



Maine Equal Justice

People Policy Solutions

Support real reform at Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

All Mainers should be able to meet their most basic needs and lead safe, healthy lives where they can reach their full potential

This is the essence of DHHS's mission.

But for too long, people seeking help at DHHS have faced barriers that are inconsistent with this overarching goal. People often experience long wait times, lost paperwork, incorrect and unreliable information, a lack of cultural competence, and other preventable problems that have serious consequences. Mainers who have dealt with this system know the department needs more resources and staff and a true culture shift—away from a blame and shame mindset—in order to carry out its mission.

It's time for real reform at DHHS. We all want a Department that treats Mainers with respect, provides opportunity, and ensures that people get the supports they need when they encounter hard times.

We're listening. We need you to be part of the solution.

Join with Maine Equal Justice to move DHHS towards real change. Together we can push for a vision where people's experiences and dignity are at the center of DHHS practice. Many reforms can also help DHHS to be more efficient and effective with stronger oversight of critical anti-poverty programs. Reform at DHHS should:

- **Redesign policies to ensure people are getting the help they need.***
- **Assure that when people seek help, DHHS staff create a sense of relief and hope rather than shame or heightened stress.**
- **Ensure that DHHS staff understand different cultures to reduce disparities and provide the best service regardless of a person's background.**

Hear the voices of Mainers at DHHS

"I want to go to DHHS without feeling like I have to prove to them that I'm worthy for the little bit of help they're giving me."

"I've been treated as if nothing is going to change in my situation; I've always been poor, always will be poor. The message is: you don't deserve [help]."

"I just want someone to say, 'I understand. Let's find a solution.'"

"We need hope to survive."

"I want DHHS to want us to know our rights, and really help us access the help that is available."

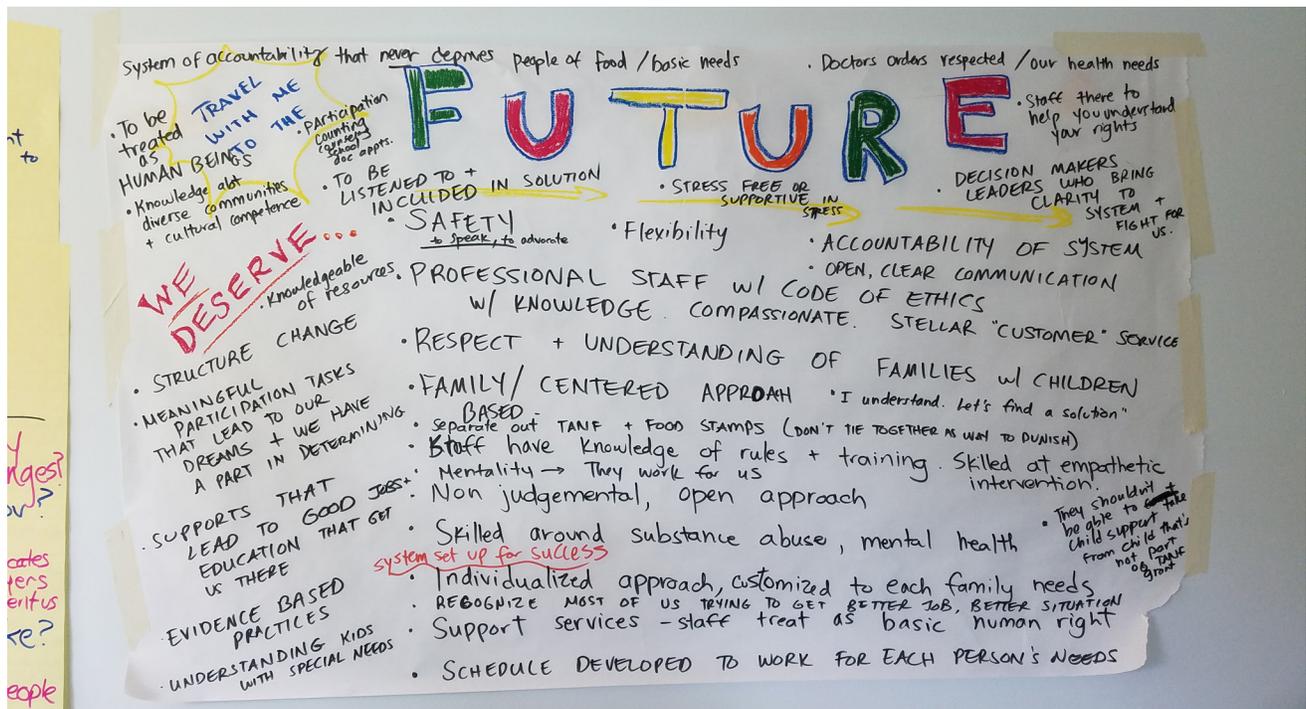
*Full recommendations on policies and program delivery at DHHS available at <https://bit.ly/2DZqOf8>

- ▶ Allow DHHS to approve applicants for one program based on their eligibility for another, using previously verified information.
- ▶ Improve written communication through clear, readable and legally adequate notices.
- ▶ Measure and track results related to poverty, food insecurity, housing, and other important measures to ensure that DHHS programs and initiatives are on the right path.
- ▶ Increase collaboration between DHHS staff and community-based organizations working to help people meet their basic needs and sustain employment.

Act with us TODAY for positive, long-term change.

Now is the moment to spark a long-term change by getting widespread involvement from Mainers. We need to let our government know we care about every Mainer who seeks support or new opportunity at DHHS. If you've interacted with DHHS, we especially want to ensure your experience reaches the ears of those who are driving change within the agency.

Support DHHS reform and receive email action alerts
 Add your name to the resolution at <http://bit.ly/2WS42wU>



Mainers who have experience seeking assistance from DHHS created this chart of goals for a better future.