

Mid-Maine Homeless
Shelter & Services

2023



ANNUAL
REPORT



Hope Starts Here

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services

Board of Directors

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KARYN BOURNIVAL,
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

TANYA FOSSETT,
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



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MISSION & VISION

We envision a community where homelessness is a rare, brief and a one-time event. Our mission is to provide support to people experiencing homelessness by providing shelter, food, and services to low income and vulnerable members of the Mid-Maine community.

Our vision and mission are based on three core values: (1) we believe in the inherent strength of the people we serve and trust they are able to determine the course of their lives and achieve housing stability; (2) we believe in building relationships of mutual trust and respect by recognizing the right of self-determination of everyone and ensuring that underrepresented voices are given an opportunity to influence decisions and speak their truth; (3) we believe that simple, decent and affordable housing is a right for all people and is necessary for building and sustaining healthy communities.

In order to achieve this vision, we organize our work around 3 key pillars:

Pillar 1: Outstanding Programs. This pillar adopts a Housing First strategy. We will strengthen the Emergency Shelter (including day shelter), YES (Youth Empowerment Services) permanent supported housing for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness, and Targeted Case Management which works to prevent homelessness.

Pillar 2: Greater Capacity. We need to build organizational capacity. This pillar focuses on setting ambitious financial goals, growing our revenues, board development, building an even stronger base of volunteers, and recruiting and retaining top professional talent.

Pillar 3: Significant Influence. Everyone who visits or experiences MMHSS knows that they've just witnessed something special and unique. This pillar builds on this positive foundation and focuses on establishing MMHSS as a recognized authority on poverty, vulnerability, and homelessness and a trusted community partner. This will be achieved through strategic partnerships, effective communication with internal and external stakeholders, and greater advocacy for the people we serve.

“Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement and success have no meaning.”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CO-CHAIRS



Marc Sirois



Kelly Rancourt

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends:


We share this annual message in a spirit of gratitude. That is the word which comes to mind as we reflect on the many ways Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Services (MMHSS) has honored its mission during the past year.

First and foremost, we thank all who work, day and night, throughout the year to ensure that no person in need is without shelter on any given night, particularly during the cold of winter. They are welcomed with open arms, respect, and compassion. These values are clearly enunciated in our agency's Guest Handbook, which was revised last summer.

The attitude of service to those at risk of housing insecurity in our local communities extends to all our staff who work tirelessly to prevent hundreds of persons, most notably families, children, and the elderly, from experiencing homelessness. In an era when housing options are limited and expensive, the efforts of our case managers, housing navigators, and support staff often result in stellar outcomes and heartwarming stories.

Several months ago, the two of us met with about a dozen employees for lunch and conversation. The discussion blew us away. One after another, the attendees spoke glowingly about how they are made to feel valued as part of a team, and recognized for their efforts in making a difference in the lives of those they serve.





Given this, it is not surprising that our employee turnover rate hovers around 3%, which is almost unheard of for non-profit agencies. With regards to our employees, we remember with sadness two staff members who passed away this year. Stacy Harris and Bill Tanner were passionate about putting into action the mission of MMHSS. Their selfless approaches live on in the hearts of their colleagues.

None of what MMHSS accomplishes would be possible without adequate funding. Many people do not realize the significant operational costs we incur. We are particularly grateful to Dr. Katie Spencer White, our President & CEO, and her administrative team for the hundreds of hours they put into raising revenue and being responsible stewards of those monies. In addition, the partnerships they continue to form with local, state, and federal stakeholders are critical to our services being of such high quality. To those of you reading this annual report who donate your time and/or funds to support us, we are most appreciative.

This year, we welcomed Kate Carlisle to our Board of Directors. Her experience, creativity, and perspectives have already made a positive impact on our governing body. Board recruitment will be a priority this coming year. We are fortunate that several persons have indicated an interest in assuming this vital role.

As the Board welcomes new members, we owe profound appreciation for the contributions of Janelle Gath and Dr. Tom Longstaff, each of whose terms will be expiring during the next few weeks. They leave to us their expertise, wisdom, devotion, and grace. Though they will no longer be official representatives on our Board of Directors, we look forward to continuing to tap into their considerable talents.

In concluding this message of thanksgiving, we look forward with even greater appreciation for what Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter and Services will accomplish this coming year. Please journey with us as we continue to envision a community where homelessness is a rare, brief, and one-time event.

Sincerely,

Kelly Rancourt and Marc Sirois. Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors



Executive Summary

Five years ago in 2019, I joined Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services. I had never worked in homeless services before, and I had certainly never led an organization through a pandemic. But I knew there was something special about this organization, its people, the community, and the potential transform homeless response in this part of Maine.



Katie Spencer White
President & CEO

Transform is exactly what we did. When MMHSS served its first guest in 1990 at the Notre Dame Parish Life House on Silver Street, we had 8 beds and a lot of faith. Today we have 62 beds, which we regularly expand to 90 in winter – and we have more faith than ever. We also serve people we never contemplated in 1990: people with major mental illness, those with addiction, victims of human trafficking, young adults leaving systems of care, seniors with critical health needs, and people who defy labels and are simply in need of a safe place to rest at night.

A lot has changed over the last 34 years – not only are we living in a different century, our social and economic world is very different. One of the most obvious changes has been the loss of jobs and affordable housing in Waterville, and the arrival of an opioid fueled addiction crisis the likes of which we never anticipated as we entered the last decade of the 20th century.



When you have a great mission and community support, however, anything is possible, and obstacles become opportunities. Our mission has always been to serve the most vulnerable with dignity and love. We've built on that solid foundation and today we are one of the most impactful homeless services agencies in the state.

In 2023 we:



Provided 22,500 bed nights to 337 unique individuals.



Assisted 534 people in maintaining stable housing through financial aid, referrals, landlord mediation, and financial counseling.



Became the only community in Maine to end unsheltered homelessness during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 winters.



Continue to serve local people: 85% come from the immediate Waterville area, 95% from Kennebec & Somerset counties.



Distributed food to more than 150 unique individuals.



Were the first general shelter to welcome pets.



Reversed more than 30 overdoses.

Our success in 2023 is the result of years of work to build capacity, transform our culture, and commit to delivering high quality, evidence-based services. We are sustained by the work we do together, by the successes large and small of the people we serve, and by knowing that what we do matters.

The work is never finished, and the demand is greater than ever. We're determined to meet the moment. Our foundation remains strong, and every day presents another opportunity to build on our achievements. We have no choice. Lives depend on it.

On behalf of everyone here at MMHSS, we offer our sincerest thanks and gratitude to everyone who supported these efforts. We can't predict the future, but we know our foundation remains strong. And over the next five years, together, we'll meet all of the moments to come.

Programs

Program Director Report

In 2023, Waterville and its surrounding areas experienced a significant surge in homelessness, unlike anything witnessed before. While instances of people sleeping rough had been observed in the past, the scale reached alarming levels by the spring of 2023, with an estimated 100 or more individuals living without shelter in Waterville by fall.



David Sovetsky
Program Director

In response to this crisis, we convened a meeting with city officials and other service providers to establish the Waterville Homeless Task Force. Through collaborative efforts, we were able to provide safe sleeping arrangements for all those living outdoors by fall, effectively dispersing encampments before the onset of colder weather.

Our shelter team played a pivotal role in this response, operating a 6-month overnight warming center with an inclusive no-turn-away policy. As the sole shelter in the state to adopt such an approach, we took pride in our ability to offer refuge to all who sought it. Additionally, we enhanced our harm reduction practices and staff training, resulting in the **reversal of over 30 overdoses in 2023**.

Despite facing challenges, such as only having to ban two guests over six months for violent or drug-related behavior, our team remained dedicated to serving the community. **We sheltered 193 unique guests** and a maximum of 42 additional guests during peak periods in the warming center for winter 2023-2024. For comparison, our year round shelter served 144 unique guests. Collectively, **our shelter programs served 337 individuals experiencing homelessness**.

Expanding our prevention efforts, we secured funding to engage in housing problem-solving conversations with individuals seeking emergency homeless services. Through this initiative, we **assisted over 534** people in maintaining stable housing through financial aid, referrals, landlord mediation, and financial counseling. While funding remains a concern for the program's sustainability, we remain committed to its continuation in 2024.

Furthermore, we launched **Rapid Rehousing (TRRP)**, a new program aimed at supporting families and individuals residing in hotels to secure permanent, stable housing. Initially targeting households facing homelessness due to financial strain, the Rapid Rehousing program, funded by Maine State Housing, provided case management, housing navigation, and landlord incentives over six months. Within less than a year, our team successfully housed 37 households.

Lastly, we mourn the loss of a dear colleague. **Dr. William Tanner** from our Case Management department passed away suddenly in December 2023. A beloved mentor, friend, and advocate for those battling substance abuse, his absence is deeply felt. While his unique contributions cannot be replaced, we remain committed to upholding his legacy by continuing to provide exemplary support for individuals facing substance abuse challenges. Dr. Tanner will be dearly missed, but his spirit will continue to inspire our work.



Dr. William Tanner

It's hard to forget

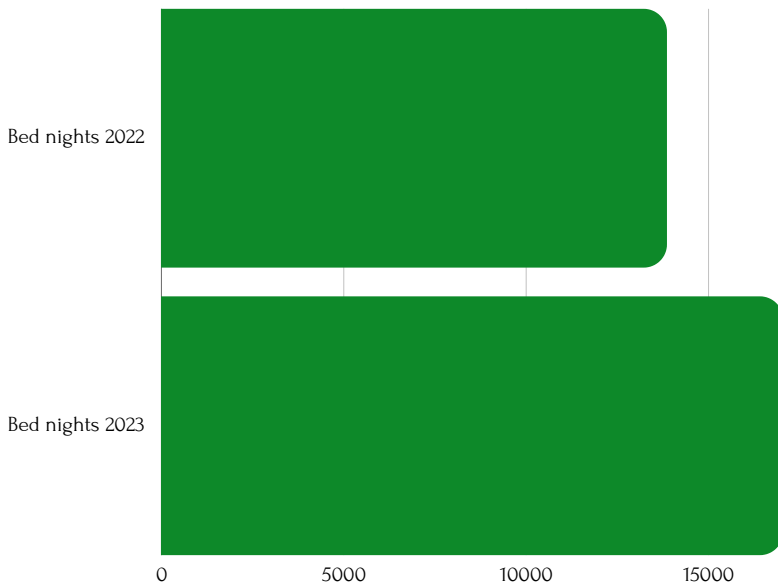
SOMEONE WHO GAVE US SO MUCH TO

remember

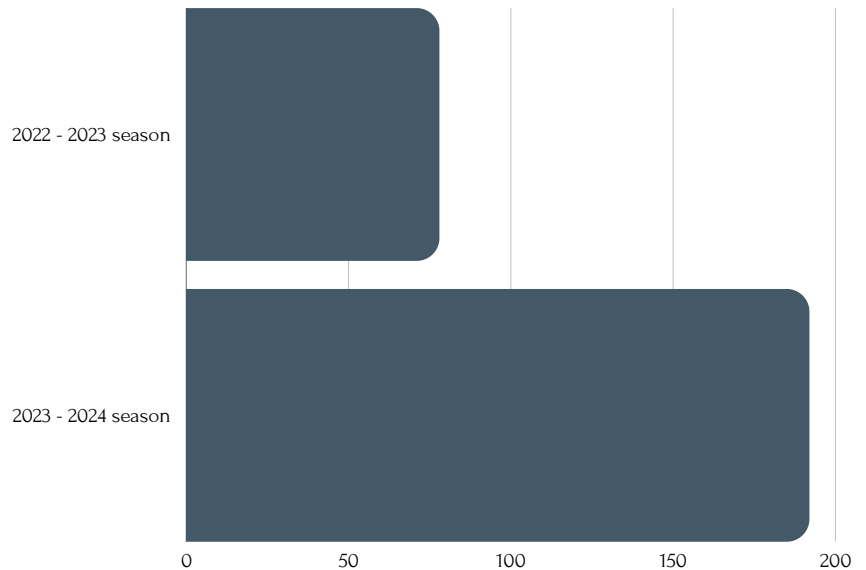
Emergency Shelter (ESHAP)

Our ESHAP shelter supported 17,047 bed nights in 2023. This is a 23% increase over 2022. This was accomplished by utilizing more common area space for mats and cots.

Shelter Bed Nights 2022 vs. 2023



Overnight Warming Center Unique Guests



Also notable is our partnership with the City of Waterville. We have continued to host a Waterville Homeless Task Force, which was able to successfully engage all people living in encampments in the fall of 2023 and effectively end encampments in Waterville for the winter season.

Brock's story

Brock is a young man who faced multiple stays in shelter over several years. Thanks to his hard work and the support of shelter staff and case managers, Brock found housing in 2024. receiving the necessary support to maintain employment and attend to his mental and physical well-being while working towards securing stable housing.

In 2022, Brock briefly stayed at the Mid-Maine homeless shelter, where his untreated mental illness posed a significant challenge. Struggling with personal support systems and mental health, Brock chose to leave the shelter voluntarily, his destination unknown. However, in 2023, Brock began reaching out to regain entry into the shelter. He diligently checked in daily and eventually secured a bed after navigating the waiting list.

Staff familiar with Brock from his previous stay noticed a remarkable change in his appearance and demeanor during his return to the shelter. He willingly shared his efforts to access appropriate support outside the shelter. While there, he secured and maintained employment at various local establishments. Although Brock continued to grapple with his mental health, his open communication with staff and management allowed for tailored support and occasional accommodations, enabling him to take necessary breaks to connect with his support network away from the shelter.

Brock was supported by shelter staff as he continued to focus on the essential aspects of his well-being. After 10 months in the shelter, he successfully transitioned into his new home.



Brock demonstrated resilience and motivation throughout his shelter stay and thrived with the support and encouragement of shelter staff which resulted in a successful housing outcome.

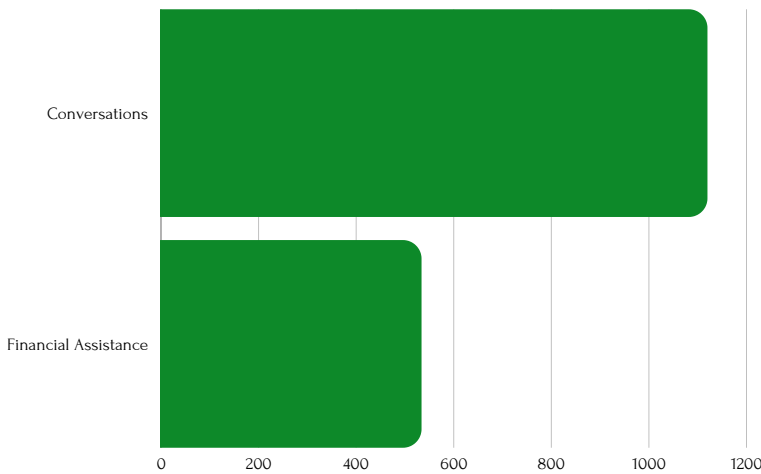
With a safe place to stay, Brock could prioritize his health and benefit from a team of workers assisting him, contributing to yet another success story for the shelter. Following his housing placement, Brock even expressed aspirations of attending college. We extend our best wishes for his journey ahead and hope for his continued success.

Prevention Services

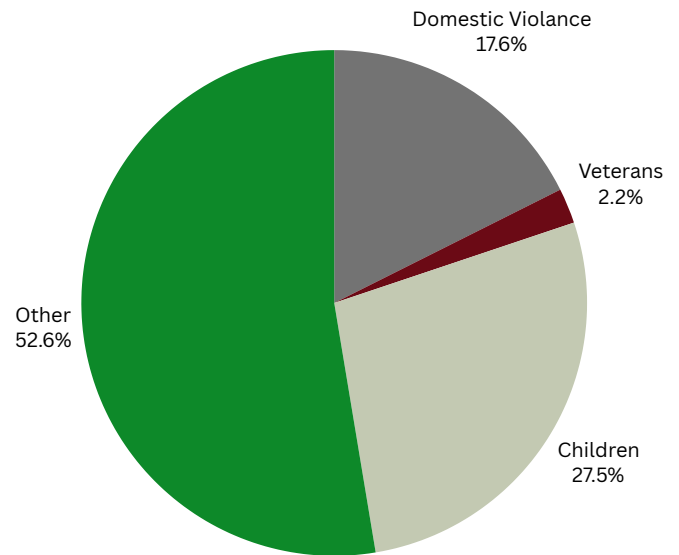
Diversion and Homeless Prevention

- Our prevention Team accomplished great things in 2023. Focused on Housing Positive Conversations, the team helped people stay in their homes and supplied small amounts of financial assistance as needed.
- Our most inclusive program, Prevention worked with many special populations including children, domestic violence survivors and veterans.

Housing Positive Conversations 2023



Special Populations



“To save a life is a real and beautiful thing. To make a home for the homeless, yes, it is a thing that must be good; whatever the world may say, it cannot be wrong.”

~Vincent Van Gogh

Stabilization Services

Case Management Highlights

- We have hired a new Case Manager as access to additional clients has increased.
- We have recently expanded Case Management to people who have not utilized the shelter but are homeless. We will continue this as an outreach component, assisting our community and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness.
- Our case managers are the most effective in the state of helping people find and keep housing. No other case management team in the state has the track record for housing success we have achieved for more than a decade.
- Our case managers have significant expertise in working with people with mental illness, substance use disorder, and major health conditions, as well as special populations like veterans, youth, domestic violence survivors, and the chronically homeless.
- To build their skills, in 2023 all case managers certified as Housing Navigators through MaineHousing.

YES Program (Youth Empowerment Supports)

In 2023, the YES program continued to have impact on young adults in the community. Take the case of the Anderson family (names have been changed), a sweet couple with an infant daughter. The new mother, Kerry, aspired to become a social worker, and with encouragement from the YES team, enrolled in classes at the University of Maine in Augusta and found a place for her daughter at Educare. The couple also worked towards obtaining their driver's licenses, and eventually secured a two-bedroom apartment and have successfully transitioned into their new neighborhood. The future of the Anderson family is bright and we wish them every success - they have earned it!

Another tenant, Amber, successfully completed the ReStart program. The ReStart Program helps families who have housing vouchers get connected with resources to allow them to reach their financial goals. ReStart coaches provide employment and education resources to assist families in becoming self-sufficient. After a four-and-a-half-year journey, Amber achieved the program's highest savings to date. Alongside that, she acquired her CNA license and maintained full-time employment at a local nursing home in Waterville. With her increased income, she no longer requires financial housing assistance. Feeling prepared, she embarked on finding a community apartment. Buoyed by her hard work and preparation, and with encouragement and support from our team, Amber secured a new one-bedroom apartment and is delighted with her new living arrangements and all she has accomplished.



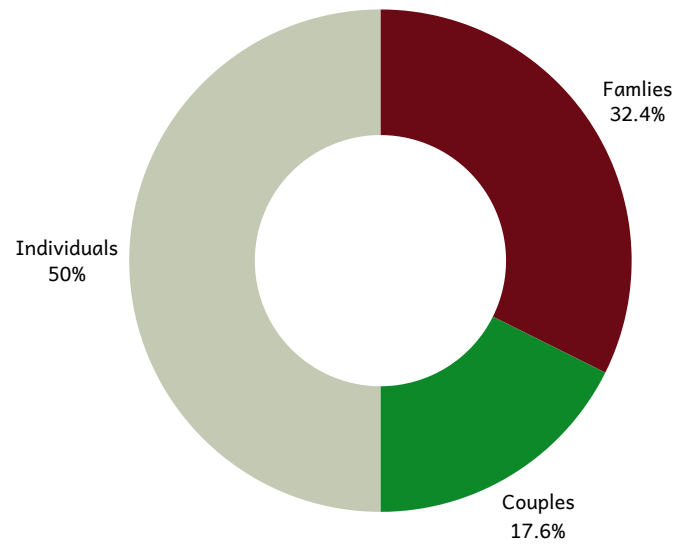
Temporary Rapid Rehousing

Rapid Rehousing is a strategy to move recently housed families and households back to permanent housing with help with a housing search and small amounts of financial assistance. In 2020 we rehoused 37 households, more than any other program in the state.

Over the past year, the Rapid Rehousing Program has been steadfast in its efforts to establish itself as a dependable housing resource in the Kennebec and Somerset counties area. Selected as one of six programs in Maine to receive extended funding from Maine State Housing, the MMHS Rapid Rehousing Program is committed to paving the way for unhoused individuals and families in the community to attain safe and sustainable housing.

A key component of our mission is client empowerment through education. We provide our clients with access to information about available resources, guiding them through the process of securing housing tailored to their specific needs. Whether it involves assisting with voucher applications or facilitating engagement with landlords, we aim to foster independence and equip clients with the necessary tools for success.

Our success is measured by the number of households we connect with housing opportunities. In the past year, the RRH program has served 56 households, encompassing 88 participants. We are proud to have facilitated connections for 11 families, 6 couples, and 17 individuals, totaling approximately 59 people across 34 households.



As we look ahead, we are excited about the prospects for the coming year and remain dedicated to our mission of providing safe and stable housing for those in need within our community.



Lisa's story

It was December 18th, 2023. It had been raining for a few days when the river started to rise and began flooding the houses along the Kennebec. That was the night that Lisa's apartment began to take on water.

Lisa and her family were staying at the Motel 6 in Augusta when they were referred to the Rapid Rehousing Program through her Case Manager.

Lisa, a wife and mother of three boys described the convenience of having her own place compared to living in a hotel and the tragedy that was the loss of her home that they had maintained for years. "It was not much to look at but it was our home." Lisa and her family stayed in the apartment for about a week after the flood waters receded, however the electricity had not been restored. A few days later the landlord informed the couple that they would have to move out of the apartment due to damages caused by the flood waters. The apartment was deemed uninhabitable.

Lisa sought help through GA and her worker at DHHS and was linked to the hotel and soon after the Rapid Rehousing Program. The only income the family had came from Lisa's husband Mark's work in construction and odd jobs he took on whenever he could find them. Mark was a construction worker who took on odd jobs where he could find them. They both openly admitted that they could barely afford the tattered apartment that they left behind prior to the flood. With three boys they were willing to take anything but could only afford a one bedroom.

Lisa's youngest son had some learning disabilities, and she wanted to stay close to the school he had attended his entire life. The Rapid Rehousing team was able to link the family to an Emergency Housing Voucher. Lisa being the motivated mother that she is kept her appointments and began looking for apartments diligently. Lisa reported that she had some apprehension about speaking to landlords. The RRH Navigator was able to act as a liaison between Maine State Housing Authority, the landlord, and the client through out the process. Lisa and her family were able to access affordable, safe housing near her son's school and remain stably housed today.

Operations

Operations Director Report

In 2023, the operations team dedicated considerable focus to enhancing our facility management. This commitment has been crucial in ensuring the safety of our guests, tenants, and staff. Key improvements included an expansion in training and communication, internal building assessments and implementing the Brave system, a reverse motion system that saves lives, and participation in state training courses. In today's digital age, the need for robust IT and cybersecurity measures became a priority as we moved to improve IT and building security.



Karyn Bournival
Operations Director

A significant challenge in 2023 was the increased needs of our building due to the high volume of people we have served, especially through our Winter Warming Center. With another winter season fast approaching, we are thankful for the volunteers and trade partnerships that assist staff in staying on top of repairs and help us plan for future building needs.

As I reflect on 2023 and the commitment to our work from people throughout the community, I am grateful for the continued dedication and support of our partners. Together we've made a difference in the lives of those we serve.

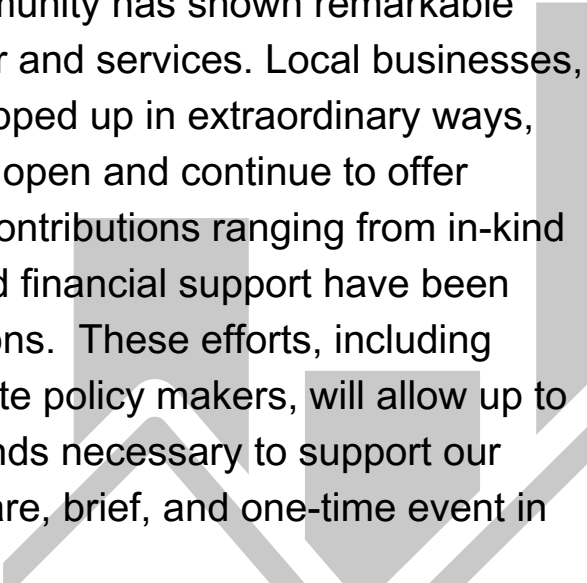


Finance

The past year also presented our organization with a series of financial challenges. With the reduction of government grants and program funding towards the end of FY23, we were faced with substantial financial challenges that impact on our overall cash flow, primarily due to a decrease in funding. These hurdles limited our ability to expand programs as well as sustain current programs such as our emergency shelter.

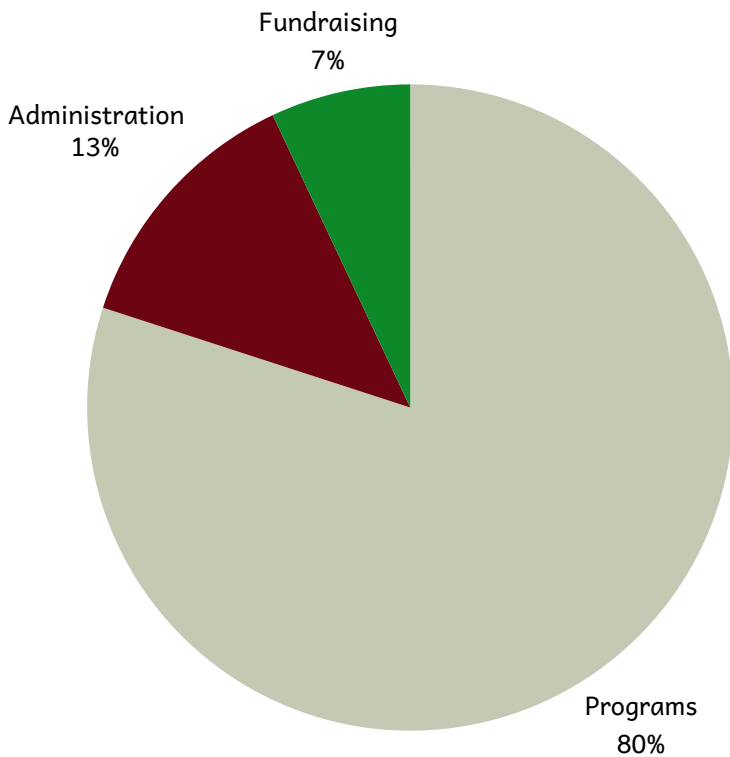
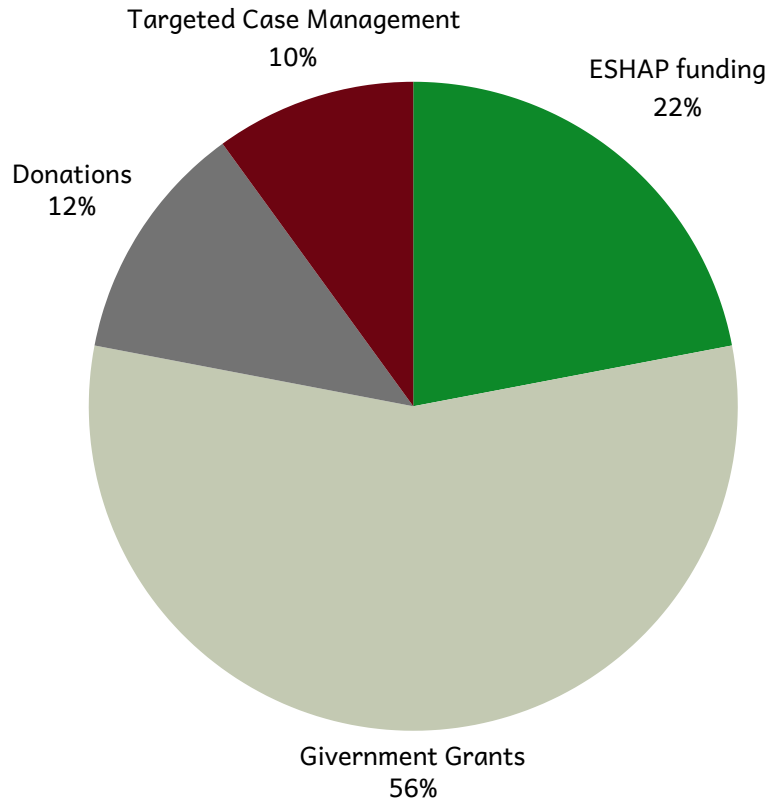
As we move forward, addressing these financial challenges will continue to be crucial to ensuring the stability of our services. One significant source of new revenue in 2024 will be the funds allocated to low barrier shelters like MMHSS through funds included in the Governor's Supplemental Budget. This funding is critical to our ability to maintain shelter operations.

Despite these difficulties, our team of 40 full and part-time staff remain committed to our mission, working tirelessly to best utilize our funding resources. Our community has shown remarkable support of our emergency shelter and services. Local businesses, volunteers, and donors have stepped up in extraordinary ways, ensuring that we keep our doors open and continue to offer support to those in need. Their contributions ranging from in-kind services and volunteer hours and financial support have been crucial in our day-to-day operations. These efforts, including support from city, county and state policy makers, will allow us to tackle homelessness with the funds necessary to support our work to make homelessness a rare, brief, and one-time event in the lives of the people we serve.



Finance

REVENUE SOURCES



OPERATING EXPENSES

Development

Development Director Report

As I reflect on the year 2023 at MMHSS, a tapestry of resilience and compassion unfolds before me. The “COVID era” tested our community in ways we never anticipated, yet it was here, within these walls of shared hope and perseverance, that we found strength amid adversity. And in 2023 we were still here. We never left. It was because of you, our donors and supporters that stayed with us that helped us to remain strong.

In 2023, the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter became more than a refuge; it became a beacon of unwavering support. As the world grappled with the aftermath of economic uncertainty and natural disasters, our shelter stood firm as a sanctuary for those in need. Families, individuals, and even beloved pets found solace within our doors, where they were met with warm beds, nourishing meals, and most importantly, a renewed sense of dignity.

The challenges were myriad, yet our dedicated staff and volunteers rose to meet each one with determination and grace. From securing emergency funding to ensure uninterrupted services to organizing community outreach programs, every action was driven by the steadfast belief that everyone deserves a chance to rebuild their lives.

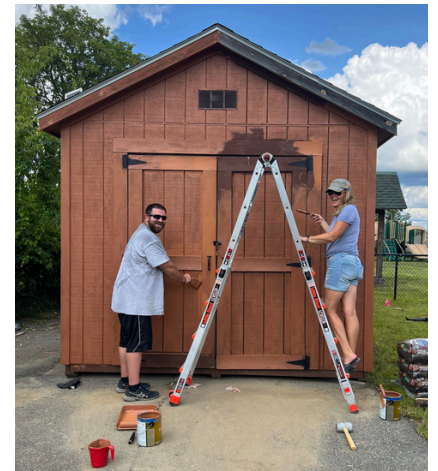
Looking forward, the lessons of 2023 resonate deeply. They remind us of the power of empathy and solidarity in navigating life's storms. They teach us that resilience blooms in the most unexpected places and that hope is a shared endeavor.

We are grateful for each donor, supporter, funder, volunteer and community partner that shares our vision and has allowed us to remain firm in our mission. Together we will continue do great work in the years to come.



Tanya Fossett
Development & Communications
Director

Events & Community Engagement



2023 Foundation and Grant Supporters

JOHN T. GORMAN
FOUNDATION



TOWN FAIR TIRE
Foundation

**United
Way**



Heart of Maine United Way



United Way
of Kennebec Valley



**THE AUBUCHON FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

Volunteers

Our volunteers continued to inspire us in 2023 with their dedication and commitment to this work. Collectively, our volunteers logged close to 2,500 hours of service for the shelter, a slight increase from last year. Their generosity of time and good will is remarkable and embodies the spirit of volunteerism at the heart of any thriving community.

We added two new members to our Board of Directors over the course of the year. They have been incredible assets to the board, and we are so fortunate to have them representing us in the community. Samantha Burdick is an active advocate in the local community, serving on several boards committed to making a difference. Kate Carlisle comes to MMHSS with an impressive background in communication and we are absolutely thrilled to have her on our Board.

As in previous years, the community food pantry was heavily utilized in 2023. We are grateful for the volunteers who came in faithfully each Friday afternoon to help with the food pantry. Our volunteers collectively spent over 150 hours throughout the year serving approximately 836 people. These people came from Waterville and surrounding areas. The pantry will be restructured in 2024, but we will continue to offer it on an as-needed basis as the need remains.



“Volunteering is at the very core of being a human. No one has made it through life without someone else’s help.” ~Heather French Henry

Volunteer Spotlight

This past year, we added one new monthly cooking group into our rotation while retaining those who already volunteered. We spoke with Melanie, whose husband has been participating in a monthly cooking group for years. She recently started her own last year and has been coming in on a monthly basis to cook for our guests.

Melanie had volunteered alongside her husband a few times, so she was aware of the need. After she began working part-time, she had more space in her schedule and was inspired to live out her faith by starting her own group. She frequently volunteers with her daughter, wanting to teach her empathy and how important it is to help others. Melanie wasn't quite sure what to expect when she came in on her own for the first time, but has come to know and enjoy each interaction with the guests. Getting to know each guest she has interacted with, even if it's only on the surface level, has been eye-opening.

When she isn't volunteering, Melanie works part-time as a tutor and has recently taken up watercolor painting. She's also a grandmother, which brings her joy and keeps her busy. We are grateful for Melanie's dedication to serving in the kitchen for our organization.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 24, 2024

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter

19 Colby Street

Waterville, ME

Welcome & Invocation

Minutes from last meeting

Acceptance of Annual Report

Consent Documents

Recognition of Outgoing board members

Janelle Gath

Thomas Longstaff

Governance

Nominations and approval of new board members

Election of Officers

Compliance Document Review and Approval

Banking Resolution - account signers

Adjourn