;
- Increase the number of affordable rental units available;
- Increase the number of vouchers and rental subsidies available to households in order to make existing units affordable;
- Reduce barriers in land use planning code that inhibit the construction of affordable housing units;
- Improve quality by working with code enforcement offices to assess and improve the quality of housing available, especially rental housing; and
- Identify, expand, and increase the accessibility of resources to improve housing quality, including federal, state, and local resources: CDBG, HOME.

FOOD SECURITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conducts an annual study of food security to determine whether households are accessing sufficient food to maintain healthy lifestyles. Food insecure households suffer from lower quality, variety, or lack of food consumption. Rates of food insecurity in Maine has continued to rise over the last few years, from 13% in 2008 to nearly 16% in 2015. Maine also exceeds both New England and U.S. averages (Measures of Growth, 2017). Nearly one in four children in Maine are food insecure (USDA, 2016).

**NEARLY ONE IN
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IN MAINE ARE
FOOD INSECURE.**

- USDA, 2016

Although food insecurity is often connected to poverty, it is more strongly correlated to unemployment. It is also an indicator for poor health status, obesity, weight gain, and mental health issues. This has a negative effect on workforce productivity. The toll food insecurity causes on older adults is heightened, especially the mental and physical implications (Measures of Growth, 2017).

About 17% of the households in Washington and Piscataquis Counties suffer food insecurity, the highest percentage of the population in the state. However, the number of households suffering from food insecurity is higher in Penobscot County (Hunger Pains, 2017).

The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or Food Stamps) provides financial assistance to families and individuals for food purchases in order to stretch their food budget. It is often described as the nation’s number one social safety net. However, Maine recently enacted a time limit on receipt of SNAP benefits to three months for childless adults who are unable to locate work, job training, or volunteer opportunities. Since this was enacted in 2015, more than 9,000 food insecure individuals have lost SNAP benefits. Maine discontinued requesting waivers that help vulnerable populations, including veterans, homeless, and those living in areas with high unemployment where jobs are scarce (Hunger Pains, 2017).

Summer is often challenging for families with children. Children receive free or reduced lunch at school, reducing the cost of household meals. There is a Summer Food Service Program, funded by the USDA, but meal sites for eligible families are sometimes inaccessible (Hunger Pains, 2017).

The Good Shepherd Food Bank, Maine's only statewide food bank, has 399 partners: 303 food pantries, 50 meals sites, and 46 other organizations, including shelters, youth programs, and buying clubs. This effort and others around the state help Mainer's supplement their nutritional needs when other government programs are not sufficient (Hunger Pains, 2017).

Possible actions:

- Protect and preserve the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and restore access in Maine;
- Increase childhood nutrition programs in schools, including weekend backpack programs and summer lunches;
- Support and strengthen hunger prevention programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, meal sites, food banks and buying clubs;
- Identify and eliminate "food deserts" where affordable healthy food is difficult to find; and
- Invest in transportation and programming that reduces other barriers to access.

SAFETY NEEDS

The need to feel personally safe in the world and free from threats is the second level of Maslow's Hierarchy. Safety needs will focus on safety at home and in the community.

SAFETY AT HOME

Domestic violence can be defined as "a pattern of coercive behavior, used by one person in a relationship to gain and maintain power and control over the other person." Abusive behavior is purposeful and chosen, and is not an isolated incident. Coercive behavior can include physical violence, sexual assault, intimidation, verbal abuse and threats, isolation, economic control, harm to children, destruction of personal property, and animal cruelty. Abusive behavior is a "mindset of entitlement, ... historical culture and tradition that reinforce abuse and violence, particularly through male power and privilege." (What is Domestic Violence, 2017).

**ONE IN FOUR WOMEN
HAVE BEEN THE
VICTIM OF SEVERE
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE.**

- Black, 2010

While Domestic Violence occurs across socioeconomic status, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and includes both genders, it is primarily men who abuse current or former women partners. Statistics indicate one in four women have been the victim of severe physical violence (Black, 2010). In 2012, there were 13,115 survivors of domestic violence in Maine who sought and received various domestic violence services specific to their needs, 96% of whom were women and children (What is Domestic Violence, 2017).

In Maine, domestic violence providers work together as part of the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. Within the five-county region, Partners for Peace (formerly Spruce Run-Womencare Alliance) serves Penobscot and Piscataquis counties, Next Step serves Hancock and Washington Counties, and New Home for Women serves Waldo county, along with Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc. Additional programs serve the remaining counties throughout the state.

Possible Actions

- Increase awareness about domestic violence and local resources available; and
- Support domestic violence providers across the region.

SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

The Maine State Police employs 334 sworn officers serving 1,300,000 people over 30, 862 square miles. There are seven regions that are governed by an officer of the rank of Lieutenant. Due to the size and diversity of the state, each Lieutenant is given the ability to create programs tailored to the demands within their geography, including the ability to incorporate community policing at the local level (Department of Public Safety, State of Maine).

COMMUNITY POLICING COORDINATORS WORK WITH RESIDENTS TO FACILITATE PROBLEM SOLVING AND CRIME PREVENTION EFFORTS

- Community Policing, City of Portland

The City of Portland hosts a robust Community Policing program in five of their neighborhoods and public housing properties. The role of Community Policing Coordinators is to act as liaisons between the neighborhood residents, the police department, local businesses, and social service providers. The premise is to actively work together with residents, who are knowledgeable about the issues within their neighborhoods and communities, and facilitate problem solving and crime prevention efforts. Creating trusting relationships provides residents the opportunity to provide valuable input and

recommendations on how to help keep their communities safe. Coordinators integrate into schools, community centers and programming, manage hotspots, and help to address neighborhood concerns and complaints (Community Policing, City of Portland).

The Maine State Police has invested time and resources into training officers in the concepts and principles of community policing. They have increased resource sharing, and have pursued funding opportunities to provide and expand community policing and other local initiatives throughout the state (Department of Public Safety, State of Maine).

Possible Actions

- Create a more accessible, friendly police presence in the community;
- Invite Police Officers or Coordinators to community meetings and events;
- Ask Police Officers to be involved with social service programming, on boards, involved in affordable housing projects, United Way, etc.;
- Collaborate with local Police Departments on community events; and
- Encourage local Police Departments to promote, share or launch community policing programs.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The physiologic needs discussed in this paper, homelessness, decent and affordable housing, and food insecurity, often result from poverty and unemployment. A Community Health Needs Assessment conducted in 2016 identified the top health factors in each county, which contributes to a persons well-being. In four of the five counties, **poverty was the number one factor impacting health in the region. Employment, or lack thereof, ranked in the top three**

(Community Health Needs Assessment, EMHS, 2016). This is supported by data provided by the U.S. Census, which indicates poverty exceeds state averages in four of the five counties (U.S. Census, ACS v2014). **It's worth noting the high rates of poverty in the five-county region, and how this, combined with unemployment, may impact a persons' ability to meet their basic needs.**

CREATING CONNECTIONS

Navigators are a type of service worker found in a diversity of fields. By nature, their role is to assess, educate, connect, and resolve. They work with individuals and families to assess their situations and understand their particular needs, research and identify appropriate resources, educate consumers on the options available to them, and facilitate connections. Their role is to *navigate* the system and connect people with critical resources.

In Maine, Housing Navigators are located in shelters and service providers across the state to help clients break the cycle of homelessness by moving them from the streets to interim housing, accessing necessary services, and assisting them to obtain and maintain permanent housing. When addressing complex, multifaceted problems, navigators play a vital role in finding the solution.

The current system of mainstream resources is difficult to access, disjointed, and confusing. Each program's eligibility criteria, application process, and receipt of benefits is different. When one's physiological or safety needs are threatened or not being met, it is increasingly more difficult to navigate an already complicated system. Navigators can be a solution, beyond housing, to connect individuals and families to the current system of resources and help them apply for and eventually receive benefits. Navigators also often provide follow-up services. For vulnerable populations and people who have experienced prolonged periods of homelessness, it is essential that services continue from the emergency of homelessness into housing. Navigators bridge this gap, providing ongoing services that help people become and remain stable in their housing, thus increasing the likelihood of success. Navigators can be used to help connect vulnerable populations to services that will benefit their overall health, safety, security, and stability.

Possible Actions:

- Understand how Navigators are integral to vulnerable populations accessing and obtaining resources/benefits;
- Develop and fund Navigators to provide services from homelessness into housing, to ensure people retain support when housed for more successful housing outcomes;
- Develop and fund Navigators to help individuals and families navigate mainstream benefits systems, and access/obtain resources that currently exist; and
- Help build bridges between existing mainstream resource systems for more user-friendly, streamlined access to benefits.

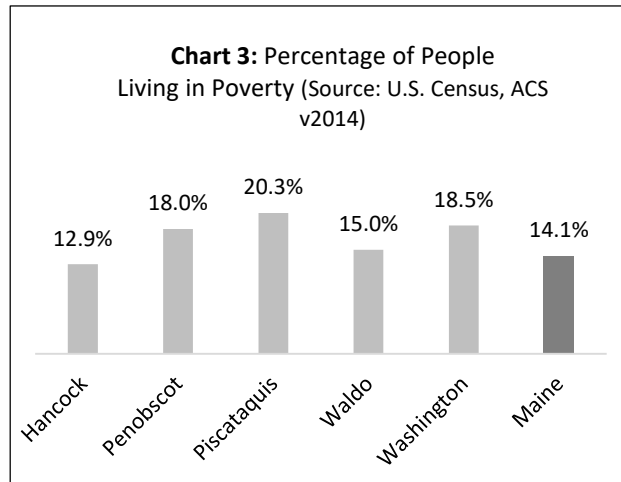


Chart 3: Percentage of People Living in Poverty, replicated Community Needs Assessment, 8/16

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