

Annual Report

2020 - 2021

The
Opportunity
Alliance



Opportunities start **here.**

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Message from the CEO



Dear friends,

Our FY21 Annual Report is all about community. Our community: the employees, clients, donors, advocates, partners, companies, and volunteers who come together each year to help The Opportunity Alliance fulfill its mission.

Through this amazing community, we have been able to weather the Covid-19 pandemic without closing one single program. In fact, this community has helped us evolve and grow to 55 programs, in order to meet the unprecedented need we are seeing across Maine. This community has held us accountable and made us take a hard look at our agency practices to be a diverse, inclusive, equitable, and anti-racist organization. This community worked alongside us to find innovative ways to serve our clients. And personally, this community has reminded me time and again that the dedicated, passionate, and exceptional people I get to call my colleagues are truly the heart and soul of The Opportunity Alliance.

In the following pages you'll read just a few of the many examples of how this powerful community came together in support of our mission. The committed employees who answer calls from individuals in crisis 24 hours a day, each and every day of the year. The companies and their equally generous employees who gave their time, talent, and treasures. The funders who joined us at the table to be a thought partner on some of Maine's most persistent challenges. And our clients, whose unwavering determination and resilience reminded us why this work is so important.

I look back on this year with a deep sense of pride, and I look ahead to the future with hope. Because I know with this community, together, we can help Mainers build better lives and stronger communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph R. Everett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joseph Everett
President & CEO

Who We Are

Our History

The Opportunity Alliance (TOA) was incorporated in 1965 as the Community Action Agency for Cumberland County, Maine. TOA works in partnership with organizations and community members to identify and address barriers for individuals and families to thrive and create a strong community fabric. As an integral part of this work, TOA is committed to helping individuals and families advocate for the resources and support they need to achieve positive outcomes. TOA has at its foundation three organizations with long histories of serving communities throughout Maine: Ingraham, Peoples Regional Opportunity Program (PROP), and Youth Alternatives. The three organizations merged in 2011 to form The Opportunity Alliance.

Our Mission

The Opportunity Alliance works with people to build better lives and stronger communities. We provide advocacy, leadership, and support to identify the goals and address the needs of individuals, families, and communities.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

At The Opportunity Alliance, we stand against racism and are an actively anti-racist organization. We will be resolute in our efforts to address disparities and injustices that we see in our workplace and in our community. We envision an agency where systems are just, fair, and inclusive, enabling all people to participate and reach their full potential. We strive for healthy and prosperous employment and client communities that promote marginalized, oppressed, and underserved groups having equitable access and opportunity.

Here's what we're doing:

- TOA's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Employee Advisory Committee reports to TOA's Senior Leadership on EDI best practices and recommended strategies. This Committee is composed of staff from various teams across the organization.
- All client intake forms are reviewed to ensure they are inclusive of all races, genders, and pronouns.
- Ensure career outreach to diverse and minority communities.
- Convert résumé experience and education levels from other countries to US/ TOA equivalents.
- Create staff training around issues such as anti-racism, inclusion, and compassion.
- Embed TOA's EDI efforts into the agency's public policy agenda.

Our Programs

Community Building

[Lakes Region Collective Action Network \(LRCAN\)](#)

[Maine Youth Action Network \(MYAN\)](#)

[Public Health Program \(PHP\)](#)

[Resident-Led Community Building](#)

Economic Resources

[Cumberland County Homeless Prevention Program \(CCHP\)](#)

[Central Heat Improvement Program \(CHIP\)](#)

[Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#)

[Energy Crisis Intervention Program \(ECIP\)](#)

[Foster Grandparent & Senior Companion Programs](#)

[Home Energy Assistance Program \(HEAP\)](#)

[Weatherization](#)

[WRAP Funds](#)

[Work Life Advisor](#)

Family & Early Childhood Education

[CDA Development Center](#)

[Early Childhood Education](#)

[Supportive Family Visitation Program](#)

[Parent Education](#)

[Maine Families](#)

[Women, Infants, Children Program \(WIC\)](#)

Mental Health & Wellness

[Behavioral Health Home \(BHH\)](#)

[Broadway Crossings Adult Crisis Unit](#)

[Children's Behavioral Health Home \(CBHH\)](#)

[Mobile Crisis Response Services](#)

[High-Fidelity Wrap Around](#)

[Homeless Youth Services \(HYS\)](#)

[The Maine Crisis Line](#)

[Opioid Health Home \(OHH\)](#)

[PATH Program](#)

Residential Services:

[Gordon Green](#), [Helen Winslow Ray House](#),

[MaineStay](#), [Morrison Place](#), [Ocean Street](#),

[The Bridge](#)



Opportunities for Community

A Two-Generation Approach is bringing neighbors together in Portland's East Bayside neighborhood.

Just blocks from the heart of downtown Portland, the East Bayside neighborhood is bordered on the west by Franklin Arterial, the east by Washington Avenue, the north by Marginal Way, and the south by Congress Street. One of the most diverse neighborhoods in Maine, this vibrant community is home to long-time Mainers as well as many immigrant and refugee families.

East Bayside has been identified by the City of Portland as an area that is in-need based upon a combination of factors: this low-income neighborhood has high rates of poverty, and a combination of limited and older housing stock and encroaching gentrification has contributed to significant housing problems.

The Opportunity Alliance has implemented a two-generation approach to increase the well-being of whole families in the neighborhood by supporting children and adults through interventions, programming, and resources. **But we don't do this work alone.** We partner with residents, along with over a dozen funders, community groups, and other nonprofits, to coordinate services and resources for the area.



For instance, in FY21 The Cohen Foundation supported TOA's East Bayside Community Resilience Builder, located in Community HUB space generously donated by Avesta Housing. The Community Resilience Builder serves as a lynchpin, bringing an array of interconnected TOA programs and services to support residents in the East Bayside neighborhood including [Head Start/Early Head Start](#); [MYAN](#) programming for young adults, especially those in BIPOC and LGBTQ+ communities; case management; support and treatment for substance use; and [PATH](#) outreach, engagement, and referral services for people experiencing homelessness.

Through Project WIN, a partnership between TOA and [United Way's Women United group](#), we are supporting a cohort of mothers and children in the East Bayside neighborhood through college education for the mothers and care for the children. Support from the John T. Gorman Foundation was critical to support many families in this neighborhood, especially as they reeled from the effects of the pandemic.



Impact Highlights



16 mothers and 49 children participated in Project WIN

Our data demonstrates that these participants are accomplishing their short-term goals; almost all of them are working, or taking classes, and caring for their families' many needs.

Senior Companions made over **2,800** reassurance calls to clients, helping to arrange delivery of groceries and rides to medical appointments.



Resident-Led Community Builders provided **6,000+** individuals and families impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with food, diapers, technology to access school, rent and utility relief, and quarantine support.

We served **73 individuals** in our six long-term residential facilities for individuals experiencing severe mental health issues and/or substance use.



Client Testimonial

"Today I am used to my life as a single mother who runs between the nursery school and my job, thanks for all the times WIN supported me financially, with gifts, advice, affection ...it has always been one of my great comforts and I will always be grateful!!! My children and I are so lucky to be part of the WIN family."

-Lydia

Opportunities for Health & Wellness

With the need for mental healthcare at an all-time high, TOA provides support and stabilization when it matters most.

*“We’re always just a phone call away and we’ll meet you where you’re at. **We’re here to help, and help starts here.**”* That’s what Kristin Ricciardone, VP of Programs at The Opportunity Alliance wants everyone to know.

For the dedicated crisis staff at The Opportunity Alliance, sometimes meeting clients where they’re at means going to someone’s home or bringing them to the TOA offices or a hospital. Often it means going to schools or shelters. And at times it means walking the streets. For some clients, they just need a conversation, and connection to providers and resources. Some require a hospital or long-term treatment facility.

Kristin emphasizes how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted TOA’s crisis work: *“The chronic stress that everyone has been under, it’s truly a complex trauma. We’re seeing a lot more desperation, more hopelessness, more suicidal thoughts, more anxiety. And with no end in sight, it is harder for people to feel like they can hang on. For someone who had preexisting conditions their condition has been exacerbated. And not only are there more people who are experiencing acute behavioral health symptoms, but at the same time many health coping mechanisms and outlets are limited. In addition, we’re seeing more of a need from children and youth with Covid related issues.”*

The continuum of care system that is offered within TOA is a full range of services. From the moment someone calls [The Maine Crisis Line](#) through their assessment, the follow-up and agreed upon treatment.



“A successful day in our program is helping people come up with a solid plan - maybe that’s placing them in a crisis unit or getting them to the hospital, whatever it takes. A good day is preventing somebody from really hurting themselves or hurting others and sharing in that success that with the client.” - Glenn

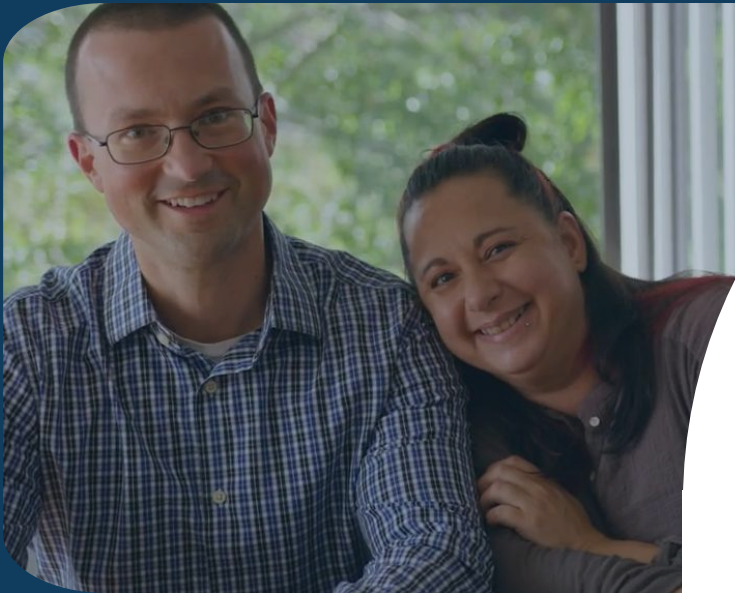
Crisis Services at The Opportunity Alliance include:

[The Maine Crisis Line](#) - the state’s crisis telephone response service for individuals or families experiencing a behavioral health crisis of having thoughts of suicide and/or self-harm. Trained specialists answer the line and provide free and confidential telephone support and stabilization 24/7/365.

If it is determined that a caller is in need of direct emergency intervention to prevent harm, the call specialist will connect them to TOA’s [Mobile Crisis Unit Response Team](#), at which time they will be dispatched to the caller’s location to provide direct care.

With a capacity of eight clients, [Broadway Crossings Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit](#) is a unique, short-term supportive and structured environment for individuals experiencing an acute emotional/mental health crisis which cannot be safely managed on an outpatient basis. Many of the individuals referred to Broadway Crossings have either experienced homelessness or are at-risk to become unhoused upon discharge.

Impact Highlights



Client Testimonial

"Morrison Place has definitely impacted my life. When I first got there, I was a total mess and falling apart. They've been working really hard with me and I'm in a safer place now. I have grown a lot and am getting through a lot of my fears. The team really listens to your needs. They take care of you. The program definitely helps and I feel better now. I feel good now."

-Crystal



The Maine Crisis Line answered **114,695 calls** from individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis or having thoughts of suicide or self harm.

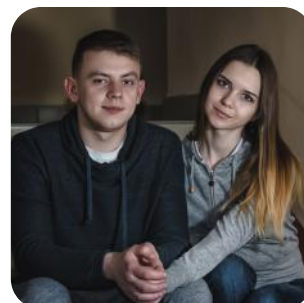


In fiscal year 2021, Mobile Crisis Response services supported **1,440 callers** to The Maine Crisis Line with in-person support.



TOA's PATH team provided outreach, engagement, and referral services for **258 people** with mental illness and those with co-occurring substance use disorders who were experiencing homelessness in York and Cumberland Counties.

Homeless Youth Services supported **136 youth** and families at risk of or who are currently experiencing homelessness in Southern Maine.



Opportunities for Partnership

A long-term partnership with WEX, Inc. is deepening TOA's collective impact.

Since 1999, Wex, Inc., a cornerstone of the Southern Maine business community, has partnered with The Opportunity Alliance to support and improve the communities their employees and customers work and live in. To date, they have donated almost \$300,000 to TOA. But their partnership is much deeper than the money. Over the years WEX employees have shared a wealth of passion and expertise as they served on TOA's Board of Directors, volunteered at Neighborhood Connection Nights, filled Christmas stockings for residential clients, and attended TOA events throughout the year. On top of all that, they have served as a true thought partner, working with TOA to create a two-generation approach that creates real, lasting solutions to some of the area's most pressing challenges.



"What's special about The Opportunity Alliance? It's the people... they love what they do. It starts with the people and it flows through the entire organization from there. I would strongly encourage all organizations to get involved with The Opportunity Alliance. It provides the opportunity at an individual level, at a corporate level, at a team level, to get involved."

- Bernie Kavanagh, TOA Board and Development Committee.
WEX SVP

"WEX is proud to be a longstanding partner of The Opportunity Alliance. We believe deeply in supporting organizations that advance social equity for all in our community, and TOA is a shining example of leveling the playing field. Our employees are passionate about engaging in hands-on volunteerism, and we appreciate the deep level of thoughtfulness and care that the team at The Opportunity Alliance brings to both our partnership and to all of their community programs." - Hilary Rapkin, Chief Legal Officer and Executive Head of Philanthropy at WEX



Impact Highlights



In 2020, **9,500 youth** and adults across the state contributed their passions and leadership to strengthen their communities through MYAN.

100% of MYAN's annual Leadership Conference attendees agreed that "***I know how to use my skills and interests to make my community better***".



211 Maine - a partnership between TOA and United Way of Southern Maine, became the go-to resource for all Covid related questions and guidance. In fiscal year 2021, 211 Call Specialists answered **97,775 calls**.

Foster Grandparents wrote **hundreds of letters** through the newly established pen pal program, adapted to remote learning with virtual meetings, read to and with students helping increase their literacy skills, and created arts & crafts projects and activity packets for their classrooms.



Client Testimonial

"I loved listening to the speakers and seeing how much I related to their experiences...Everyone was understanding and welcoming and being able to talk freely about microaggressions and racism, things that we've experienced....it was very freeing and I'm so glad that I was able to attend as many sessions as I did."

-Black Student Caucus
MYAN Leadership
Conference Attendee

Opportunities for Growth

Head Start programs provide a pathway to stability and hope.

As we faced the height of the Covid-19 pandemic during 2020-2021, leadership within our Early Childhood Education programs wondered how they would be able to support our families during another year of uncertainty. Would children be able to learn in person? How would we keep them healthy? How could we possibly build quality relationships with families over Zoom? Would children who required extra supports be able to access them? What about families who already felt isolated? We quickly realized (and remembered) just how resilient our Head Start families are and got to work. **We reviewed Covid protocols and expected families to trust us enough to share their personal health status with us daily. We used multiple different communication platforms to meet parents' needs and dreams focusing on setting and achieving goals.**



We laughed. We cried. We pivoted between in person and virtual learning. We delivered schools supplies and food to students at home. We provided students with special education and mental health services in-person and virtually. **We provided a strong foundation for families to walk side by side us with during a pandemic, while continuing to face their biggest needs, goals, worries, and hopes head on.**

At the end of the school year, we celebrated, reflected, and found ourselves thinking about what incredible relationships were formed with families, how flexible our staff are, how strong our children are, and how truly invested in our communities Head Start staff are.

This insight was provided by Riverton Head Start teacher Kaitlyn Braylee.

Impact Highlights



Client Testimonial

"The staff at TOA's Head Start program have gone above and beyond for Keith and I. He just started here this month and I already see so many wonderful changes in him. I just want my boys to be successful and whatever they dream to be, they become."

-Shantel



Through a partnership with The Locker Project, Head Start staff delivered over **75,000 pounds** of fresh produce and grocery items to at least **170 families**.



Our Head Start staff supported the following Health Services in 2020-21:

176 Immunizations

106 Dental Visits

125 Medical Services at Home

106 Emergency / Crisis Services



WIC counselors made **36,000 referrals to resources** like health and dental care, substance use treatment and more.

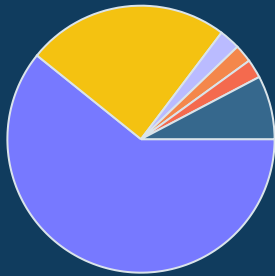


TOA's Work Life Advisor supported and empowered **152 individuals** to help them find successful employment and economic stability.

Financial Overview

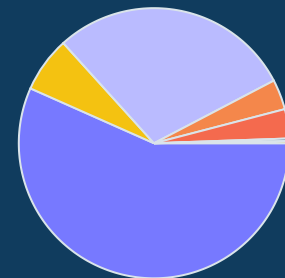


Revenue - Fiscal Year 2021



■ Government Grants	32,470,168
■ Medicaid	13,090,030
■ United Way & Other Grants	1,353,410
■ Private Fee For Service	1,158,522
■ Individual & Private Support	1,221,569
■ Forgiveness of PPP Loan	4,119,600
Total Revenue	53,413,299

Expenses - Fiscal Year 2021



■ Staff Expenses	25,294,455
■ Physical Plant	2,966,761
■ Client Support	12,961,770
■ Program Related Costs	1,610,220
■ Purchased Services	1,563,374
■ In Kind	133,604
■ Equipment & Vehicle	117,219
Total Expense	44,647,403

To view a more detailed accounting of our revenue and expenses for fiscal year 2021, please see the financial documents posted on our website: www.opportunityalliance.org.

The Opportunity Alliance

Board of Directors 2020-2021

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