

Maine's TANF-Funded
Whole Family Services
Programs

2022

Year 1 Annual Outcomes Report



STATE OF MAINE

Department of
Health and Human Services

Office for Family Independence



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Overview

Since Summer 2021, the Office for Family Independence at Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has partnered with providers across the state to offer Whole Family Services* (WFS) to families experiencing social and economic instability. Our WFS programs are multi-generational coaching programs that invite both parents and children to partner with a Family Coach who offers referrals, resources, planning, and advice to families working towards stability.

The whole family approach to service delivery is a multi-generational, strengths-based service model that works to create success for both parents and children. Unlike traditional case management, Maine's WFS programs offer family-centered coaching that encourages families to create their unique definition of stability and to set their own goals. Families who participate in WFS programs enter into a partnership with their Family Coach to define their own path forward and create goals that are personally meaningful.

Because families initiate and influence their own goals and activities, WFS uses a broad definition of stability when measuring family outcomes. Families come to WFS with goals including finding stable housing, passing the HiSET, accessing behavioral healthcare for their children, improving their credit score, and more. Family coaching is centered around six broad service areas: housing, physical and mental health, social capital and self-confidence, child development, education, and employment and income.

"This program is so great at really helping families in a way that makes a difference."

Parent partner with Downeast Community Partners

Each Family Coach that is part of WFS works with 18-25 families at a time to create individualized Family Plans. Each Family Plan lists short- and long-term goals and associated activities for each member of the family, including goals and activities for the children. Since families are partners with their Coach, each Family Plan also includes activities for the Family Coach to complete along side the family. WFS coaching is intensive, and many Coaches spend a large part of their week visiting families in their homes and accompanying them to appointments. Because of the range of goals that families bring to the program, Family Coaches have been extremely flexible with the intensity of services offered to each family. Many families enter the program with immediate needs and benefit from multiple contacts with their Coach weekly. Other families who feel they are approaching stability may meet with their coach by phone only once a month as they work towards longer-term goals like education and employment. In Whole Family Services, the types and intensity of services are determined by the needs of the family.

An important part of WFS is connecting families to other programs for which they may be eligible. Many families who partner with WFS are also enrolled in Maine DHHS assistance programs like Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE) and Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE). For families pursuing more targeted goals through other programs, WFS can provide additional wraparound supports to ensure that both parents and children have access to the resources they need to thrive.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

22 M.R.S.A §3769-G

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES BLOCK GRANT: WHOLE FAMILY ECONOMIC SECURITY INITIATIVES

Maine's WFS programs were created through legislation in 2019 that allocated \$2 million annually in funding from Maine's TANF block grant. Families are eligible to receive Whole Family Services if they have income under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and have dependent children. Maine DHHS contracts with 11 service providers who operate WFS programs in all 16 counties across the state.

*Other Maine programs use TANF funding to offer services within a whole family model, including Family Future's Downeast, a two-generation college program for parents and their children, as well as the Whole Family Case Coordinators within the ASPIRE program, which is Maine's TANF workforce participation program. The services described in this report refer specifically to the contracts resulting from 22 M.R.S.A §3769-G.

WHOLE FAMILY SERVICES IN YEAR 1

July 2021 to June 2022

Maine's Whole Family Services programs partnered with 437 families comprised of 1,353 individuals in the first year of service delivery. Enrollment increased steadily throughout the year with a peak of 298 families enrolled simultaneously in June 2022. Total statewide program capacity at any given time is roughly 550 families. Many providers are approaching their individual capacity and are looking to create wait lists for interested families, but all 11 providers ended the year with availability to accept new families into their program.

Many providers have faced staff shortages in the last year, which has affected family enrollment in some parts of the state. Several agencies have responded by cross training staff in their other programs to be able to offer family coaching in their regions.

Housing has emerged as the largest source of instability for families across the state. Roughly half of families reported unstable housing situations, and some providers reported that up to 90% of the families they partnered with were experiencing some form of housing instability. Many families are on a wait list for a Housing Choice Voucher, while other families who have obtained a voucher are unable to find a landlord willing to participate in the voucher program. WFS providers have partnered with housing authorities, shelters, subsidized communities, and housing advocates across the state to find dozens of families a safe and affordable place to live.

"ACAP services and supports helped me regain a positive mindset and was a huge relief for me and my family. I am very very grateful."

Parent partner with Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)

Transportation is another goal area shared by many families across the state. While families with medical goals have greatly benefited from MaineCare's Non-Emergency Transportation, families who need transportation to school or work have limited options. In some cases WFS providers have been able to access funding for vehicle repair and mileage reimbursement, often through Maine DHHS programs like TANF and HOPE. In some instances, providers have been able to provide a short-term supplement for a family's gas expense through WFS funding if the family doesn't have access to resources through other programs.

Despite these challenges, families who partnered with WFS have achieved successes in access to healthcare, child development, education, and employment. One quarter of families increased their income through employment, and roughly a quarter of parents who were not employed enrolled in a post-secondary education program to enhance their skills. 88% of parents reported that their children attended school at least 90% of the time, and 95% of individuals had access to healthcare through health insurance or Free Care.

"Whole Family Coaching is an amazing program. I was able to see gains in participants that I had never seen working in other social support programs."

Tracy Collins
*Operations Manager - Supportive Services
Downeast Community Partners*

MAINE'S WHOLE FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDERS

Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP)

Aroostook

Community Concepts

Androscoggin
Oxford

Downeast Community Partners (DCP)

Hancock
Washington

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP)

Kennebec
Somerset

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS)

Androscoggin

Midcoast Maine Community Action (MMCA)

Lincoln
Sagadahoc

Penquis

Penobscot
Piscataquis
Knox

The Opportunity Alliance (TOA)

Cumberland

Waldo Community Action Partners (WCAP)

Waldo

Western Maine Community Action (WMCA)

Franklin

York County Community Action Corp. (YCCAC)

York

WHERE ARE OUR FAMILY PARTNERS?

ANDROSCOGGIN: 85

AROOSTOOK: 91

CUMBERLAND: 12

FRANKLIN: <10

HANCOCK: 30

KENNEBEC: 27

KNOX: <10

LINCOLN: <10

OXFORD: 49

PENOBSCOT: 20

PISCATAQUIS: <10

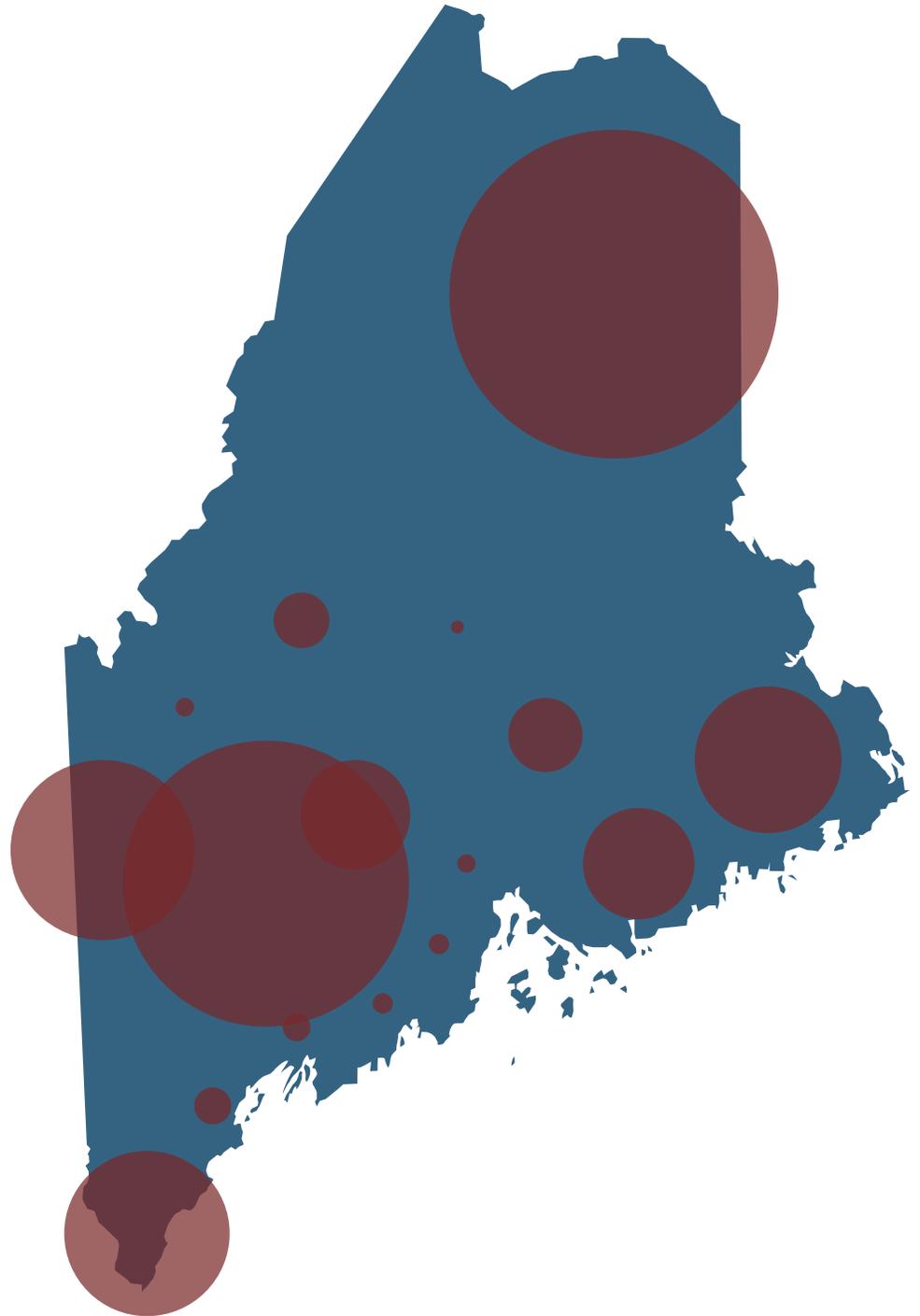
SAGADAHOC: <10

SOMERSET: 14

WALDO: <10

WASHINGTON: 40

YORK: 45



WHICH FAMILIES PARTNERED WITH WHOLE FAMILY SERVICES?

437 Families 554 Parents 799 Children

FAMILIES



EMPLOYMENT



INSURANCE



EDUCATION





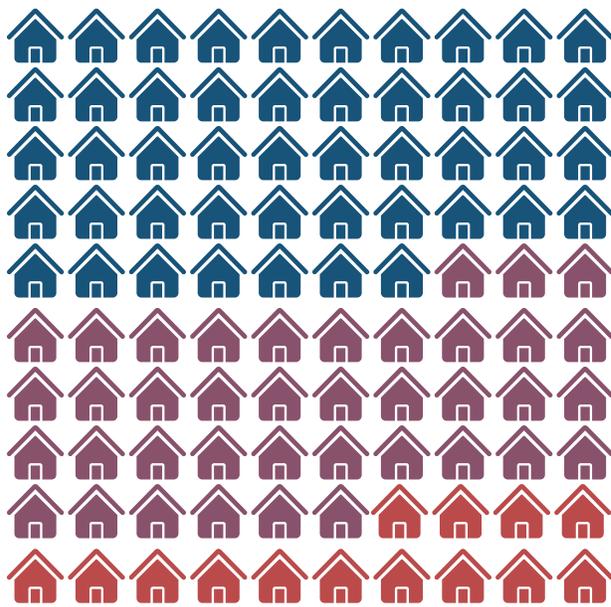
Measures of Self-Sufficiency

Maine's Whole Family Services programs partner with each family to clarify their personal definition of stability. Many families are seeking additional household income and the stability that employment can bring. Many others want to manage a chronic illness, find safe and affordable housing for their children, or finish their post-secondary degree.

Because every family is different, Whole Family Services looks at a broad range of outcomes that can be organized into six broad service areas: housing, physical and mental health, social capital, child development, education, and employment. Every family who partners with Whole Family Services completes a Self-Sufficiency Matrix to assess their resources and supports in each category and to help clarify the goals they want to work on with their Family Coach.

Whole Family Services understands that all of a family's goals are interconnected. Families need to be healthy to get to work, and they need income to find stable housing. Because of this perspective on stability, one important measure of progress is when a family accomplishes goals in two or more areas on their Self-Sufficiency Matrix. In the last year, 51% of families accomplished goals in two or more areas.





205 FAMILIES RESIDE IN STABLE HOUSING

170 FAMILIES ARE EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HAVE APPLIED FOR A HOUSING VOUCHER

62 FAMILIES ARE EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSTABILITY AND HAVE NOT APPLIED FOR A VOUCHER

HOW DOES WHOLE FAMILY SERVICES DEFINE HOUSING INSTABILITY?

- HOMELESSNESS
- CONFLICT WITH A LANDLORD
- AN UNREASONABLE COMMUTE TO WORK
- HOUSING THAT DOESN'T FIT THE FAMILY SIZE
- MONTHLY HOUSING EXPENSE OVER 1/3 OF MONTHLY INCOME
- NEEDED REPAIRS THAT CAUSE ISSUES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Housing Stability

Housing has been one of the most difficult challenges facing families over the last year. Roughly half of families who partnered with Whole Family Services are experiencing some form of housing instability, whether it's trouble paying rent, unsafe housing conditions, or housing that is too small for the size of the family. The tight housing market in Maine has made it difficult for many families to find a place to live.

Many families have been able to qualify for the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program to achieve temporary stability while they work to increase their income. Many other families have turned to Whole Family Services as their ERA funds run out and are looking for help applying for a subsidized unit or to finding a landlord who will accept a housing voucher.

For other families, moving forward with other goals can mean a step backward in their living situation. Single mothers looking for safety from abusive relationships have been able to access temporary housing through WFS referrals while they look for something more permanent. For families experiencing an acute housing crisis, Family Coaches work with parents to make sure their children still attend school and have access to food, clothing, and healthcare.



Family Highlights

HOUSING STABILITY

Barbara

Community Concepts

In November Barbara reached out to Community Concepts after being given custody of her two granddaughters. Barbara reported that her granddaughters were attending school regularly, but that she had recently become homeless and was staying in a shelter. Barbara's Family Coach helped her apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance program, visiting her outside the shelter where she was staying to complete the necessary application paperwork. Three days later, Barbara found an apartment. Her Family Coach helped her get established in her new town by providing contact information for local medical providers and the new public school where her granddaughters would be attending. One month after welcoming Barbara into the program, her Family Coach arrived at her new apartment and dropped off donated Christmas gifts for the two girls.

Alana

Waldo Community Action Partners

Alana was referred to WCAP by her employer. Alana, a mother of three children, is going through a divorce and the family is staying with Alana's mother in an overcrowded home. Alana had not previously connected with any benefits programs aside from MaineCare because her husband had not let her apply. Alana's Family Coach helped her apply for housing assistance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the Child Care Subsidy Program (CCSP). She also accessed the diaper closet, soap closet, and food pantry at WCAP. Alana was surprised at how much support was available to her. Alana is currently on a wait list for the subsidized housing in her area and hopes to find an apartment soon to have enough space for her and her children to live independently. Her goals also include establishing credit for herself and getting connected with a primary care doctor for her children.

Vanessa

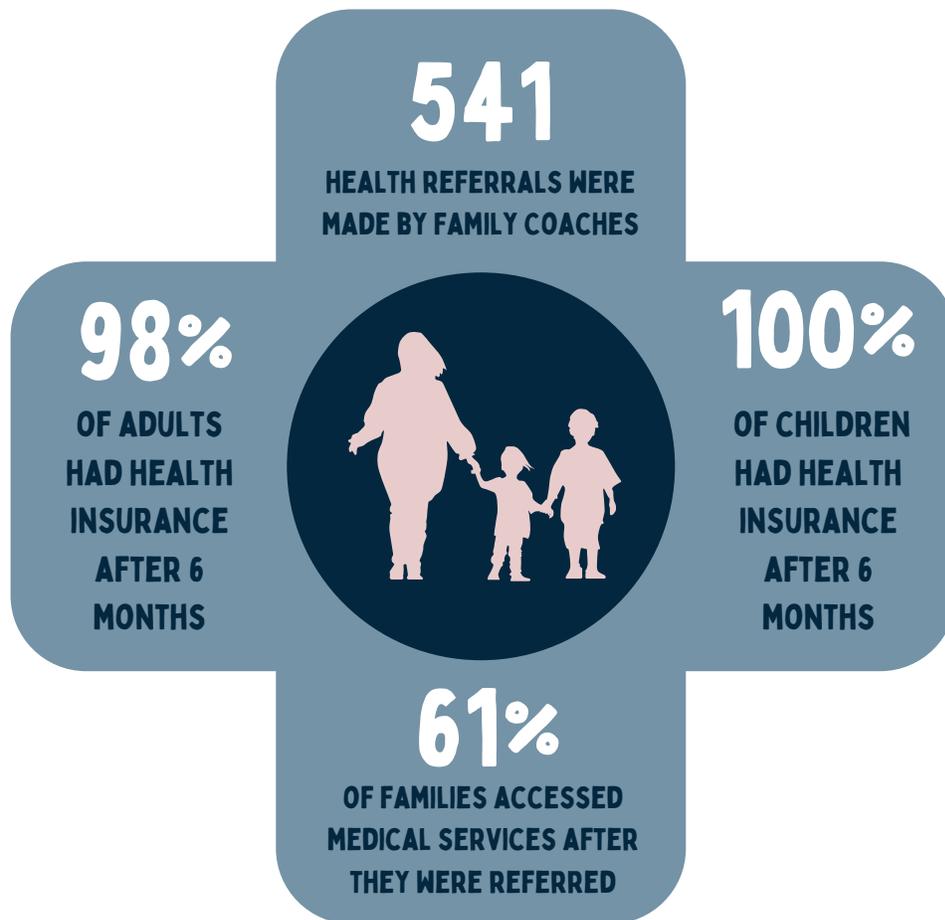
Aroostook County Action Program

Vanessa started working with ACAP a year ago. At the time she was homeless and staying with a friend without any supports. When Vanessa enrolled in WFS, her first goal with her Family Coach was to enroll in support programs. Within two appointments, Vanessa and her children were both approved for MaineCare and SNAP and got connected to a primary care physician in their area. Soon after Vanessa's living situation fell through when, after a disagreement, the friend she had been staying with threw all of the family's belongings out on the lawn. Vanessa called her Family Coach and ACAP sent out a van to help her and her family move their things into a room at ACAP's shelter. Vanessa worked hard to complete applications for housing assistance, and within a few weeks was accepted into a subsidized apartment. ACAP connected her with some furniture and partnered with Catholic Charities to provide a \$150 voucher to purchase more furniture. Vanessa soon started working at a full-time job and enrolled in college, making the dean's list her first semester.

Anna and Corey

Aroostook County Action Program

Anna, Corey, and their three small children were living in a camper when they partnered with WFS in December. As winter approached they were struggling to heat their home and were hauling five gallons of fuel to fill their tank every day. Their Family Coach helped them apply for the Home Energy Assistance Program to help with energy expenses and they were approved. The family worked with their Family Coach and eventually were able to find an apartment that fit their budget. Their next steps include applying for WIC to help provide for their 9-month-old baby. ACAP is also helping the family search for an apartment with cheaper rent in anticipation of their Emergency Rental Assistance ending.



Physical and Mental Health

Physical and mental health goals are an essential part of Whole Family Services. A family's health affects every aspect of their lives, and many families with long-term housing, education, and career goals often come to Whole Family Services with health as their first priority. A family's health goals may involve disability, dental work, chronic anxiety or depression, substance use and recovery, or any other health-related challenge affecting family stability.

Whole Family Services measures access to healthcare by the number of individuals who have enough health insurance or Free Care to cover regular PCP visits and by the number of families who access health services once they're referred. Measuring families who actually accessed services is one way that we assess other barriers families may be facing, including transportation to appointments.

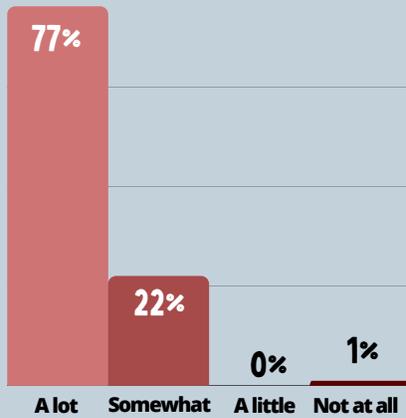
While almost every individual who partnered with Whole Family Services for longer than six months was able to obtain health insurance, some families do face initial challenges when trying to enroll. WFS helps families applying for MaineCare to collect necessary documentation and proof of residency, which can be a challenge for families who move frequently or are experiencing homelessness. Other families experience some instability as their income goes up and they lose eligibility for publicly funded insurance options, and WFS is available to help them explore alternative ways to remain insured.*

Maine's immigrant community also experiences unique barriers with health insurance access since many adults do not qualify for full MaineCare due to their immigration status. WFS providers working with individuals who do not qualify for MaineCare help families access alternative options like Free Care through the hospital system.

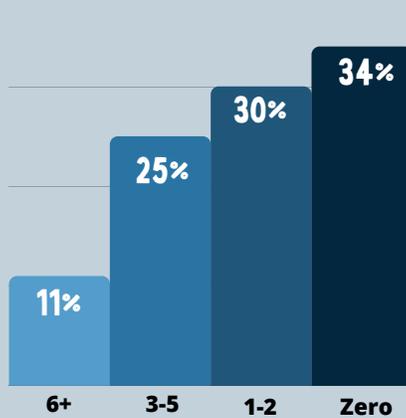
*A change in income has not been an allowable reason for MaineCare closure during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency which began on March 8 2020.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY

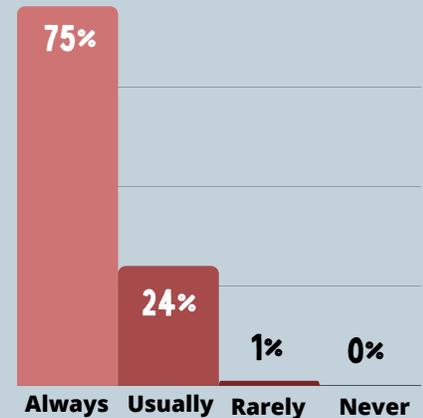
DO YOU FEEL MORE SELF-CONFIDENT BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT THAT HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO ME BY THIS PROGRAM?



HOW MANY SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY EVENTS DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN EVERY MONTH?



DO YOU KNOW WHO TO TURN TO FOR HELP IN YOUR LIFE?



2,200



HOME AND COMMUNITY VISITS WERE CONDUCTED BY WFS FAMILY COACHES

126



PARENTS PARTICIPATED IN A WORKSHOP WITH OTHER PARENTS

Social Capital and Self-Confidence

Helping families connect with their community and their peers is a core aspect of a whole family approach to services. Increased social capital and self-confidence are difficult outcomes to measure, but Whole Family Services considers these less tangible outcomes to be an essential part of a complete view of family stability. Hopelessness and isolation are common experiences for the families we partner with, and many WFS families have expressed a new sense of hope, excitement, and relief as they achieve their goals.

Maine's Whole Family Services programs seek to build connections in Maine's communities by connecting families to local resources, facilitating community events, and meeting families in their home and in public. It also means that Whole Family Services providers work to develop networks of support in their regions, coordinating with other agencies and providers to ensure that families receive appropriate resources and referrals.

WFS also provides access to workshops for parents. Workshop topics might include anything from household budgeting to parenting to healthy eating, and all workshops provide an opportunity for parents enrolled in the program to spend time with other parents.

Family Highlights

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND HEALTH

Olivia

Midcoast Maine Community Action

Olivia struggles with debilitating anxiety and initially opted out of in-person meetings when she enrolled in WFS. Her new Family Coach was happy to accommodate her by providing services over the phone. Eventually Olivia felt comfortable enough with her Family Coach to meet over a Zoom call. Her Coach spent time providing Olivia with tools to gain self-confidence and communication skills and connected her with a therapist for specialized support. Olivia has enrolled her child in a soccer program and attended every practice without experiencing panic attacks. Her self-confidence has increased so much that she recently expressed an interest in hosting a weekly art class for other parents and plans to begin instructing this fall.

Holly

York County Community Action

Holly has previously been through periods of homelessness and has struggled with depression. In partnership with WFS Holly has found a new job closer to home that allows her to spend more time with her children in the afternoons. Holly has even found time to take care of herself and recently had several teeth pulled in preparation for a new set of dentures. This self-care has improved her confidence and decreased her symptoms of depression, and she says she is looking forward to being able to smile confidently.

Elaine

York County Community Action

Elaine recently completed a six-month jail sentence and a year of intensive outpatient substance use recovery for her opiate addiction. Since partnering with WFS Elaine has celebrated one year of sobriety, been granted custody of her child, found a part-time job, and had her driver's license reinstated. One of her life goals has been to work in early childhood education, and her Family Coach recently connected her to a teacher training position within Early Head Start to begin her journey as an educator.

Kristina

Aroostook County Action Program

"I felt hopeless, had no positive support, no one to talk too. Not knowing how I was going to be able to provide for my family caused me to have a lot of anxiety. ACAP went over the top, above and beyond to help us. Helped me maintain my job part time job, not give up, gave me hope and restored my confidence. ACAP services and supports helped me regain a positive mindset and was a huge relief for me and my family."

Maggie and Tom

Community Concepts

Maggie, Tom, and their three children were experiencing economic and emotional hardship after they lost work during the Covid-19 pandemic. The additional stress was causing conflict in the household and Tom had left the home. When they decided to partner with WFS they told their coach that they didn't see a way out of their situation. Their Coach helped them find assistance repairing their vehicle and Maggie soon returned to work full time. Recently Tom moved back in with the rest of the family and they feel that they have regained much of the love, joy, and confidence that they had before the pandemic.

Tammy and John

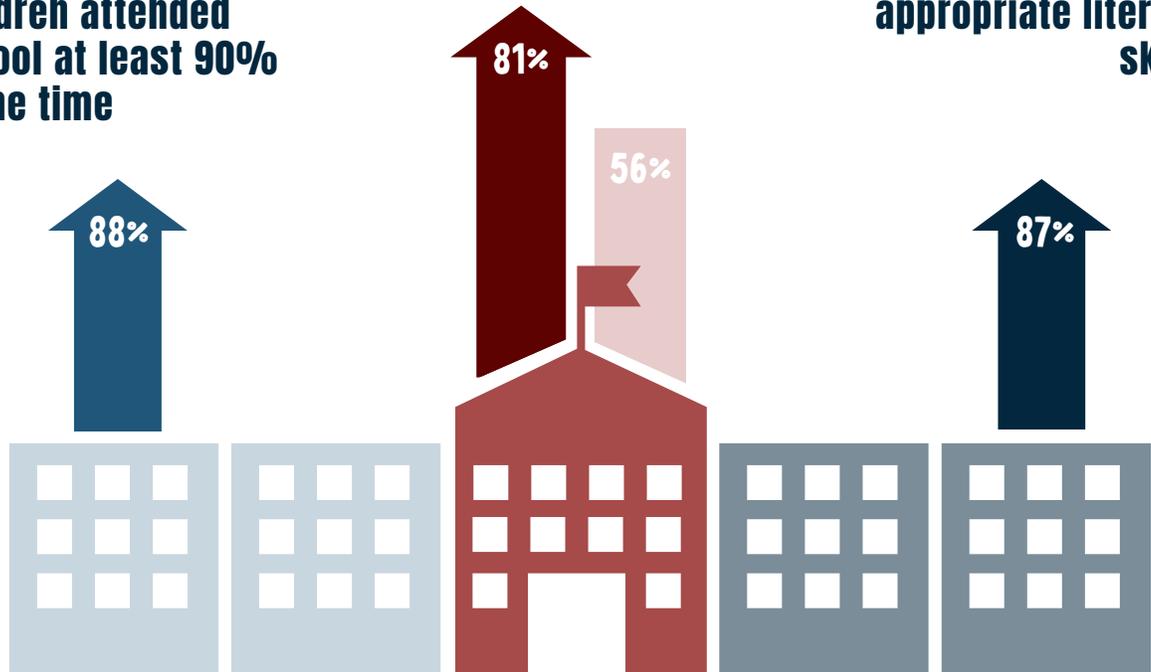
The Opportunity Alliance

After a major medical event left John unable to work, Tammy too had to leave her job to care for her family at home. When they began their partnership with WFS, Tammy and John were facing eviction. They had also recently identified some developmental concerns for one of their children, complicating their childcare search. Their Family Coach was able to help them identify next steps to apply for disability and Emergency Rental Assistance and provided a referral to Child Development Services. Tammy soon found a full-time position and says that the family feels much less isolated and alone than they did before they found WFS.

88% of parents with school-aged children reported that their children attended school at least **90%** of the time

Families enrolled in WFS for longer than 6 months were **45% more likely to have enough childcare to cover their needs**

87% of parents reported that their children had age-appropriate literacy skills



Child Development

Maine's Whole Family Services programs provide multigenerational services, which means that every family partnering with the program works with their Family Coach to create goals for both parents and children. Goals for children often include increased school attendance, access to developmental screenings and checkups, enrollment in childcare, and grade-appropriate educational outcomes.

Many Whole Family providers have used their programs to offer additional supports to parents whose children were enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start, relying on the stable, high-quality childcare to support the families' broader goals of stability.

Several agencies have also developed relationships with Maine DHHS's Office of Child and Family Services to partner with families with active or past involvement with Child Protective Services. Leanne Waldie, the Family Development Coach Team Lead at Community Concepts, provided some insight into her approach to partnering with families referred from CPS: "We have the difficult conversations with parents about the barriers that led to the CPS involvement, as well as other barriers they have. We work with the caseworker and the parent to develop a plan for rectifying the issues that led to CPS involvement and then continue with the family after the case has moved to permanency or closure. We also maintain open communication with the caseworker in order to work as a team to support the family and ensure child safety. We attend Family Team Meetings and court hearings with the parents whenever we are able. This goes a long way to showing parents that we are truly working to support the whole family. "



Family Highlights

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Richard

Midcoast Maine Community Action

When Richard began partnering with WFS he was engaged with Child Protective Services over safety issues involving firearms in his household. By court order, Richard had a limited time to complete workshops on parenting and firearm safety. Richard's Family Coach helped him connect to the workshops and even provided funds to cover the cost of the firearms safety course. Richard was facing potential jail time and his Family Coach attended his court sentencing date and provided a letter describing the services that were being provided to Richard and his family, ultimately helping him avoid a jail sentence. The Coach has since helped Richard and his children successfully enroll in Head Start and connected the family with Child Development Services, behavioral therapy, children's case management, and mental health evaluations for the adults in the household.

Amber

Community Concepts

Amber was referred to WFS by Child Protective Services after her and her four children had been evicted. Her partner had recently left the family and Amber's landlord, a relative of her former partner, was evicting her. In order to maintain her full-time employment, Amber was forced to drive her children to the closest available childcare, which was an hour away and added almost four hours to her daily commute. This extra time constraint resulted in an unpaid leave of absence from her job. Amber's Family Coach was able to help Amber move into temporary motel accommodations, provide an emergency food delivery, and assist with finding a more local childcare option so that Amber could return to her full-time job. Her Coach also helped her complete applications for SNAP, TANF, and a housing voucher. They also helped her relocate her pets to increase her chances of finding stable housing. Amber has also been referred to a local family doctor to schedule regular checkups for her children.

Jess and David

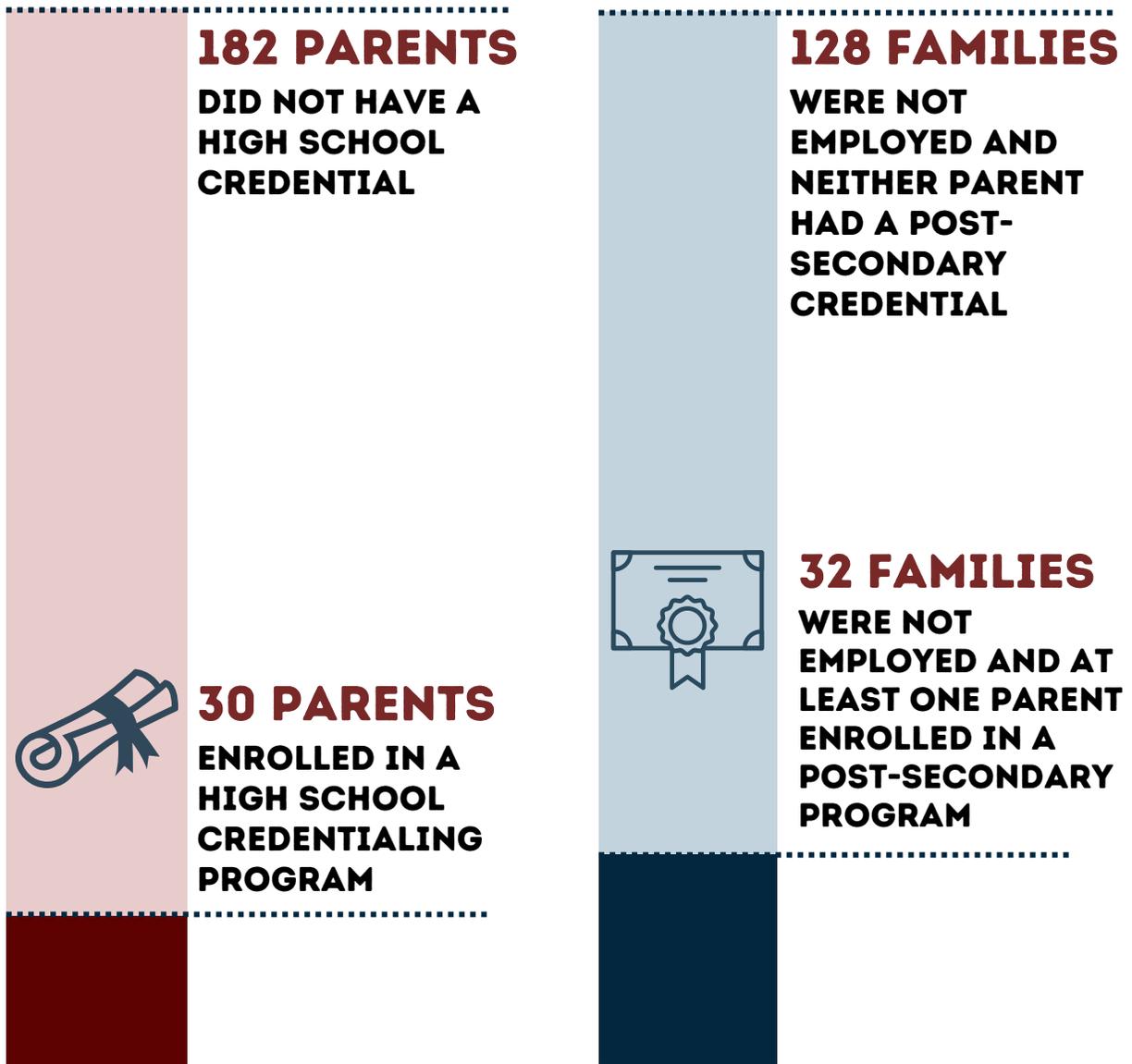
Penquis

Jess and David came to WFS with a concern about their child's behavioral health issues. Their Family Coach helped them enroll in Head Start and connected them to a mental health consultant to work with the family. David does not have a high school diploma, so his Family Coach also helped him enroll in a HiSET preparation course, which he has fully committed to. Jess's long-term goal is to finish a degree that she previously started and plans to work with her Coach to connect to an internship that will help her graduate.

Michelle

Midcoast Maine Community Action

Both of Michelle's children receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for ongoing diagnoses. When Michelle moved to Maine a year ago, she had thought that the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) that she had established in her home state would transfer to her new school system, but when one of her children started having trouble in school she learned that their IEP had expired. Michelle's Family Coach provided her with information on how IEPs work in Maine and offered to help Michelle work with the school system. Michelle and her coach were surprised to learn that the school had no knowledge of her child's diagnoses. Michelle's Coach advocated for a psychological evaluation to be conducted by the school before the end of the school year in order to help Michelle apply for in-home support service referrals. Michelle's Coach also made a referral to Disability Rights Maine access additional advocacy and support for Michelle's child and has helped Michelle contact Maine DOE to mediate between the school and the family. It has since been determined that the child will have an IEP in place for the coming school year. Michelle has also since completed a parenting workshop and found employment for herself. Her long term goals are to continue her own education as she builds a stronger supportive network to meet her children's health and educational needs.



Education

Many of the families who came to Whole Family Services with long-term educational goals felt that they lacked the necessary resources and supports to enroll any time in the near future. Parents whose immediate needs including housing, health, and income often feel that they need to put their educational ambitions lower on the list of priorities. Whole Family Services honors these families' personal priorities while also laying a groundwork of support to help families take the next step in their educational journey.

Roughly 1 in 3 parents enrolled in our programs have not completed high school with a credential. Family Coaches work with these parents to ensure that they have enough childcare and other supports to enroll with their local adult education program to work towards a HiSET.

Many other parents who did graduate with a high school credential are looking to post-secondary education to increase their earnings potential. In the last year 42 parents were working towards a post-secondary credential, 32 of whom were not currently employed.

Family Highlights

EDUCATION

Manuel and Julie

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Manuel completed an Associates in Computer Technology while partnering with KVCAP's Whole Family Services program. Due to his immigration status, Manuel was unable to work while he was taking classes. KVCAP helped Manuel access supports for which he was eligible, including scholarships, grants, and emergency aid programs to help support him while he was in school and to cover tuition. WFS also helped the family find childcare to support Julie, who works part time and is also attending an educational program. Manuel has since received his work authorization and is employed full-time in an IT department, a job which provides his family a living wage. Manuel is scheduled to start his bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity in Fall 2022.

Amanda

Aroostook County Action Program

Amanda has been on SSI since she was 18. One of her children is enrolled in Head Start at ACAP, and when she heard that ACAP could provide her a Family Coach she asked about assistance pursuing her HiSET so that she could go to college. Amanda has since achieved her HiSET and has been accepted to Northern Maine Community College. She started summer courses in 2022 and decided to ask her Family Coach for help applying for jobs. She ultimately interviewed for an Ed Tech III position at ACAP itself and was hired in summer 2022. She is about to come off of SSI for the first time since she was 18. Amanda is also working with her coach to purchase a new vehicle, enroll in a first-time homebuyer's class at ACAP, and improve her credit so that she can qualify for a home loan. Her long-term goal is to find a home where she can open a daycare facility once she finishes her degree in Early Childhood Education.

Alex

Downeast Community Partners

Alex recently gave birth to her first child. Alex's Family Coach had connected Alex to her local adult education program so that she could start working towards her HiSET, and Alex has been able to continue taking classes and working towards her credential while taking care of her newborn. Alex and her child have access to a maternal nurse who is helping manage some medical issues that the baby is experiencing. Her long-term goal is to care for her child's health, obtain her high school credential, and ultimately to go to college for nursing.

Kaitlin

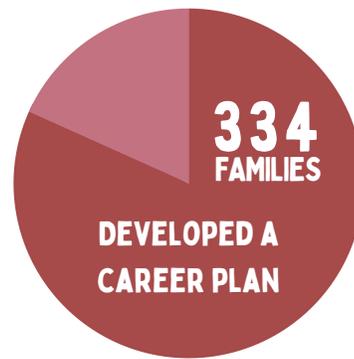
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Kaitlin was working as a Certified Nursing Assistant in a hospital, but demanding hours made it difficult to find enough childcare to remain employed. Kaitlin worked with WFS to apply for Central Maine Community College's Medical Assistance program to increase her job prospects and earning potential and hopes to find a job with a more flexible schedule. Her ultimate goal is to become a registered nurse. While enrolled in WFS, Kaitlin and her child moved to Boston to escape a domestic abuse situation. Kaitlin has since exited WFS but was able to find safe housing and apply to local education programs as she transitioned to her new home.

Erin

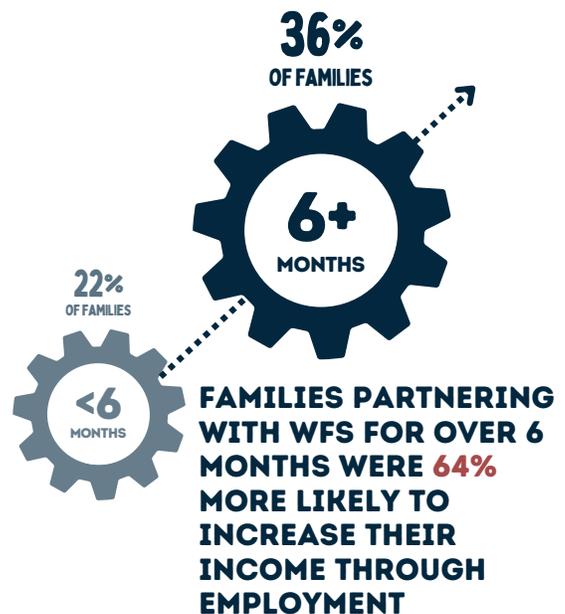
Penquis

Erin came to Penquis through their Head Start program. After her son aged out, Penquis was able to continue working with Erin through Whole Family Services. Erin is currently taking college courses. She started her education journey studying to be a paralegal but has now decided it's possible to pursue a law degree after working with her Family Coach to make a plan. Erin's son has dietary and speech issues, so she has worked with WFS to find her son a dietician and specialized speech services.



1 in 8

SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORTED THAT THEIR INCOME HAD INCREASED "A LOT" WHILE PARTNERING WITH WFS



Employment and Income

Maine's Whole Family Services programs take a broad look at what stability means for a family, and for the majority of families this includes new or increased employment opportunities. Family Coaches work with each family to develop a long-term career plan for at least one parent in each household. Employment is the most immediate concern for many families and we work with each one to make sure that they have access to the housing, transportation, and childcare necessary to support them in their employment goals.

For some families, working towards long-term employment necessitates focusing on other goals in the short term. Many families who are in need of stable housing, better healthcare, and higher educational attainment understand that it takes time to develop a career, and Whole Family Services aims to be a resource for these families for however long they need support. Most families that partner with WFS develop a long-term career plan, even if employment isn't part of their short-term goals.

Whole Family Services is available to any family under 200% FPL, and many families who partner with our programs are employed full-time (and about 10% of families have income over 150% FPL). Many employed families are looking for help with childcare and transportation to remain employed. Some are also looking for help enrolling in educational programs to gain new skills to qualify for higher paying jobs.

Family Highlights

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Jess and Sam

Western Maine Community Action

Jess is enrolled in the Department's HOPE Program and is pursuing a post-secondary degree. Sam has been looking for full-time employment to support the family while Jess finishes school but has had trouble finding work, partly due to a criminal record. Jess has considered putting her education on hold to find employment to support the family. WMCA's Family Coach helped Sam find access employment assistance and Sam has found full-time work that can support their family. Jess has maintained her enrollment in her educational program and is expecting to graduate Fall of 2022. Sam remains employed and is also working with New Ventures Maine to discuss the possibility of starting his own business.

Rebecca

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Rebecca is currently navigating the homebuying process for the first time. She is soon to give birth to her second child and is looking for a home that can fit her growing family. Rebecca was surprised to discover that credit score was much worse than she was expecting, and after some investigation found that there was a credit card in her name that was delinquent on payments. Rebecca has never had a credit card, so she asked her Family Coach at KVCAP to help fixing her credit score. Rebecca worked with her coach to send a letter to the credit card company to explain the situation. The card was ultimately removed from her credit report and her credit rating improved enough that she can now qualify for a home loan. She is currently working with a realtor to find a new home before her second child arrives.

Mahzala and Lmar

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services

Mahzala, Lmar, and their three children are Afghani refugees. Mahzala is fluent in English and MEIRS was able to help her register for an exam to become a certified interpreter, and she is now working as an interpreter and earning an income. Lmar is a mechanic but has low English language skills. Despite his language barriers, Lmar worked with MEIRS to obtain his drivers license and find work at a tire store. With the money that Mahzala and Lmar are earning from their new employment they were able to purchase a car. Mahzala, who has never driven, has obtained her drivers permit and is scheduled to take her road test to get her license.

Rachel

Downeast Community Partners

Rachel recently achieved sobriety and found full-time employment. In partnership with Downeast Community Partner's WFS program she was able to obtain temporary housing at a family shelter and reunite with her young daughter. She was recently promoted to Manager at work and has significantly increased her family's income through her new promotion. She has also found reliable transportation and hopes to find stable housing in the near future.

Stacey

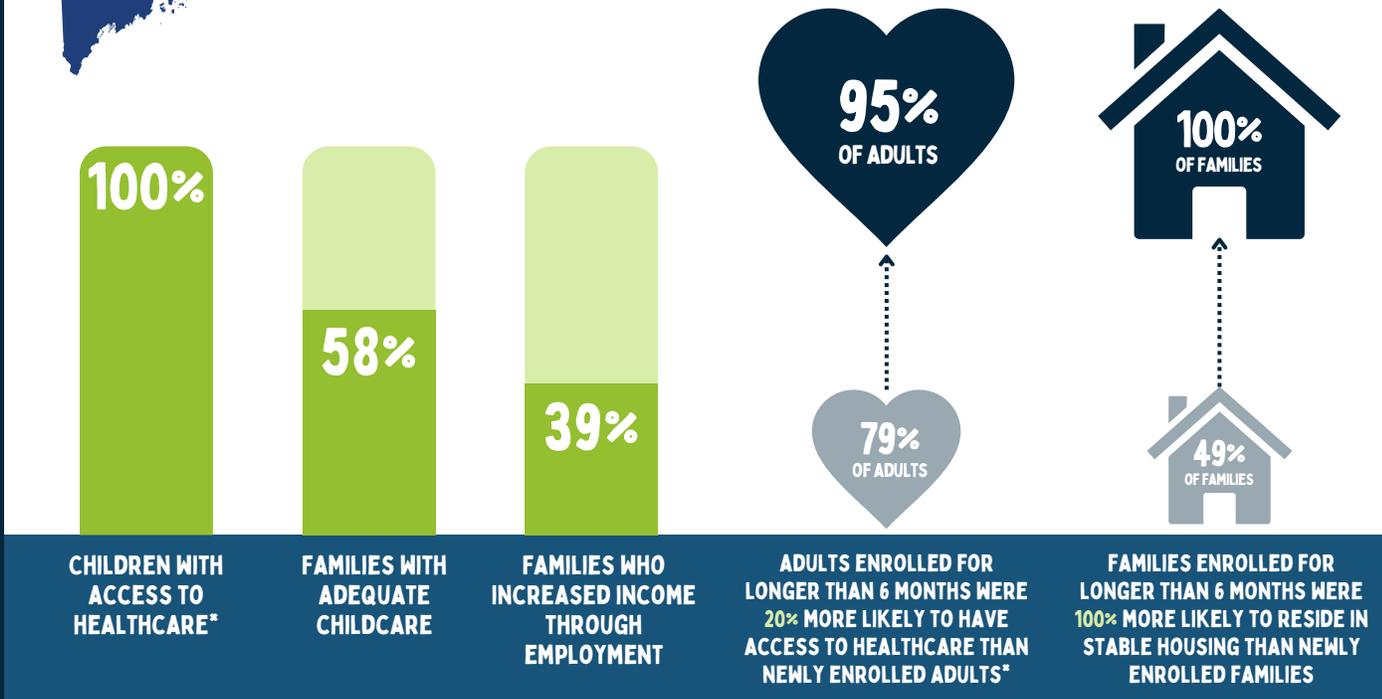
Western Maine Community Action

When Stacey first started partnering with WFS she was trying to expand her residential housekeeping business but transportation was a barrier. She had a working vehicle but her insurance had lapsed, and since the summer rental season had just ended she didn't have extra money on hand to pay. Stacey's Family Coach helped her to access multiple funding sources to pay for her vehicle insurance for six months so that she could keep working. Stacey was also referred to New Ventures Maine for help creating a business plan and hopes to increase her business's financial viability.



Maine Immigrant & Refugee Services Enrollment and Outcomes

69 families
partnered
with MEIRS



New Mainers

Whole Family Services partners with asylum seekers, asylees, refugees, and naturalized citizens across the state to work towards their goals and to help them find long-term stability in their new homes. While most New Mainer families are working towards goals of housing, healthcare, education and employment, many also experience unique challenges including navigating the immigration process and accessing English as a Second Language classes.

New Mainers are able to access services in all 16 counties and many providers are doing incredible work with their regional New Mainer populations. Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS), one of two Whole Family Services providers operating in Androscoggin County, provides services exclusively to the New Mainer population in the Lewiston area. MEIRS employs a multi-cultural coaching team to provide services in Somali and Portuguese to members of Maine's East and West African communities, as well as Dari and Pashto to provide services to Maine's Afghan community. MEIRS also employs a Board of Immigration Appeals Accredited Representative to assist families with the immigration process.

New Mainer families working with MEIRS experience housing instability at higher rates than other families partnering with Whole Family Services. In the last year MEIRS partnered with the Migration Policy Institute through support from the John T. Gorman foundation to engage stakeholders Lewiston's housing community with the hope of creating awareness of the types of issues that New Mainer families face when looking for safe and affordable housing in the area.

*Some New Mainers are ineligible for full MaineCare benefits due to immigration status. In the outcomes data for MEIRS, access to healthcare is measured by an individual's ability to arrive at and pay for regular medical appointments, which may include individuals with private insurance or MaineCare as well as those who have been able to access Free Care through the hospital system.



Family Highlights

NEW MAINERS

Esther and Joao

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services

When Esther came to Whole Family Services she was experiencing severe dental pain. Her Family Coach called all of the local dental providers who would accept Esther's MaineCare but none had appointments for several weeks. Esther's coach called dental providers further and further out until she found a provider an hour away who could take an emergency appointment. Joao, who is working full-time to support the family, was unable to get home from work to watch the children, so Esther found a neighbor to help while her Family Coach drove her to her dental appointment. Her coach waited for the dental procedure to be completed and then drove Esther to pick up her new prescription before dropping her off at her house. Esther has since given birth to a new child, Joao has obtained his driver's license, and the family is saving for a down payment on a vehicle.

Aamiina

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services

Aamiina was separated from her husband and two of her four children in her home country. When Aamiina enrolled in WFS with MEIRS she was looking for a place for her and her two small children to live. One of her children needs specialized medical care due to an old injury and access to medical services was also important for the family. Aamiina's Family Coach helped her find an apartment within walking distance from a hospital and the MEIRS office so that the family has easy access to the services they require. Her child's medical condition has improved tremendously since finding a stable place to live. MEIRS also helped Aamiina with her immigration process and she has since been granted asylum, which will allow her to bring her husband and two remaining children to Maine. Her children have entered school and she has found employment to help support her family.

Paola and Oscar

Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Paula and Oscar came to WFS through KVCAP's Early Head Start program looking for help managing their finances, with the ultimate goal of purchasing a home. They've worked with their Family Coach on household budgeting and are working to improve their credit score. WFS also referred them to a financial management course called My Money Works offered through New Ventures Maine. Oscar is also taking English as a Second Language classes to improve his English so that he can find employment. His coach referred Oscar to the local CareerCenter to get help practicing for a virtual or phone interview since remote communication can present additional challenges for English Language Learners. Oscar has since found a full-time position that provides a living wage. He has also completed the FAFSA and plans to start courses towards a Bachelor's this fall.

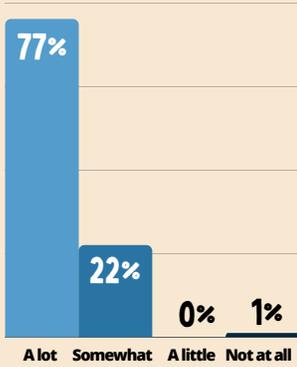
Constance

Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services

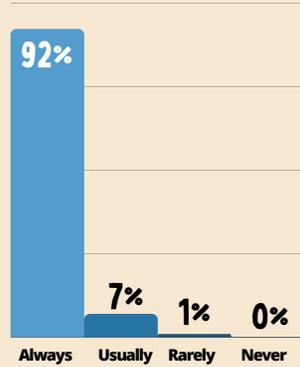
Constance came to the U.S. through the border with Mexico. While in the custody of federal border agents Constance had her glasses taken from her. Constance is nearly blind without her glasses and has struggled to read and understand paperwork and documentation sent to her about her immigration status. Constance is ineligible for MaineCare (although her son is eligible) so she was having difficulty getting a new pair of glasses. Her Family Coach with MEIRS was able to find help through a local community member who donated money to help Constance see an eye doctor and to purchase two new pairs of glasses for her.

PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

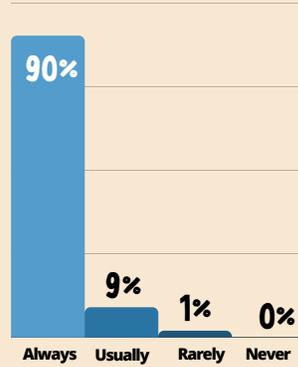
I FEEL MORE SELF-CONFIDENT BECAUSE OF THE SUPPORT THAT HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO ME BY THIS PROGRAM.



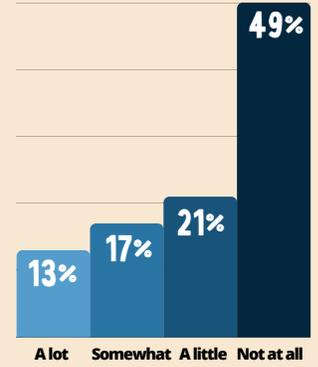
I FEEL LIKE AN EQUAL PARTNER WITH MY COACH.



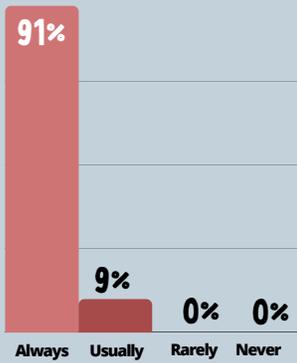
MY FAMILY COACH MAKES REFERRALS AND CONNECTS ME TO RESOURCES THAT HELP ME MEET MY NEEDS AND REACH MY GOALS.



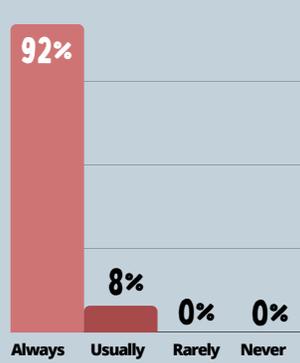
MY MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD INCOME HAS INCREASED.



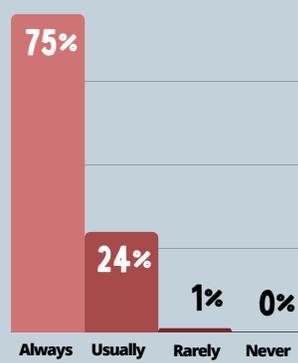
I FEEL STAFF RESPONDED TO MY FAMILY'S NEEDS, PROVIDING SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE WHEN NECESSARY.



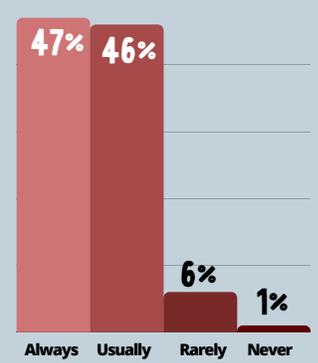
STAFF HAVE KEPT OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION.



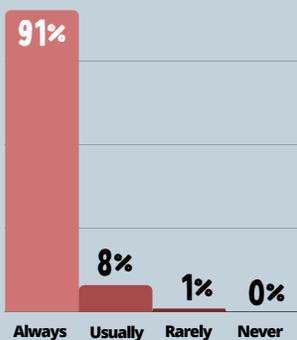
I KNOW WHO TO TURN TO FOR HELP IN MY LIFE.



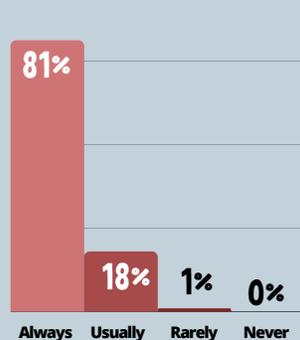
I FEEL LIKE I CAN CONNECT WELL WITH OTHERS.



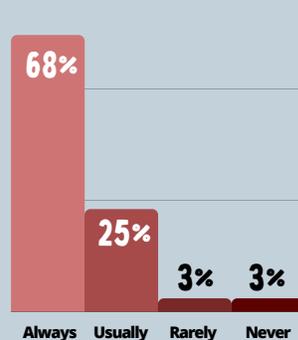
MY FAMILY COACH UNDERSTANDS MY SCHEDULE AND TRANSPORTATION SITUATION AND SCHEDULES OUR APPOINTMENTS AT TIMES THAT WORK FOR ME.



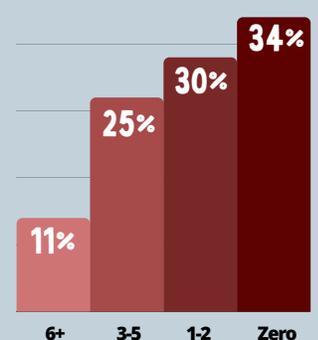
I FEEL LIKE THE GOALS MY FAMILY AND I SET WITH OUR FAMILY COACH MATCH OUR NEEDS AND WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH.



MY CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL REGULARLY.



I PARTICIPATE IN _____ COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL EVENTS EVERY MONTH.



SURVEY RESPONDENTS: 101

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO COMPLETED A SURVEY: 18%

Surveys are collected by WFS providers annually at a minimum. Surveys are voluntary and anonymous.

Contact and Referrals

For more information about Maine's Whole Family Services programs and for assistance getting in touch with your local program provider for a family referral, please contact:

Tim Sturtevant

Whole Family Services Program Manager

Office for Family Independence

timothy.sturtevant@maine.gov

207.615.7162



STATE OF MAINE

Department of
Health and Human Services

Office for Family Independence