



The  
Opportunity  
Alliance

**GOOD THINGS**  
are Happening.

# Table of Contents

Message from the CEO

Who We Are

Our Programs

The Good Things Happening in our  
Community

Financial Overview

Charitable Gifts



# Message from the CEO

---



Dear Friends,

In 1965 The Opportunity Alliance was created as the Community Action Agency for Cumberland County, Maine. It was a turbulent time in history, but it was also an era of hope and opportunity. Five decades later, the agency still carries that hope. The way we deliver services reflects our fundamental belief in people's capacity to succeed with the proper support systems in place.

Today, my colleagues and I envision a community in which all people in Maine have access to high-quality childcare and early childhood education programs, safe and stable housing, effective and compassionate mental health and substance use treatment, and basic needs supports. In the following pages you'll read how we're making that vision a reality.

Our programs and resources are working to pull people out of crisis and set them up for a lifetime of stability. We're helping families break the cycle of generational poverty and create communities that are thriving. There is so much work that still needs to be done. But as you'll see, **good things are happening.**

Sincerely,

*Joe Everett*

President & CEO

# Who We Are



## Our Mission

To build better lives and stronger communities across Maine, The Opportunity Alliance supports people with the programs and resources they need to improve their health, safety, and stability.

## Our Vision

The Opportunity Alliance envisions a community in which all people in Maine have access to high-quality childcare and early childhood education programs, safe and stable housing, effective and compassionate mental health and substance use treatment, and basic needs supports.

## 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've done so far:

- Added EDI and anti-racist training to staff curriculum.
- Increased translations of client materials.
- Reviewed client intake forms to ensure they are inclusive of all races, genders, and pronouns.
- Increased career outreach to diverse and minority communities.
- Developed a process to convert resume experience and education levels from other countries to US/TOA equivalents.
- Embedded TOA's EDI efforts into the agency's public policy agenda.

TOA by  
the numbers:

**4** Pillars of Service: Community Well-Being, Poverty & Economic Supports, Childcare & Early Childhood Education, and Behavioral Health and Wellness.

**474** Employees      **28** Locations

**57** Years serving people across Maine



# Our Programs



## Community Well-Being

Maine Youth Action Network  
Community Building



## Poverty & Economic Supports

Cumberland County Homelessness Prevention Program  
Central Heat Improvement Program  
Energy Crisis Intervention Program  
Foster Grandparent & Senior Companion Programs  
Home Energy Assistance Program  
TogetherWeWork - A Whole Families Program  
Weatherization  
WRAP Funds  
Work Life Advisor



## Childcare & Early Childhood Education

CDA Development Center  
Head Start & Early Head Start  
Supportive Family Visitation Program  
Parent Education  
Maine Families  
Woman, Infants, & Children Program (WIC)



## Behavioral Health & Wellness

Behavioral Health Home  
Broadway Crossings Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit  
Children's Behavioral Health Home  
Mobile Crisis Response Services  
High-Fidelity Wrap Around  
Homeless Youth Services  
The Maine Crisis Line  
Opioid Health Home  
PATH Program  
Residential Services:  
Gordon Green, Helen Winslow Ray House,  
Morrison Place, Ocean Street, The Bridge



# Mobile Crisis Response

## Support, empathy and connection...

If you or someone you know is having a mental health crisis, you can call The Maine Crisis Line 24/7 and be connected to a trained professional who will help navigate the situation. If in-person intervention is needed, that's when the Mobile Crisis Response Team comes in. TOA's Mobile Crisis Response team will travel anywhere in Cumberland County to support individuals and families in crisis (and if you're outside Cumberland County they'll connect you to the appropriate team). They spend time to engage with each individual, assess their needs, and develop appropriate and collaborative action steps to keep everyone safe. The team is also trained to support children and teens.

*"We are seeing more clients than ever," said Carrie Swarthout, Assistant Director of the Mobile Crisis Response Team. "And because after the pandemic there's less resources, there's less treatment options. It takes longer to find support. People are experiencing more acute symptoms because it takes longer to find preventative resources... when they finally get to us, things are harder, people are more depressed, people are more psychotic. People's substance use disorders have gotten farther down that road, and we try to be a stopgap as much as we can."*

The Opportunity Alliance works with cities and towns to create an alternate response to police intervention. TOA currently has five police liaisons- one in Bridgton and two in Portland that respond with officers to 911 mental health calls and two who work as an alternate response team to respond to 911 calls without police. This approach provides individuals experiencing a mental health crisis with professionals trained to support them and frees up police officers to respond to other local needs.

The mental health epidemic is creating an unprecedented need across Southern Maine. Data collected by the National Alliance on Mental Illness in 2021 indicated that 223,000 adults and 14,000 children in Maine have a mental health condition. Sadly, only half the adults and children with a mental health disorder are receiving the treatment they need. For those living in poverty, the effects of an untreated mental health disorder can quickly derail steps towards stability.



**"We see all sorts of people, from our unhoused neighbors to people that live in million-dollar homes. We see everyone. We're all the same. We're all deserving of the same support and empathy and connection as anybody else."**

*Carrie Swarthout*  
Assistant Director  
Mobile Crisis Response

Here's  
the  
Good  
News

**1,710**

adults and children were cared for by TOA's Mobile Crisis Response team.

**118,754**

calls were answered by compassionate, trained professionals at The Maine Crisis Line.

**209**

individuals experiencing a mental health crisis found safety at Broadway Crossings Adult Crisis Stabilization Unit.

# Behavioral Health Home

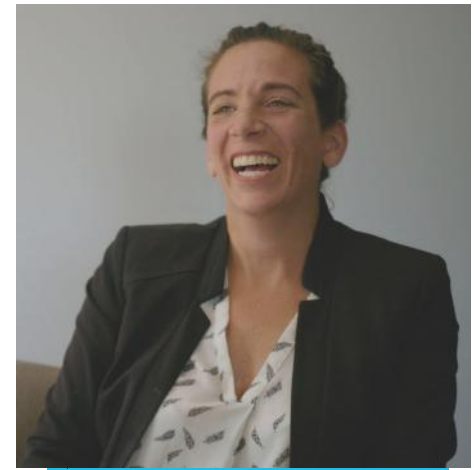
## An innovative and integrated approach to mental health care...

At TOA, the Behavioral Health Home (BHH) provides at-risk adults with an integrated, innovative approach to mental health care. The staff within BHH help clients meet their needs around housing, health care, finances, work, and education.

What is a Behavioral Health Home? It is not, in fact, a house! The health home model provides an integrated and coordinated approach to all primary, acute, and mental health services and supports to treat the whole person. This is beneficial for everyone, and especially vital for individuals who are unhoused or living in poverty. This includes working with natural supports such as family members, doctors, social workers, and others to offer guidance, find services, and navigate the complex and sometimes intimidating network of social services. Sometimes this also includes providing access to basic necessities such as housing, heating, food and transportation.

Peer Health Navigators within the program are employees with lived experiences that reflect the clients we serve. This creates a relationship and level of trust that is unique and incredibly effective in providing care.

46% of the Mainers that did not receive mental health care during the past year said they actively chose not to seek help because of the cost.



"I build connections and advocate... I give our clients voice where maybe they wouldn't have one... I am projecting what they would say or what they would want or what they need because I've been there."

*Tasha*  
Peer Health Navigator  
Behavioral Health Home

Here's  
the  
Good  
News

**322** adults were provided behavioral health case management services through TOA's BHH in 2022.

**308** children were supported through TOA's Children's Behavioral Health Home.

**150** children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start have access to mental health services through play therapy.

# Community Building

## Opportunities for social connectivity...

Mputu came to South Portland from the Congo after her husband passed away. She had family here but didn't know what to expect. Living in the Brick Hill neighborhood, she connected with Merrie, TOA's Community Builder who works out of the South Portland Hub. With some help from Google Translate, the two quickly formed a friendship and Mputu has become a regular visitor to The Hub. She also brings her family and friends by.

The South Portland Hub serves as a welcoming space that is open to everyone in the community. It is defined by its atmosphere of accessibility, inclusion, and hope. The Opportunity Alliance Community Builders serve neighborhoods in Portland, South Portland, and Bridgton, working to increase the capacity of neighbors to support each other, and making connections with local partners that help them to be more responsive to the needs of the community. These consistent opportunities for social connectivity not only bring neighbors together, they minimize the stresses caused by poverty.

As TOA's Community Building program evolves to meet the changing needs of the communities it serves, a focus has been placed on increasing trauma-responsive community strategies that improve social connection, physical/built environment, and economic opportunities.

South Portland's West End neighborhood ranks the highest in the city for households without a vehicle and second highest for individuals living at or below the poverty line. In addition, nation-wide isolation and loneliness is on the rise, and research suggests that immigrant and LGBTQ+ populations experience loneliness more often than other groups, with detrimental impacts to their health.



"The Hub gives us a way to be together, to chat. If we chat with other people, it relieves a bit of stress, it's good for us. I bring other people to the Hub...afterwards you see people start to smile... We have to help people."

*Mputu*  
Member of the South  
Portland Community Hub

Here's  
the  
Good  
News

50+

families receive food at the neighbor-led monthly Wayside Mobile Food Pantry outside the South Portland Hub.

400-500

texts and phone calls are made each month by the Hub Community Builder to maintain a connection and relations with various neighbors.



In neighborhoods with Community Builders we've seen drops in crime rates, increases in investment, and gains in neighborhood engagement.

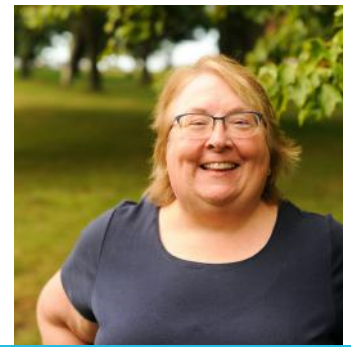


# Women, Infants, & Children's Program (WIC)

*Completely safe, seen, and cared for...*

"I first met Jill after a traumatic pregnancy and wild emergency birth. My son was in the NICU and a social worker approached my husband and I to share options of support that we had. I hadn't heard of WIC in detail before this and so I had no idea what I was in for. At my first appointment I was a wreck. Still in shock from everything I had been through, struggling to pump and care for my son as he wouldn't latch, and feeling like a complete and utter failure since we couldn't breastfeed.

Every medical appointment which we had been to, including our 28 days in the hospital, while well meaning, put so much pressure on me to breastfeed. I was shattered and prepared for another blow about breastfeeding at my WIC appointment. However, gratefully I was met with the most compassionate care from Jill. She was soft spoken, kindhearted and the energy she gave off was like a warm embrace. As I sat there stumbling over my words, apologetically sharing that we were unable to breastfeed and that the pumping was starting to take a major toll on my mental health but that I was going to keep trying, she very kindly said: *"It sounds like you are done breastfeeding, and that is totally ok. I'll set you up for formula."* It felt like the world had been lifted from my shoulders. I don't remember much about the rest of the meeting, just the feeling of being completely safe, seen, and cared for. Jill was the first in line of dozens of professionals to see my struggle, hear what I was sharing, and with the utmost compassion and grace, acknowledge it and offer a helping hand without any hint of judgement. It was a pivotal moment in my motherhood journey and Jill has continued to be a huge source of support for me as I find my way as a mom." - **WIC Client**



Nutrition Counselor Jill McPhail has been with TOA's WIC program for 30 years. Described by her colleagues as "quietly magical" WIC parents and caregivers ask for Jill by name and are sad when she is on vacation.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children - better known as the WIC Program - serves to safeguard the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding people, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risk by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating including breastfeeding promotion and support, and referrals to health care.

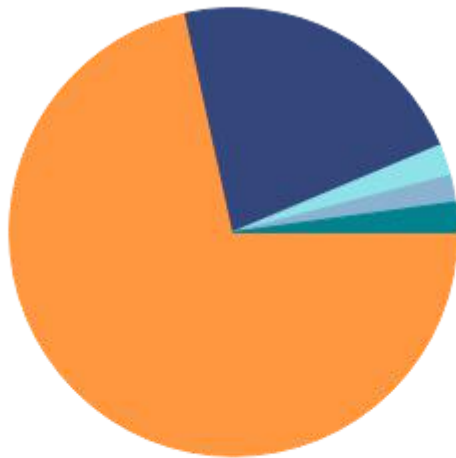
Here's  
the  
Good  
News

- 4,692** mothers, fathers, and children were served by WIC last year.
- 32,916** health and social service referrals were made.
- 15,000+** cans of infant formula were distributed.
- 1.9** million in food benefits were redeemed.

# Financial Overview



## Revenue - Fiscal Year 2023

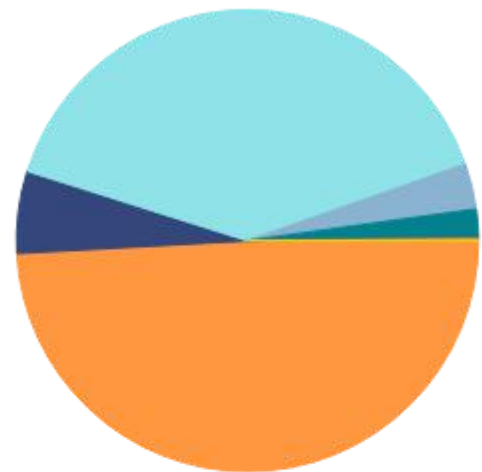


- Government Grants \$41,395,427
- Medicaid \$12,789,203
- United Way & Other Grants \$1,312,761
- Private Fee For Service \$1,125,236
- Individual & Private Support \$1,227,558

**Total Revenue : \$57,850,185**

To view a more detailed accounting of our revenue and expenses for fiscal year 2023, please see the financial documents posted on our website: [www.opportunityalliance.org](http://www.opportunityalliance.org).

## Expenses - Fiscal Year 2023



- Staff Expenses \$28,117,411
- Physical Plant \$3,292,855
- Client Support \$22,751,298
- Program Related Costs \$1,830,807
- Purchased Services \$1,039,743
- In Kind \$143,961
- Equipment & Vehicle \$63,629

**Total Expenses : \$57,239,704**



# The Opportunity Alliance

Every day, and in times of crisis, **help starts here.**

To learn more or donate visit  
[OpportunityAlliance.org](http://OpportunityAlliance.org)



## 2022-23 Board of Directors

Colette Twigg-Rowse, *Chair*

Josh Steirman, *Treasurer*

Dr. Rebecca Bloch, *Secretary*

Abusana Micky Bondo

Elizabeth Conrad

Erin Diekema

Anneliese Gerland

Meghan Henry

Jeanne Hulit

Frances Hutchinson

Bernie Kavanagh

Anne LaFond

Katherine Pelletreau

Ghomri Rostampour

Kris Sahonchik

Rebecca Smith

Penelope Wheeler-Abbott