



Maine Resilience Building Network

Annual Report 2021

www.maineresilience.org



Maine Resilience Building Network

A Note from Kini



Dear Friends,

Together we embraced another challenging year of social isolation from the COVID-19 pandemic. MRBN remained strong and focused, forging ahead to address resilience, ACEs and trauma-informed systems and policies with another year of pandemic-driven virtual work. As we all work absent the professional, in-person connections that make our field so dynamic, we are reminded to value our partnerships and the MRBN Network because the mission we are collectively engaged in is such an important one. The heart of our organization is our statewide, diverse, cross-sector Network representing individuals and organizations who gather, share, and learn together. Thank you to our Network, partners, collaborators, and funders.

We are pleased that we have experienced significant growth for MRBN in 2021. We started the year with Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth Community Conversations statewide to learn from community members and organizations how collectively we can support our youth in communities where they live, work, play and go to school. Deep, thoughtful conversations and programming are informing the design of community tools and resources for youth mattering and we look forward to introducing MRBN's community resilience framed model in early 2022.

The MRBN Team collaborated with national experts to deepen the understanding of ACEs, resilience, mattering, and primary prevention evidenced-based research and implementation science. In 2022, we invite you to join us in a collaboration of national and state organizations to strategize a Maine approach to integrate Community Resilience research and best practices into community health initiatives. Strong social support and social connectedness is key to a resilience-framed community health model. Please mark your calendar for April 12-13, 2023 for MRBN's post-pandemic biennial conference featuring Building Community Resilience in Maine Communities.

I am proud to work with you and look forward with optimism for MRBN to tackle challenges ahead. Thank you for staying connected with MRBN. The coming year offers hope.

Sincerely,
Kini-Ana Tinkham
Executive Director

A Note from Catharine

Dear Friends,

In the context of our current social conditions, MRBN's mission and work to accomplish that mission is increasingly important. MRBN started as a volunteer Network grounded in the mission, "to promote resilience in all people by increasing the understanding of the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the importance of building resilience through protective factors such as positive relationships." Over a decade later, MRBN, now a non-profit organization, continues to be a convener, catalyst, and leader in addressing the adverse impact of ACEs, promoting trauma-informed systems and resilience building strategies. We have seen tremendous growth in the organization as we work with an active MRBN Network, provide leading edge professional development opportunities, and promote best practices for building resilience as a key strategy across sectors in Maine. As we look ahead with hope and optimism to renewed commitment to community, hopefully beyond a pandemic, MRBN's work as a leader in sustainable strategies and supportive systems to build resilience is even more necessary.

On behalf of MRBN's Board of Directors, thanks to our funders, network, partners and to our staff for spearheading our work dedicated to improving health of individuals, families, and communities in Maine.

Sincerely,
Catharine Biddle
President, MRBN Board of Directors



About Us

Mission Statement:

Maine Resilience Building Network's mission is to promote resilience in all people by increasing the understanding of the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the importance of building resilience through protective factors such as positive relationships.

Maine Resilience Building Network has been putting a spotlight on youth health and well-being since its founding in 2012 as an all-volunteer organization dedicated to increasing the understanding of the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the importance of building resilience through protective factors such as positive relationships.

In 2019, MRBN became a 501(c)3 organization with a strong foundation of more than 2,400 individuals, agencies, and organizations who are Network members. MRBN is at the forefront of thought leadership and action to bring about awareness and change to address the systemic inequities and root causes of poor public health and health-related outcomes related to ACEs. MRBN seeks to advance resilience-building strategies and develop or enhance protective factors to prevent and mitigate the long-term effects of ACEs.

This work became more relevant than ever in 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to fuel a mental health crisis. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national state of emergency in child and adolescent mental health. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy issued a Surgeon General's Advisory on Protecting Youth Mental Health, which recognized that these issues predate but are exacerbated by the pandemic. Across the U.S. between March and October 2020, the percentage of hospital visits for mental health emergencies rose by 31 percent for children ages 12-17. Emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts among girls increased by more than 50 percent.

MRBN is working to catalyze community-developed approaches to these issues, while also fostering public policies that address mattering and social connectedness. By building the capacity of organizations throughout the state, MRBN serves as an impact multiplier and a catalyst for change.



MRBN Responds: A Year of Listening, Engagement and Learning

We must support communities – businesses, schools, community organizations, health organizations and others – to shift culture and systems to support prevention. The notion of “upstream prevention” is our guiding metaphor. We will be overwhelmed from rescuing people downstream who are drowning in the river, so we need to go upstream and construct barriers to prevent them from falling in the river in the first place. The need for primary prevention is extremely evident when we take a public health view of the issues we are struggling with – the opioid epidemic, chronic disease issues, and the health effects of social isolation.

Even before the isolation and disconnect caused by the pandemic, young Mainers were suffering. In the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS), 20 percent of middle school students said they have seriously considered killing themselves; 8 percent said they have attempted suicide. 16 percent of high school students said they had seriously considered suicide during the previous 12 months, while 9 percent reported attempting suicide. At the same time, 41 percent of middle school students and 44 percent of high school students said they don't feel they matter in their communities.

Mattering is a protective factor linked to social connectedness, recognized by the US CDC as one of the five priority social determinants of health that can impact health and health equity. MRBN's focus on mattering in community is grounded in the research of Gordon Flett, Ph.D., a professor at York University who has written extensively on the subject. Mattering is measured in three domains: home, school, and community. Community connections that make youth feel seen, heard, and valued are crucial, particularly for vulnerable adolescents who do not feel supported at home or at school.

MRBN launched Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth to shift cultures and systems to focus on Youth Mattering as a social norm that is measured and valued by schools, communities, and organizations. We are taking a long-term approach to implementing this initiative, with strong stakeholder engagement throughout.



MRBN Responds: A Year of Listening, Engagement and Learning

"It all started with MRBN, thank you! I heard the phrase "make no decision about me without me" and realized that as an organization designed to benefit teenagers, we better be sure we are being advised by them. It was time to form a Youth Advisory Council. I drafted a sketch of the program and then connected with a USM Leadership student who helped me refine my plan. We presented a session at the Maine Youth Action Network 2020 conference called "Design the Best Youth Advisory Council" and got more input from some fabulous youth participants. Thank you MRBN for being the inspiration for this rewarding new aspect of Teens to Trails."

Alicia Heyburn, Teens to Trails,
Executive Director

The early stages of the Youth Mattering initiative included:

- MRBN White Paper, "Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth"
- MRBN Annual Meeting featuring keynotes by Dr. Christina Bethell of Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health on "The Science of Mattering"
- Portland Press Herald Op-ed by MRBN's Executive Director and Board President, "Maine Voices: It's up to community to make young people feel that they matter"
- MRBN Thought Leader Roundtables on Cultivating Mattering for Maine's Youth.

This set the stage for 2021, as MRBN created and facilitated opportunities for communities to discuss the issues young people are facing, holding virtual Community Conversations in Maine's nine public health districts from January through March. The events brought together nearly 500 people – the majority of whom had not previously engaged with MRBN. This influx of new contacts was the primary driver of a 23 percent increase in our network contacts in 2021.

MRBN issued comprehensive reports on the Thought Leader Roundtables and Community Conversations, adding to our library of resources for communities.

Additional resources are being developed, including a Maine Youth Thriving Guide for Community Action that incorporates Youth Mattering strategies that align with the Maine CDC Suicide Prevention Plan. In addition, MRBN is creating documents featuring foundational information and practical advice for increasing social connectedness and mattering.

The 2021-2024 Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth strategic plan – informed by youth-serving organizations including Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness, OUT Maine, Black Portland Organizers Working to End Racism (POWER), Autism Society of Maine and New Mainers Public Health Initiative – provides a roadmap for the next three years. Those organizations will continue to serve as advisers as we develop youth-informed messaging for communities undertaking Youth Mattering work. MRBN is collecting feedback and evaluation data from advisors, stakeholders, and communities to guide and shape the Mattering Initiative.

With support from a diverse group of funders, MRBN is moving forward with programming that supports schools, organizations, government agencies, and businesses as they collaborate to find solutions that address the interlocking issues of youth mattering and social isolation. We believe this is one of the most impactful steps we can take as an organization to make systems-level change in Maine.

MRBN's Impact: Advancing Knowledge into Practice and Systems Change

The MRBN Network

With a network reaching more than 2,400 individuals, agencies, businesses, and organizations, MRBN builds the capacity of organizations throughout the state, serving as an impact multiplier and a catalyst for change. MRBN's work as a convener, catalyst, and initiator/innovator may be framed in an adaptation of the Collective Impact Model, whereby MRBN serves as an "unofficial backbone" organization. This is a strong factor of the value-added aspect of MRBN's work in Maine.

MRBN acts as an unofficial backbone organization for resilience-building in Maine, as adapted from the Collective Impact Framework. Backbone organizations essentially pursue six common activities to support and facilitate collective impact. They guide vision and strategy, support aligned activities, establish shared measurement practices, build public will, advance policy, and mobilize funding. As an unofficial backbone MRBN fulfills a number of these functions, uses resources to support work in this area by all organizations, convenes stakeholders to seek common and synergistic solutions, brings attention to issues to build public will and advances policies conducive to community and individual resilience.

Our quarterly network meetings are opportunities to gather, share resources, learn together, and elevate and celebrate the good work that is happening across the state. In network surveys, these meetings are consistently cited as high-value events. We believe that the collective influence of the network is beyond the scope of any one organization to prevent and mitigate the public health burden of ACEs and foster resilient communities.

Professional Development – Community & Organization

Throughout 2021, MRBN provided professional development to nearly 3,000 people. From state agencies and community organizations to business leaders and educators, MRBN's reach extended across the public and private sectors. We are grateful to donors and funders whose support enabled MRBN to share valuable professional development with 21 groups at no cost.



We are a statewide network—we had participants from all 16 counties in Maine in 2021.



MRBN's Impact: Advancing Knowledge into Practice and Systems Change

Among the highlights were two special events that brought national and local experts together to offer deep insight into two of MRBN's areas of focus: ACEs and Youth Mattering.

Connecting the Dots: The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Health Disparities and Health Outcomes

MRBN invited staff of the US CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control to present the FY2021–FY2024 Adverse Childhood Experiences Prevention Strategy.

Their presentation was followed by Maine and national experts providing timely presentations on youth and chronic disease data, health disparities and ACEs links to chronic disease. The program framed the importance of primary prevention to prevent negative health outcomes across the life course and explored the evidence and practices highlighting that ACEs are widely recognized factors in issues for children and adults for diseases of despair – suicide, substance misuse, and excessive alcohol use. ACEs are also increasingly linked with health disparities and issues of health equity, as well as with leading causes of morbidity and mortality from chronic conditions and with poor socioeconomic outcomes in adulthood.

Mattering in the Community: A Pathway to Youth Resilience & Adaptability with Dr. Gordon Flett

MRBN's Youth Mattering initiative is informed by the work of researcher Gordon Flett, Ph.D., author of "The Psychology of Mattering: Understanding the Human Need to be Significant". Dr. Flett provided insight into the science and evidence on Youth Mattering, issues of youth social anxiety and perfectionism, and strategies for communities to enhance supports for Youth Mattering. A panel of experts provided local context, with a youth librarian, social-emotional learning specialist, and social worker discussing Maine-based approaches to enhancing Mattering, building resilience, and improving well-being and public health.

Technical Assistance and Education Collaborations and Partnerships

MRBN cultivates long-term partnerships with organizations and agencies that seek technical assistance and ongoing education. These collaborations foster deeper relationships and sustainable change.

MRBN's Impact: Advancing Knowledge into Practice and Systems Change

Sectors Engaged

- Behavioral Health
- Business
- Civic/Government
- Community
- Judicial/Criminal Justice
- Education
- Philanthropy
- Public Health
- Recovery
- Students/Youth
- Workforce Development

Here are a few examples of long-term partnerships:

- MRBN has been offering technical assistance to the Bangor Region YMCA since 2019, supporting the Y's work towards becoming trauma-informed organization. A similar collaboration with Maine's WIC nutrition program is helping leaders and staff move along the continuum toward being trauma informed. We are pleased to continue our work with these partners in 2022.
- MRBN is partnering with the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) to develop a "Social Determinant of Health Accelerator Plan" for Aroostook County. In 2021, we worked together on a successful proposal to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a plan to accelerate actions that prevent and reduce chronic diseases among people experiencing health disparities. ACAP, in collaboration with MRBN, will convene and coordinate a Leadership Team of multisectoral partners, and develop an implementation-ready plan to impact social connectedness and food and nutrition insecurity in Aroostook County.

A robust partnership with Maine CDC Prevention Services resulted in new connections in the recovery community, including educational sessions on the strong correlation between ACEs, substance use, and subsequent substance misuse. The work that began in 2021 will continue in 2022 with community-level conversations designed to build resilience, reduce stigma, and strengthen connections and support for community members affected by substance use disorder.



MRBN Thought Leadership and Policy Influence

MRBN serves as a thought leader and convener to cultivate and support high-quality strategies to build resilience in Maine. In 2021, MRBN's Cultivating Mattering for Maine Youth initiative was cited as a protective factor, upstream strategy in the "Maine Opioid Response: 2021 Strategic Action Plan" issued by Governor Mills' Opioid Task Force.

Our Youth Mattering work gained a national audience from Community Commons, a website that offers curated tools, resources, and inspirational stories to drive community change. The site featured "Building a Culture for Community Resilience: Safe Spaces and Small Acts," MRBN's report on key learnings from Youth Mattering Community Conversations held in public health districts across Maine.

MRBN's work is garnering national recognition. MRBN was selected and interviewed by the US CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors as a Subject Matter Expert/Key informant for work on ACEs contributions to chronic diseases. The interview will be used to inform the development of strategies by the US CDC to address the impact of ACEs on chronic disease later in life.

Paid Family Leave

It is a founding value and policy of MRBN to build and support resilience in all people, which includes our employees.

MRBN is proud to lead by example on the crucial issue of paid Family Medical Leave.

MRBN's Board of Directors approved paid leave to support employees as they bond with a newly born, adopted, or fostered child; care for a close relative with a serious health condition; or assist with family situations when a family member is deployed abroad on active military service.

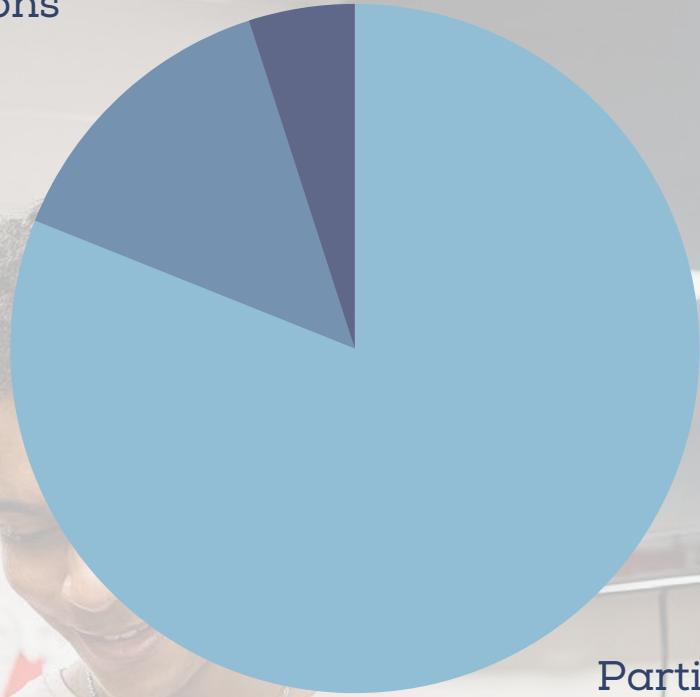


By the Numbers

Statewide Engagement 2021

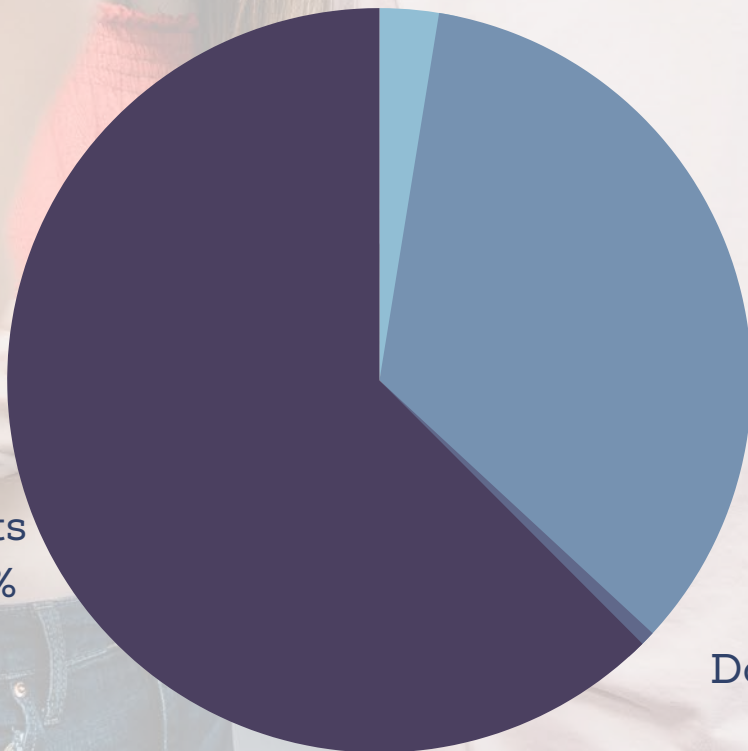
Community Conversations
489

Network Meetings
174



Participants
2837

Membership
2.6%



Fees, Products & Services
34.3%

Revenue Streams 2021

Grants
62.5%

Donations
0.6%

Gratitude

When we reflect on 2021, the word that comes to mind is gratitude. We are so very grateful to everyone who engaged with us, shared new perspectives, contributed to our understanding of the current landscape and resilience needs of our communities, and our state. We look forward to deepening these relationships as we collaborate to envision and create a more resilient Maine.

Thank you to everyone who supports our work, including contributing members, donors, and philanthropic organizations.

The Betterment Fund

The Bingham Program

**Maine Community
Foundation**

**Maine Health Access
Foundation**

**Sadie and Harry Davis
Foundation**

Peter Alfond Foundation

Unum

