



# **Advancing Dignity, Compassion, and Possibility**

Downeast Community Partners  
Strategic Plan  
2019-2023

March 19, 2019

# Downeast Community Partners Strategic Plan Introduction

*By Mark Green, Executive Director*

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“Dignity. Compassion. Possibility.” or “DCP” for short is the values statement we developed as part of the new strategic plan. “Dignity” because we respect and value the people we serve; “Compassion” because we care about people and believe in the goodness of the human spirit; and, “Possibility” because we know that there are always opportunities to help people improve their lives. These are values that we all understand and values that have always and will always be at the core of our being.

The completed plan includes new mission and vision statements, five principal goals, along with supporting strategies, outcomes, and suggestions on how measure our success. Even with all this, the plan is relatively short at only 12 pages, and easily read. Most importantly, it provides the board and staff with a plan that will improve the quality and effectiveness of the work we do in Hancock and Washington counties.

The process of developing this strategic plan took most of a year overseen by a group that included board members and staff with the able support of Deb Burwell and Sarah Strickland. Early on, the group decided to make certain our plan focused on the people we serve and that they had a voice in its creation. We accomplished this by surveying a sampling of the people we serve and by meeting with several focus groups. We also made certain that we gathered input from our partners and employees. We learned a great deal using this approach and incorporated what we learned into goal C, “Enhance DCP’s organizational culture so all communication, interactions, and service delivery promote dignity and well-being.”

The goal that best describes the important role that DCP plays in our region and the opportunities we have to expand this role is Goal A “Ensure that people can access resources to meet basic needs’ This goal has thirty-six separate strategies, almost as many as the other four goals combined. Of particular note are strategies 1-6 which include: ensuring the quality of existing programs; focusing on achieving incremental innovations; being prepared for opportunities; providing leadership where it is needed to spark collaboration; developing cross-division strategies and bringing expertise, leadership, and resources to solve complex problems.

Goal D “Build sustainable internal capacity to increase DCP’s impact” lays out strategies for strengthening our workforce through the development of a compensation plan and by encouraging employee involvement and innovation. It also recognizes the importance of a strong Board of Directors, good customer service and a positive public perception regarding the work we do in our communities.

As with any strategic plan, its value and impact will depend entirely on our commitment to put in the time and effort that will be required. We are at a place in our history where we now have an opportunity to build exponentially on the 50 plus years of good work done by CFO and WHCA. We have the experience and knowledge to make a lasting difference in this region and now we have a road map on how to get it done. As importantly, we also have in place a network of strong and capable partners that can assist us with implementation and in some cases take the lead on important strategies. The rest is now up to the board, volunteers, employees, and partners of DCP. It’s an opportunity, a challenge, and above all a privilege that not many get. Let us work together to provide the leadership and organizational skill to “Improve the Quality of Life and Reduce the Impact of Poverty in Downeast Maine.”

**Downeast Community Partners  
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**Mission**

*To improve the quality of life and reduce the impact of poverty in Downeast communities.*

**Vision**

*Downeast Community Partners is a catalyst for improving life in Downeast Maine.*

**Values**

*Dignity. Compassion. Possibility.*

**Five-Year Goals**

- A. Ensure that people can access resources to meet basic needs.
- B. Improve economic well-being for vulnerable individuals and families.
- C. Enhance DCP's organizational culture so all communications, interactions, and service delivery promote dignity and well-being.
- D. Build sustainable internal capacity to increase DCP's impact.
- E. Build external capacity to increase DCP's impact.

**Downeast Community Partners**  
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**Strategic Planning Assumptions**

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1. Over the next five years, the 45-65 cohort will continue to be a significant demographic for Downeast Maine and many will be entering retirement with financial challenges.
2. Based on historical cycles, there is likely to be another economic downturn in the next five years. DCP needs to be ready to adapt as things shift by staying aware of these trends.
3. The top challenges and barriers are: transportation, good paying jobs, affordable housing, elder care, child care, food security, access to mental health/health care services, and the stigma of poverty.
4. DCP strives to reach more people who are eligible for services including vulnerable populations above the poverty line.
5. DCP will need to collaborate with partners at state and federal levels to advance our mission; DCP will need to collaborate with others who have strengths and expertise that DCP does not possess.
6. Community partnerships and collaborations are different between Hancock and Washington counties. This has implications for how DCP expands services from one county to another.
7. Additional capacity (time, financial, organizational culture) is needed for DCP to partner, collaborate, innovate, and execute inside and outside the organization.
8. There is greater alignment around core values across the organization than might be anticipated given that the merger was recent.
9. The principles of “dignity first” and being community informed are guiding principles for the entire organization in order to have effective programs.
10. There are evidence-based, multi-generational models that can inform DCP’s program design and increase its impact with individuals and all types of family units.
11. DCP’s culture needs to evolve to encourage and support innovation by all staff.
12. DCP communicates its mission, values, and vision through its facilities, media and messaging, public relations, and all staff interactions with clients.

13. DCP will have sufficient reserves for financial sustainability and innovation.

# Downeast Community Partners

## FIVE-YEAR Goals With Strategies

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### **GOAL A: Ensure that people can access resources to meet basic needs.**

#### **Five-Year Outcomes**

- Access to basic services increases for DCP's clients, both through DCP and outside referrals.
  - a. Increase the # of clients being served for their "presenting need."
  - b. Increase a client's access to additional services at DCP.
  - c. Increase referrals to external resources that DCP cannot meet.
- DCP becomes an "agent of change" in the counties.
- Community well-being improves as measured by National Performance Indicators (NPI).

#### **Agency Strategies**

- A-1 Ensure the quality of existing programs.
- A-2 Focus on achieving incremental innovations to be prepared for opportunities.
- A-3 Forecast and take advantage of trends and opportunities as they emerge.
- A-4 Provide leadership where it is needed to spark collaboration.
- A-5 Develop cross-division strategies to achieve division and agency outcomes.
- A-6 Bring expertise and additional resources to complex problems and innovative initiatives.

#### **Division Strategies**

##### ***Transportation***

- A-7 Complete a five-year plan for replacing and expanding the size of fleet.
- A-8 Complete a 2-county evaluation to determine innovative models and DCP's niche.
- A-9 Create a five-year plan for adding new vehicles with minimum or no restrictions.

##### ***Housing development***

- A-10 Continue development of the Tiny House Project.
  - Complete 1 project each year.
  - Explore opportunity to do a tiny home "community" with a municipality.
- A-11 Explore how DCP can increase its role and expertise in housing development in both counties.
  - In Machias, focus on affordable elder housing.
  - Evaluate strategies to rehabilitate older buildings/mobile homes/motels into workforce housing.

##### ***Home Repair & Weatherization***

- A-12 Secure funding for more projects with fewer restrictions.
- A-13 Explore how to scale private funding for collaboration with Maine Seacoast Mission.
- A-14 Study how to reduce the home repair waiting list.
- A-15 Develop a funding strategy to pay for conversions from conventional to alternative heating systems including propane, solar, to reduce home energy costs.

##### ***Heating Assistance***

- A-16 Advocate for procedures that make it easier to apply for heating assistance.
- A-17 Develop cross-division outreach strategy to significantly increase number of applications each year.
- A-18 Increase funding for THAW Fund to help people with temporary needs for heating/cooling.

**Early Care & Education**

- A-19 Transition remainder of Head Start to the School Day, School Year model.
- A-20 Utilize two classrooms for Early Care and Education in Ellsworth.
- A-21 Explore how DCP-Head Start can expand its visibility, role, and voice as an expert for early care and education initiatives in public education.
- A-22 Expand collaboration with community colleges to develop qualified teaching staff.
- A-23 Secure ongoing funds to participate in Family Futures Downeast with increased staff hours and more services.
- A-24 Develop a funding strategy to provide bridge funds to parents who are in transition due to work and/or medical situations.
- A-25 Develop fundable strategies to meet the transportation needs of Family Futures Downeast parents and Early Child Care and Head Start children.
- A-26 Explore and initiate collaborations to broaden our reach and expand early education and family support services.

**Adults & Elders**

- A-27 Complete a study to explore what collaborative models might work best for adult day services and in-home care throughout the two counties with the aim of establishing a facility in Washington County.
- A-28 Explore co-location models combining childcare with adult service sites.
- A-29 Expand hours of the elder advocate position in Washington County.
- A-30 Explore shared housing models with unrelated young families and older adults.
- A-31 Prepare to expand OT/PT/Speech services for adult day programs.
- A-32 Explore the foster grandparent model.

**Nutrition & Health**

- A-33 Complete inventory of how DCP is currently involved in Nutrition and Health in both counties, to determine its role and priorities.
- A-34 Explore what expanded role DCP might play to increase food security for DCP's clients.
- A-35 Explore how DCP could increase access to and funding for health-related services including: dental access for children and elderly; hearing aids; cancer care – transport, lodging help; behavioral services for children and parents.

**Substance Use Disorder Support Services**

- A-36 Investigate and develop services that support the existing two-county goals and strategies. Ideas include:
  - Transitional and permanent housing for people in recovery: men, women with children.
  - Transportation to treatment services and work; working with employers.
  - Child care for parents in day treatment.
  - Funding to support parents with substance use disorder who need Head Start services.
  - One-stop shopping/support service models.

**Metrics**

- Capacity/demand indicators: measure what capacity exists, what the demand was, what capacity is not filled, what demand is not met.
- Referral rates: increased referrals equals increased access.
  - Number of referrals to each program quarterly/annually.
  - Number of referred people served quarterly/annually – inside DCP and externally.

- Conversion rate: referrals to people served for each program/service.
- National Performance Indicators show marked improvement in measured areas, and reflect the needs identified in the community needs assessment.



# Downeast Community Partners

## Five-year Goals With Strategies

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### **GOAL B: Improve economic well-being for vulnerable individuals and families.**

#### **Five-Year Outcomes**

- Vulnerable individuals and families inform new program development and existing services.
- DCP program design is informed by effective anti-poverty programs.
- DCP services for people in temporary distress and vulnerable to falling below the poverty line are expanded.
- DCP is contributing in a measurable way to Workforce Development in the two counties.
- Community well-being improves as measured by National Performance Indicators (NPI).

#### **Strategies**

- B-1 Complete a needs assessment on how to best serve and expand services to 8-24 year olds.
- B-2 Convene a cross-division pilot to deepen access to DCP's basic services for vulnerable clients. Pilot Aroostook County Action Program's 2-Gen model to connect Head Start families with other DCP services.
- B-3 Using models like At Home, Friendship Cottage, Families Futures Downeast (2-Gen), Maine Seacoast Mission housing collaboration, design and provide services for vulnerable people who need information and assistance to improve their economic well-being or help at a time of need.
- B-4 Develop a position paper that presents how DCP is contributing to workforce development in Hancock and Washington counties and define its niche going forward.
  - Complete a study about the Downeast Business Alliance model to build the skills of the self-employed and/or life skills education programs for specific clients (jails, re-entry, high schools).
  - Link DCP clients to workforce training programs and funds.

#### **Metrics**

- Completing a study on DBA and other education strategies to expand into workforce development.
- The number of 18-24 year olds served.
- Documentation about how community input informs program design.
- The number and type of vulnerable population segments that are served by DCP increases.
- National Performance Indicators show marked improvement in measured areas, and reflect the needs identified in the community needs assessment.

# Downeast Community Partners

## Five-year Goals With Strategies

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**GOAL C: Enhance DCP's organizational culture so all communications, interactions and service delivery promote dignity and well-being.**

### Five-Year Outcome

- Board, employees, and volunteers demonstrate DCP's core values in all interactions with colleagues and clients.
- Client perspectives and satisfaction inform program delivery, facilities design, and employee education needs.
- All employees have the skills to interact with each other and clients in challenging interactions.

### Strategies

- C-1 Develop a *Core Values Statement* to guide internal and external communications and employee behavior.
- C-2 Develop agency-wide policies and procedures about values-based behaviors.
- C-3 Provide all employees ongoing education and customer service training to increase their knowledge and skills about challenges that impact client behavior: crisis; trauma; mental health; poverty; substance use disorder.
- C-4 Create a centralized system to conduct and analyze division and agency-wide client surveys, to inform action.
- C-5 Review the design of all facilities to ensure respectful, safe, and efficient spaces for clients and employees.

### Metrics

- Completed Core Values Statement.
- Board approved policies and procedures.
- Trends and results from agency wide and division client surveys.
- Trends and results agency-wide employee survey.
- # of programs and training offered each year.
- # of employee participants in the trainings.
- % of employee participants.

# Downeast Community Partners

## Five-year Goals With Strategies

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### **GOAL D: Build sustainable internal capacity to increase DCP's impact.**

#### **Five-Year Outcomes**

- The Board of Directors carries out its fiduciary and strategic roles to advance DCP's mission and vision.
- Sufficient financial reserves exist to ensure long-term sustainability and to invest in innovation.
- Employee satisfaction and retention increases each year.
- DCP is an employer known for how to listen to employee needs, spark innovation and encourage outstanding work effort from all its employees.
- Staff innovation and collaboration across departments and with external partners are valued as essential parts of the DCP culture.
- Client satisfaction with DCP's services and delivery is high.
- Public awareness about DCP's mission, core values and services increases.
- Community well-being improves as measured by National Performance Indicators (NPI).

#### **Strategies**

##### Board of Directors

- D-1 Conduct annual evaluations to measure board effectiveness.
- D-2 Develop a succession plan for board members and DCP leadership.
- D-3 Provide board training on selected and required financial and strategic topics.
- D-4 Increase board engagement on the Finance Committee.
- D-5 Conduct ongoing board recruitment to ensure the board has necessary expertise.

##### *Metrics*

- A standard board self-evaluation by the board members is completed each year.
- A succession plan is developed for key DCP positions through 2023.
- Board has a high degree of participation and expertise.

##### Sufficient financial reserves

- D-6 Complete a comprehensive list of available agency reserve funds, their uses, and current restrictions.
- D-7 Develop a fund balance reserve policy to present to the Board.
- D-8 Establish a policy for the agency's minimum cash flow reserve level.
- D-9 Develop capital plan and establish a reserve fund for forecasted maintenance and capital investments.
- D-10 Develop a financial metrics dashboard for annual and quarterly indicators.
- D-11 Establish a New Initiatives Fund to support new idea generation and pilot projects each year.
- D-12 Develop a financial contingency plan to guide agency-wide decision-making in challenging times.
- D-13 Increase the agency's capacity to maintain program support through public and private funding sources.
- D-14 Explore increasing private donations through "brand" specific fundraising strategies similar to At Home and Friendship Cottage's model.
- D-15 Complete a feasibility study for a Planned Giving strategy to increase the endowment.

##### *Metrics*

- Policies are approved and implemented.
- Feasibility studies and new initiatives are completed and acted upon.
- Financial dashboard is developed and used by leadership on a regular basis.

- Capital plan exists.

## **Goal D Continued**

### Employee satisfaction and retention

- D-16 Develop a compensation plan that moves DCP's wage and salary scale to be competitive in order to attract and retain employees.
- D-17 Implement a focused periodic agency-wide employee survey to gather baseline data on selected metrics to inform strategies to attract and retain employees.
- D-18 Conduct regular division discussions with employees about job satisfaction.
- D-19 Explore a "cafeteria-style" benefit package.
- D-20 Explore a Paid Time Off (PTO) benefit for part-time employees.

#### *Metrics*

- Annual employee satisfaction increases based on established targets.
- Retention, turnover, full/part time ratios, best-place to work rating all meet annual targets.
- Recommendations and decisions made on PTO and/or cafeteria benefits.
- A compensation plan is developed and acted upon by the board.

### Staff innovation and collaboration

- D-21 Experiment with cross-functional/division teams for pilot projects/improvement initiatives.
- D-22 Develop, fund, and implement two professional development tracks for employees: (1) Leadership and (2) Management/supervision
- D-23 Implement a process for supervisors to solicit and reply to employee's innovative ideas.

#### *Metrics*

- Selected NPI's
- # of Case Review meetings each year; # of participants; process changes made.
- # of stories shared in the Board Report.
- # of employee education sessions across divisions; # and % of employees participating in these.

### Client Satisfaction and Service

- D-24 Increase employee knowledge about all DCP services and external resources.
  - Continue the EmpowOr implementation and use it as a tool to increase employee knowledge, sharing, and collaboration across divisions and services.
  - Implement a Case Review model with managers and employees to discuss customer service topics.
  - Capture and relay stories about excellent client service that involve internal/external collaborations and innovations.
- D-25 Increase client volunteer engagement with DCP programs.
  - Explore CCC's "Needs and Offers" model.
- D-26 Monitor customer satisfaction across the agency.
  - Expand division/agency-wide client surveys to include questions about customer service.
  - Include customer service measures in the EmpowOr database.

#### *Metrics*

- Client survey results over time.
- Outside referrals to DCP increase.
- EmpowOr report implementation.

Communications & Public Relations

- D-27 Develop, fund, and implement a Public Relations and Communications plan that increases public awareness and increases use of DCP services.
- D-28 Implement Web/Facebook analytics and use data to inform all types of communications with clients, employees, and other stakeholders.

Metrics

- PR/Communications Plan completed on time, resourced and implemented.
- Web analytics meet annual targets.
- # of articles/mentions in newspapers monitored by an external vendor.
- # of increased partnerships.

# Downeast Community Partners

## Five-year Goals With Strategies

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### **GOAL E: Build external capacity to increase DCP's impact.**

#### **Five-Year Outcomes**

- DCP's influence on state and federal policies increases funding for client services.
- DCP's client outcomes improve as a result of partnerships and collaborations with other agencies.
- Community well-being improves as measured by National Performance Indicators (NPI).

#### **Strategies**

- E-1 Work with Maine's Congressional delegation on community needs and DCP's pivotal role in meeting basic needs in the two counties.
- E-2 Continue to build strong relationships with regional and state offices that fund current DCP services and future opportunities.
  - Transportation - MaineCare
  - Housing – Maine State Housing
  - Head Start – Regional Head Start
  - Early Childhood Education – Maine Department of Health and Human Services
  - Opportunities: recovery residences; adult day services; increased funding for early care; expanded nurse bridging; home health services
- E-3 Build strong mutually beneficial relationships with all members of the two county state legislative delegations.
- E-4 Establish formal working relationships with the Passamaquoddy nation/leaders in Washington County.
- E-5 Increase annual communications with town managers and selectmen.
- E-6 Continue to build agency-to-agency working relationships through MCAA.
- E-7 Explore a collective action entity for Hancock County based on the CCC model in Washington County.
- E-8 Continue to build and expand strong relationships with funders to support DCP's innovation and service expansion. Priorities:
  - Friendship cottage to become self-sustaining
  - 2 classroom utilization for Early Care and Education for Ellsworth
  - Housing program – CF Adams Trust
  - Transportation – John T. Gorman Foundation/Maine Community Action Association
  - FFD – Sewall
  - Unrestricted - Boston Foundation
- E-9 Expand ways to work collaboratively with health care systems and FQHC's to improve client services and referrals to DCP.

#### **Metrics**

- Expanded funding for current, expanded and new services.
- Expanded number of federal, state and private funding sources.
- Leaders are coming to DCP for information, to collaborate on new opportunities, and to work together on unmet needs in the community.
- Examples of DCP serving as convener for Hancock County collective action initiatives.
- National Performance Indicators show marked improvement in measured areas, and reflect the needs identified in the community needs assessment.