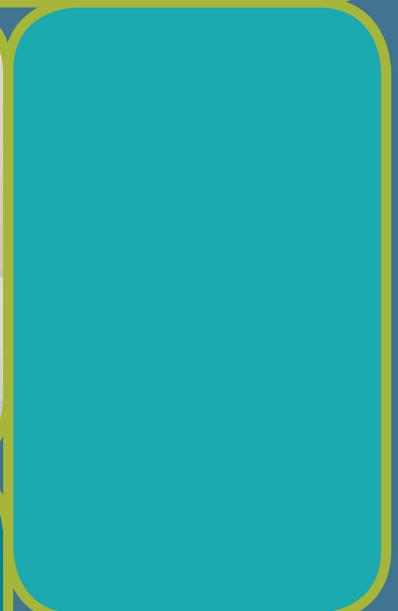


MEASURING UP

Shaping Maine's Future
through Education, Place, and Leadership



Maine Community Foundation
A Special Report, 2015



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Maine
Community Foundation



Measuring Up

Join us in shaping Maine's future

The Maine Community Foundation board, staff, and partners agree: Education, vibrant downtowns, and the state's matchless natural resources are key ingredients to future economic health. We believe philanthropy can help advance Maine's economy, and we recognize that leadership—our own and others'—is vital to bring about positive change.

The foundation's leadership is manifested in many ways, from our ability to bring together diverse groups to our success engaging donors on behalf of Maine. In the words of one board member, "The community foundation partners effectively across the state and brings philanthropic and investment dollars to bear on some intractable issues."

"Measuring up" is an apt metaphor for our work. While we strive to reach a certain standard, our philosophy has always been—and continues to be—to build on community assets and look forward.

Know that our strategic course is far from business as usual. Encouraged to be bold, we are taking a longer view—ten years and beyond—and are committed to reporting our progress along the way.

How do *you* want to make a difference in Maine? As you review this report, we urge you to get involved. Whether your interests align with ours or take you in another direction, we are united in our love for Maine.

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Kelsey Herrington of Two Farmers Farm in Scarborough sells produce at Portland's Monument Square farmers market.



Photo: Andrea Nemitz

Toward a Thriving Maine Economy

Measuring Up, the first in a series of reports that will reflect on progress of the Maine Community Foundation's Plan for the Future, focuses on work in education and place.

Our goal for **education** is to increase post-secondary degree and credential attainment rates in Maine. The economic benefits of earning a degree are crucial for Maine residents. We also recognize that education is a continuum that begins in early childhood and lasts a lifetime.

Deering High School seniors march into the Cumberland County Civic Center for graduation.



Photo: Shawn Patrick Ouellette,
courtesy Portland Press Herald



Our **place** goal is to help communities and the environment flourish. To that end, we have established special investment pools dedicated to revitalizing downtowns and increasing access to fresh food. Two years into this new initiative we are starting to see results, be it restoration of a mill in Dover-Foxcroft or expansion of Northern Girl's food processing operation in Aroostook County.

We approach our work in education and place with experience. We helped found the Maine Compact for Higher Education, which evolved into Educate Maine, an organization that actively champions increased education attainment. To date, our \$1-million investment in Maine Farmland Trust's Buy/Protect/Sell program has helped preserve more than 9,200 acres and facilitated the transfer of 32 farms to new farmers at affordable prices.

Leadership ties all of this work together. We are committed to expanding the state's leadership potential for the long haul. **Here we go.**

Education

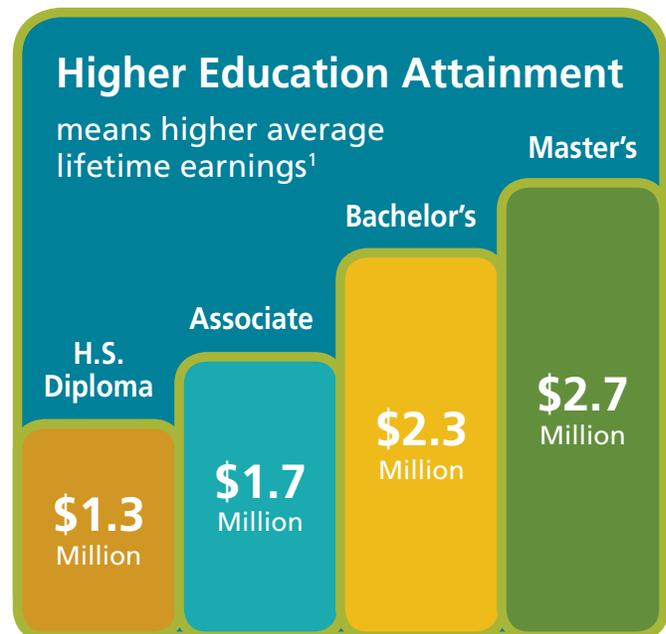
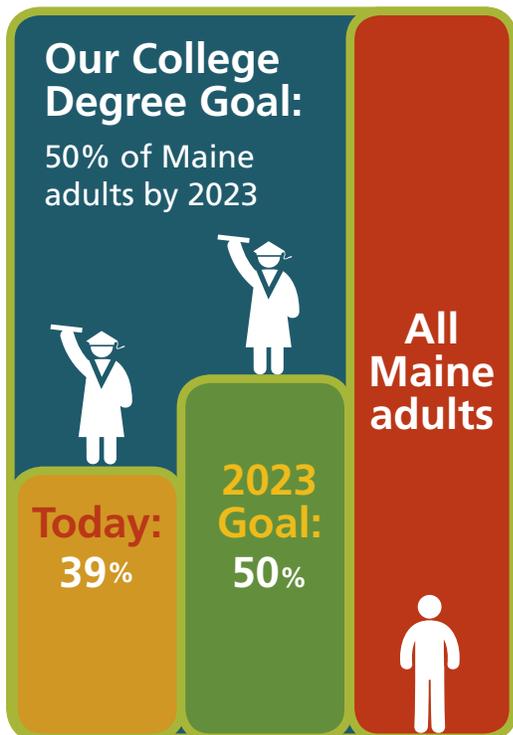
Trained and educated Maine people are cornerstones of a

THE CHALLENGE

In the next 10 years, 90% of high-growth jobs will require education beyond high school,¹ yet only 39% of adults in the state hold degrees—the lowest rate in New England.² At the same time, Maine students carry the seventh highest student loan debt load in the U.S., an average of \$29,934 per student.³

THE IDEA

Nearly 190,000 people in Maine have completed coursework toward a college degree that they have yet to finish.⁴ Scholarships and programs that help adults transition back into school can help lower that number while Maine builds an educated workforce.



Footnotes

¹Educate Maine. (2014). *Education Indicators for Maine, 2014*. Retrieved from www.educatemaine.org

²U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *American Community Survey (cited by Lumina Foundation)*. Retrieved from www.luminafoundation.org

³The Project on Student Debt. (2014). *Student debt and the class of 2013*. Retrieved from projectonstudentdebt.org/files/pub/classof2013.pdf

⁴U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). *2012 American Community Survey*

THE STRATEGIES

In 2014 the community foundation launched the Adult Learner Partnership, a pilot program to support college transition programs across Maine. At the same time the foundation has expanded the availability of scholarships for adult learners, with 19 funds that now offer financial support.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Post-secondary degree completion rates among Maine residents will increase to 50% by 2023. College and post-secondary certificate attainment will be more affordable.



Composite Science and Manufacturing students work on boat hull molds at Southern Maine Community College's Midcoast campus in Brunswick.



Place

Maine communities are stronger when they have access to,

THE CHALLENGE

Maine's agriculture industry has a \$2-billion impact on the state's \$51-billion economy¹ while fisheries-related enterprises generate nearly 33,000 jobs² and about \$585 million in seafood landings.³ At the same time, however, farmers, fishermen, and organizations seeking to expand production and markets need more capital to meet the growing demand for fresh food.



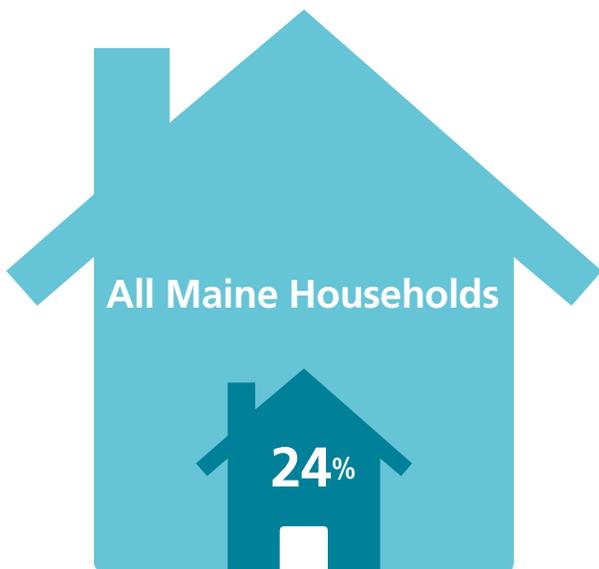
THE IDEA

Providing low-interest capital to Maine farmers, fishermen, and organizations that support them helps protect vital natural resources these industries need to increase profitability and broadens the distribution of locally harvested food. Targeted loans have a ripple effect that spurs job creation, provides revenue, and increases availability of local, sustainably produced food.



Lack of access is why 24% of Maine households say they don't buy more food that is grown, raised, or caught in Maine.⁴

Given a choice, almost 80% of Maine households would choose to purchase food grown, raised, or caught in Maine.⁴



Footnotes

¹Maine Farmland Trust & U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2015). *John Piotti, MFT*

²Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (2015). *Maine Seafood Study*. Retrieved from www.ceimaine.org

³Maine Department of Marine Resources. (2015). *Value by Species, 2014*. Retrieved from www.maine.gov/dmr/commercialfishing/recentlandings

⁴Maine Food Strategy. (2014). *Maine Food Strategy Consumer Survey Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.mainefoodstrategy.org>

invest in, and add value to their natural resources.

THE STRATEGIES

In 2013, the community foundation established the Farms, Fisheries, and Food impact investing program to provide low-interest loans to farmers, fishermen, and nonprofits seeking to protect natural resources, expand their operations, and broaden distribution networks. Loans have been made to farms and fisheries through several partners, including the Fair Food Fund/Fair Food Network, The Nature Conservancy, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., and Maine Farmland Trust.



LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

Natural resources are sustained and leveraged to improve the economy and quality of life in Maine communities. The sustainability and profitability of local entrepreneurs in agriculture- and fisheries-related businesses are improved.

Leah Cook, vice president of Northern Girl in Van Buren, shows off beets ready for processing. A \$230,000 investment from the Fair Food Fund using funds from the Maine Community Foundation has allowed the facility to purchase new equipment and increase its production: twice as many pounds of beets (3,000) and five times as many pounds of russet potato wedges (8,000) processed per day. Northern Girl has also expanded its purchases from Lajoie Growers and established a partnership with the Easton Amish community to supply root crops.



Photo: Julia Bayly, courtesy Bangor Daily News

Adding Measure: Take Action

The success of the strategies outlined in this report hinges on the commitment of Maine Community Foundation partners like you. We hope this report inspires you to support education- and place-related efforts that lead to a stronger Maine economy. Here are a few ideas.

Ways You Can Encourage Education

- **Start a scholarship fund that is open to adult learners**, or add to the Maine Community Foundation's Adult College Completion Fund, a permanent fund specifically designed to assist adults returning to school.
- **If you are an employer, support your employees** by providing financial incentives or flexible schedules that allow them to pursue higher education.
- **Offer to mentor an adult learner in your community or office**, or contact a college transitions program to learn about possible volunteering opportunities or to provide financial support. Visit www.maineadulted.org to connect with a local program.
- **Support adult learners in your community.** Help fill out a college application or offer to provide child care during classes. For older students juggling work, family, and school, this kind of encouragement can go a long way toward helping them complete their coursework.

Ways You Can Promote Place

- **Fund organizations working on place-related issues**, such as downtown revitalization, natural resources conservation, and local food production.
- **Contribute to the community foundation's Farms, Fisheries, and Food or Downtown and Business Development impact investing funds.** Provide small businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations with critically needed low-interest capital and technical assistance.
- **Shop locally at farmers markets.** Buying local has economic value for your community—and it tastes better, too.
- **Volunteer to make your downtown a better place.** Connect with the Maine Downtown Center to learn more about getting involved in downtown revitalization efforts.

Your Action Plan— and a Grant in Your Name

Have ideas that aren't here? Please share them with us by visiting www.mainecef.org. We will post some of them on our Facebook page and select three winners who will be invited to make a \$1,000 grant through the Maine Community Foundation to an organization working in education or place.

Partners and Resources

Interested in learning more about place and education issues or connecting with organizations in the state working in these areas? Here are a few of our partners along with suggestions for further reading on place and education topics.



Educate Maine

www.educatemaine.org
Education Indicators for Maine 2014



Environmental Funders Network

www.maineef.org
Anatomy of a Partnership: Lessons from the Quality of Place Initiative



Maine Association of Nonprofits

www.nonprofitmaine.org
Maine Nonprofits at Work: Adding Up the Impact



Maine Development Foundation

www.mdf.org
Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy



Maine Philanthropy Center

www.mainephilanthropy.org
Giving in Maine



The Maine Food Strategy

www.mainefoodstrategy.org
Maine Food Strategy Consumer Survey Report

MEASURING UP

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Cover Photos (left to right): Entrance to Maine Discovery Museum, Bangor. Flickr user David Seibold | Art instructor Brian Reeves assists a student in a screen printing class on SMCC's South Portland campus. Photo courtesy SMCC | Sirventa wheat from noted seed saver Will Bonsall, grown by Richard Roberts in seed trials for Maine Grain Alliance. Photo courtesy MGA.



A RESOURCE FOR MAINE

\$250 million:

Total grants and scholarships distributed since founding in 1983

\$24 million:

Grants and scholarships awarded in 2014

520:

Scholarships available to Maine students

\$410 million:

Value of scholarships and funds under stewardship

500+

Number of community advisors who help network across the state

150:

Endowments the community foundation manages so nonprofits can build a perpetual source of funding