

Sunrise County Economic Council

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

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Introduction

The Sunrise County Economic Council's mission is to create jobs and wealth in Washington County, Maine. Over the past twenty-three years, SCEC has worked to strengthen its own as well as its partners' capacity to carry out this important work. SCEC has consistently been willing to experiment and to seek out new partners; has developed new programs; and helped bring substantial new investment into the county. We have helped hundreds of businesses with loans, training, and technical assistance; scores of individuals to advance their careers; and dozens of towns to improve their public infrastructure. SCEC has had many successes, but the hard fact is that the overall health of the county's economy has not improved. Washington County is still lagging behind. SCEC has undertaken this strategic plan in an effort to build on our individually successful programs and partnerships and scale up the organization to meet this imperative.

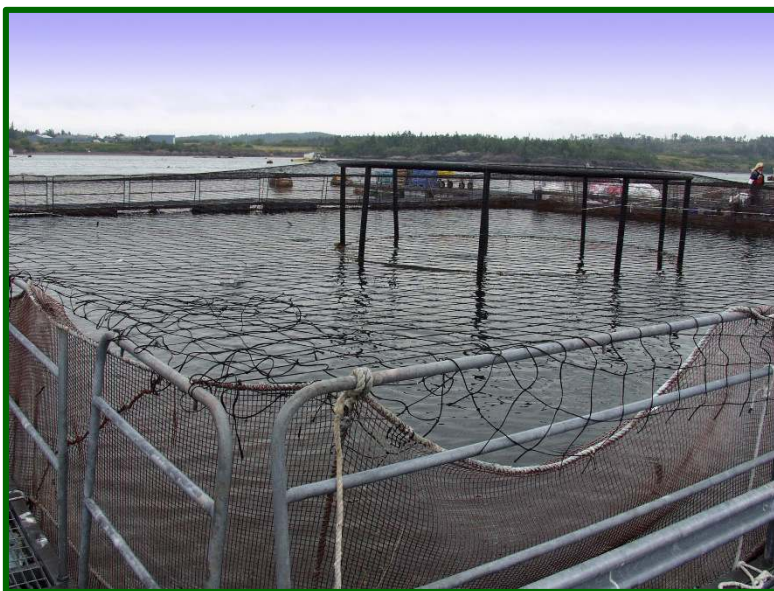
Washington County is facing a converging set of demographic, social, and economic challenges. Over half of our population is older than 45. Almost a fifth is 65 or older. Over the past twenty years, the number of individuals with disabilities has almost tripled while the overall population has become smaller. Only about half of the population is part of the workforce. Our transportation system is lacking and high speed Internet is not universally available. The county has unemployment rates consistently higher than the rest of the state while hundreds of jobs go unfilled. In recent years, the number of deaths in



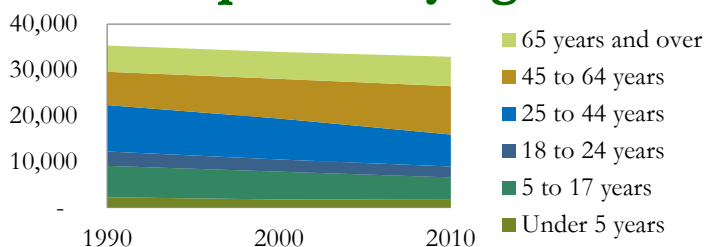
any given year is at least a third higher than the number of births. In part contributing to, and in part caused by these other challenges, our families are facing particularly high rates of substance abuse and addiction, especially to opiates.

Yet Washington County also holds considerable assets and optimism. We have 32,000 year round residents, thousands of additional summer residents, and an aggregate personal income of \$1.2 billion. Our natural resource industries, especially blueberries, lobsters, and hardwood pulp, are thriving. We have an innovative non-profit sector and a comprehensive network of public schools, libraries, hospitals, health centers, and institutions of higher learning. Most importantly, we have hundreds of small businesses and thousands of microenterprises.

SCEC's challenge is one of scale. The danger is that our efforts, while individually successful, are insufficient to shift the trajectory of the county's economy. Strategic planning input from key stakeholders across the County underscored that SCEC must grow into a larger, more capable organization that achieves greater results. This plan outlines seven goals and numerous initiatives that both build on our current strengths and partnerships and go beyond them. Over the next five years we will work to accomplish ambitious targets while recognizing that this plan is an interim step. When accomplished, this work will lay the groundwork for even more challenging ambitions in the future. There is much more work to be done to leverage the resiliency and capabilities of Washington County people and change the direction of our economy. We present this strategic plan as a substantial next step.



Washington County Population by Age





Mission, Goals and Objectives

Mission

To initiate and facilitate the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County, Maine

Goals

1. Increase the availability and utilization of business investment capital in Washington County.
2. Lead and support new economic development opportunities for Washington County.
3. Improve the transportation infrastructure essential to Washington County's economic development.
4. Strengthen Washington County's local food production, marketing and distribution network.
5. Expand opportunities for people to connect, learn and advance their business, career and life goals in Washington County.
6. Use data to tell the Washington County story as an information leader and policy advocate.
7. Build the organizational and financial capacity to achieve SCEC's strategic plan.

1. Increase the availability and utilization of business investment capital in Washington County.

- A. Administer the Unorganized Territories Tax Increment Financing (UT TIF) program under contract with Washington County, providing grant and loan packages to businesses in the unorganized territories.
- B. Pursue opportunities to support other municipal development initiatives using a UT TIF program as a model.
 - 1. Create TIF informational materials and educational workshop for town leaders.
 - 2. Provide technical assistance for towns to develop TIF proposals.
 - 3. Explore possibilities for TIF programs including, but not limited to:
 - a. Calais: downtown TIF,
 - b. Columbia and Cherryfield: windfarm developer,
 - c. Eastport: property developer; tidal power; Ocean Renewables Power Company,
 - d. Machias: Airport; Maine Wild; sewer.
 - e. Pembroke: tidal power.
 - f. Trescott/Whiting: windfarm developer.
 - 4. Explore TIF programs that would pay for workforce training, including scholarships.
- C. Increase the availability of flexible loan and grant products that meet the needs of businesses.
 - 1. USDA Intermediary Revolving Loan Program: portfolio at or above \$260,000
 - 2. Finance Authority of Maine (FAME): portfolio at or above \$225,000
 - 3. Sunrise Ag Micro-Loans Fund: portfolio at or above \$100,000
 - 4. DE Commercial Fisheries Fund: increase portfolio from \$35,000 to \$300,000
 - 5. PRI funds: portfolio at \$60,000
 - 6. UT TIF Commercial Revolving Loan Fund: portfolio at \$620,000
 - 7. Tourism Businesses: portfolio at \$3000/year
- D. Make connections and increase investments in Washington County projects through Slow Money, foundations, additional government programs, private philanthropists and “orphan loan funds”.
- E. Explore models for a Business Turnaround fund and targeted “add-ons” such as marketing.
- F. Explore creating a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).



TIF funds have enabled the Tide Mill Creamery to invest in state of the art cheese making equipment

2. Lead and support new economic development opportunities for Washington County.

A. Maintain contacts and take active roles in the continued vitality of Washington County's health care and higher education institutions.

B. Partner with Internet Service Providers and Municipalities to track, report on, and advocate for development of county-wide Broadband infrastructure and access.

1. Undertake a study to determine the existing level of High-Speed Internet available in Washington County and plans in progress.
2. Produce a gap analysis showing what would need to be done to achieve the appropriate standard for economic/community development.

C. Advance solutions to high energy costs in Washington County.

1. Work with the Affordable Heat Consortium to raise \$1million to implement a "heat coach" model to assist 200 Washington County homeowners in obtaining energy audits and implementing energy efficiency upgrades.

Create a rigorous methodology and detailed data set that will support future public and private thermal efficiency investments in the region.



STEM Guides Downeast was launched on September 1, 2015 at University of Maine Machias. U.S. Sen. Angus King delivered remarks at the event:

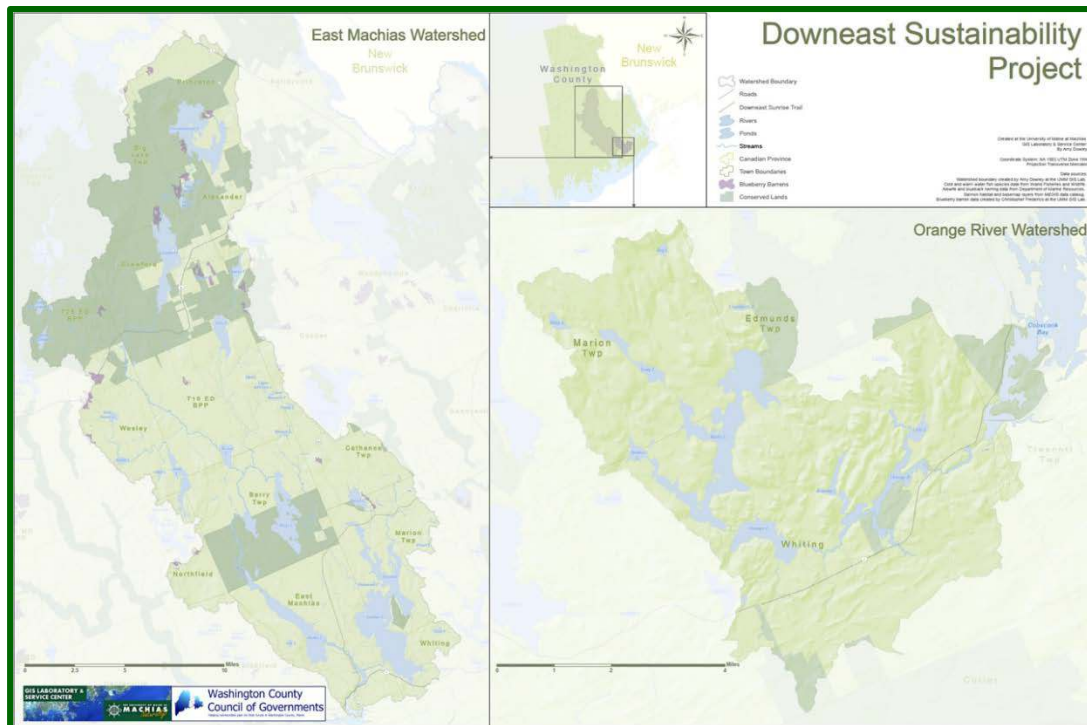
"Science, technology, engineering, and math are all driving our future. But far too often, students, especially those in rural areas, have limited opportunities to build on their interest in those fields and develop the knowledge they want and need to get ahead," King said. "That's why it is so critical for us to close the digital learning gap for our rural students by connecting them to the information and resources they need."

2. Serve as an initial point of contact for industrial scale energy or electricity producers with interests in Washington County and provide information and links to local contacts and officials.
3. Increase availability of technical assistance for businesses to access heating/energy audits and funding sources for energy efficiency upgrades including, but not limited to Efficiency Maine, USDA and federal Solar Tax Credits.
4. Work with communities and businesses to expand access to natural gas in Washington County.

5. Explore a Solar Roofs initiative assessing interest and addressing offset cost for new installations.
 6. Work with regional partners to explore a wood based heating system transition initiative.
 7. Support exploration of community wind farms.
- D. Pursue opportunities with the Passamaquoddy Tribe and perhaps Penobscot Nation to participate in the federal Promise Zone program.
- E. Support the Washington County Development Authority in its effort to redevelop the former Cutler Naval Base.
- F. Develop a regional approach to maximize local economic impact with land conservation organizations including, but not limited to timber management to maximize local employment and destination scale recreation infrastructure.
- G. Support new initiatives and partnerships with potential to further our mission in a meaningful way.



Aerial view of the former Cutler Navy Base



3. Improve the transportation infrastructure essential to Washington County's economic development.

- A. Collaborate with WCCOG to advocate for road improvements in road conditions that are essential to Washington County's economy.
 - 1. Convene stakeholders to implement a design and funding plan for improved traffic flow on Rt 92 at the head of Machiasport Road.
- B. Provide staff support and guidance to the Machias Airport Committee to achieve a fully functional airport facility with 3,500 foot runway, aviation fuel and other essential supports.
 - 1. Complete a letter of support/MOU with Town of Machias confirming SCEC's supporting role.
 - 2. Serve as a liaison with FAA.
 - 3. Support the Airport Committee in essential steps including, but not limited to:
 - a. Completing the crack seal project.
 - b. Environmental assessment as needed.
 - c. Extending Internet to terminal and installing a GUARD/plane traffic tracking system.
 - d. Purchase and sale agreements for easements to secure air rights on adjoining properties.
 - e. Obstruction/tree removal.
 - 4. Provide fundraising support for project management, design and capital needs, bringing an approximate \$6 million infrastructure investment to Washington County for runway reconstruction and extension: 90% federal funds, 5% state funds, 5% municipal match (\$300,000).
 - 5. Implement a strategic communications plan to inform and engage key stakeholders throughout the project.
- C. Participate in Eastport Rail Connection Task Force.
- D. Support new initiatives and partnerships with potential to advance transportation infrastructure essential to economic development.



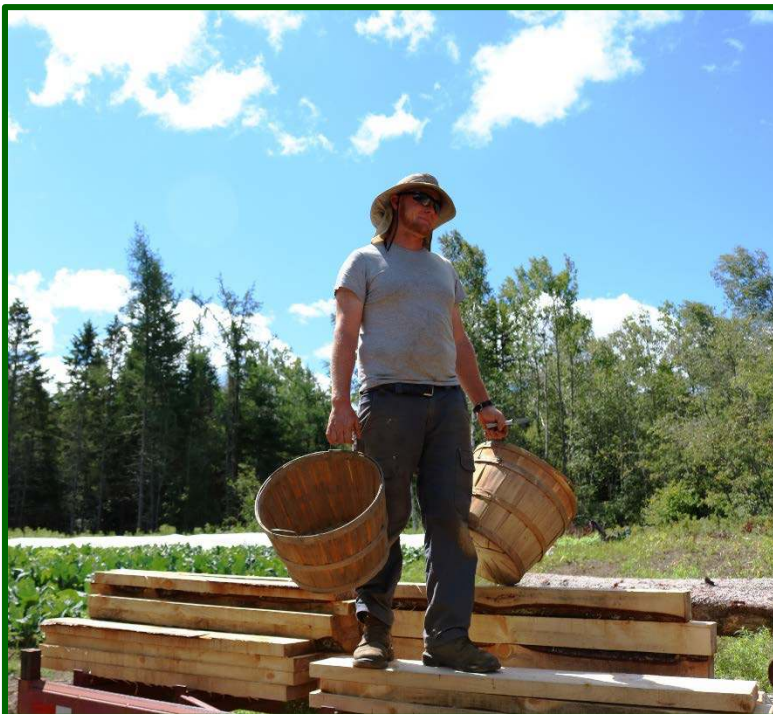
Through SCEC's assistance with an emergency city-wide income survey, the City of Eastport was able to access \$1million in Community Development Block Grant funds to assist with the repair of its breakwater

4. Strengthen Washington County local food production, marketing and distribution.

- A. Enhance connections, knowledge and skills among producers, distributors, aggregators, wholesalers, and institutions within the county and beyond into the Great Region.
 - 1. Support development of producer coops, shared facilities, buying clubs and networks for shared labor and worker housing.
 - 2. Provide diverse topical learning opportunities, information resources, and formal agricultural management instruction; topics include but are not limited to:
 - a. Growing and selling for wholesale markets.
 - b. Organic conversion.
 - c. Family farm or business succession planning.
 - d. Agro-tourism.



Through the USDA Local Foods Promotion Program, the Machias Marketplace was able to expand cold storage options



Salty Dog Farm has accessed funding and technical assistance through the Sunrise Food Infrastructure Initiative

- 3. Increase availability of training, technical assistance and financing to enable farmers and small businesses to obtain necessary certifications, licenses, permits and insurance, including but not limited to:
 - a. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Certification
 - b. Fermented products, seafood handling, and organics.
- 4. Partner with food pantries and other food security focused non-profits to increase the amount of locally produced food that is consumed locally.

B. Support growth of farmers and local foods businesses with balanced access to loans and grants.

- 1. Enhance outreach to increase awareness and utilization of existing loan programs including TIF and Sunrise Agriculture Micro-Loans (Farmer SAM).

2. Connect farmers and businesses with targeted grants through USDA, ME Department of Agriculture, Slow Money, private foundations and others.

C. Implement initiatives for enhancing infrastructure and scaling-up production, aggregation, distribution and marketing for local farms and food businesses including, but not limited to:

1. Enabling local meat processing.
2. Increasing field preparation and mechanization.
3. Creating shore side infrastructure to enable seafood to reach local and remote markets.
4. Expanding aquaculture, dairy farming and alewife harvesting.
5. Strengthening food hubs and aggregation nodes: Eastport, Harrington, Milbridge, Wesley, Grand Lake Stream, Waite, Calais, Woodland, Princeton.
6. Collaborating on transport and other needs with Healthy Acadia, Sunrise Food Alliance, local businesses, and others.
7. Increasing public awareness and local foods purchasing, including online wholesale and retail ordering.



Eighth and ninth generations at Tide Mill Farm

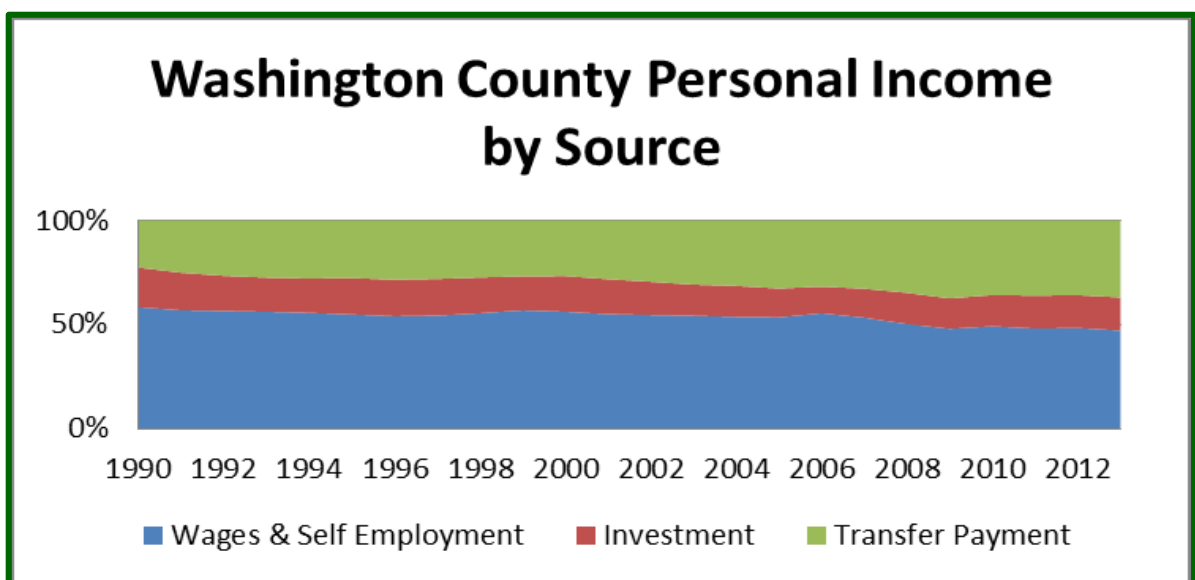


Tide Mill Organics built a USDA chicken processing plant and chicken shelter with SCEC's help

5. Expand opportunities for people to connect, learn and advance their business, career and life goals in Washington County.

- A. Serve as a one-stop-shop providing comprehensive information and contacts for people seeking to do business in Washington County.
- B. Participate in the MCF Leadership Learning Collaborate; assess and enhance WCLI.
- C. Act on opportunities for intensive workforce development initiatives through MCF Educational Attainment Initiative, WorkReady Initiative Network (WIN), Workforce Development Board and others.
- D. Continue SCEC's collaborative role in delivering capacity-building and training programs, and develop new SCEC training initiatives.
 - 1. Create and co-sponsor an annual calendar of topical trainings in collaboration with CEI and others.
 - 2. Partner with Axiom to create a Washington County Innovation and Entrepreneurship Expo and Conference using employer initiative research findings.
 - 3. Partner with New Ventures Maine and CEI to create a Business Basics/Boot Camp.
 - 4. Collaborate with Community Caring Collaborative on conferences or training initiatives related to workforce development, employee assistance programs, and the intersection of health and productivity.
 - 5. Host regional and statewide economic development events including the annual Maine Community Development Association Conference.

Address the need for employee assistance programs for micro, small and mid-sized businesses.



E. Expand initiatives and scholarships designed to attract, retain and grow the Washington County workforce of the future.

1. Work with MCF to substantially increase the size of the Gracie Fund program.

2. Ensure that the Sunrise Scholarship Fund is sufficiently large and flexible.

a. Continue low threshold eligibility @\$500 cap and, using loan committee model, add flexible cap up to 100% of applicant need.

b. Work with/expand Collaborative to assess total need including all barriers to training and employment.

c. Be able to cover CNAs, IT certifications including A+ and Project+, Pilots, Heavy Equipment Operators, and others that arise such as CDL, EMT, CRC.

d. Explore building a scholarship endowment.

3. Create pro-active initiatives to recruit students to prepare for projected high-demand jobs.

4. Explore programs and funds designed to manage and reduce student loan debt.

F. Collaborate with Family Futures Downeast to support individuals who are moving out of multi-generation poverty to develop or grow micro- and small businesses.

Explore the specifics of the rapidly changing workplace and the implications for preparation of students who already are or soon will be entering it.



Kyle Pepperman, 2011-2014 Gracie Fund recipient, is a marine biologist with the Down East Institute for Applied Marine Research (DEI). Like many college grads, Kyle was buried in student debt, and wouldn't have been able to stay in Washington County without some help. Enter the Gracie Fund, a student loan repayment program that the Maine Community Foundation and SCEC offer local people in return for community service.

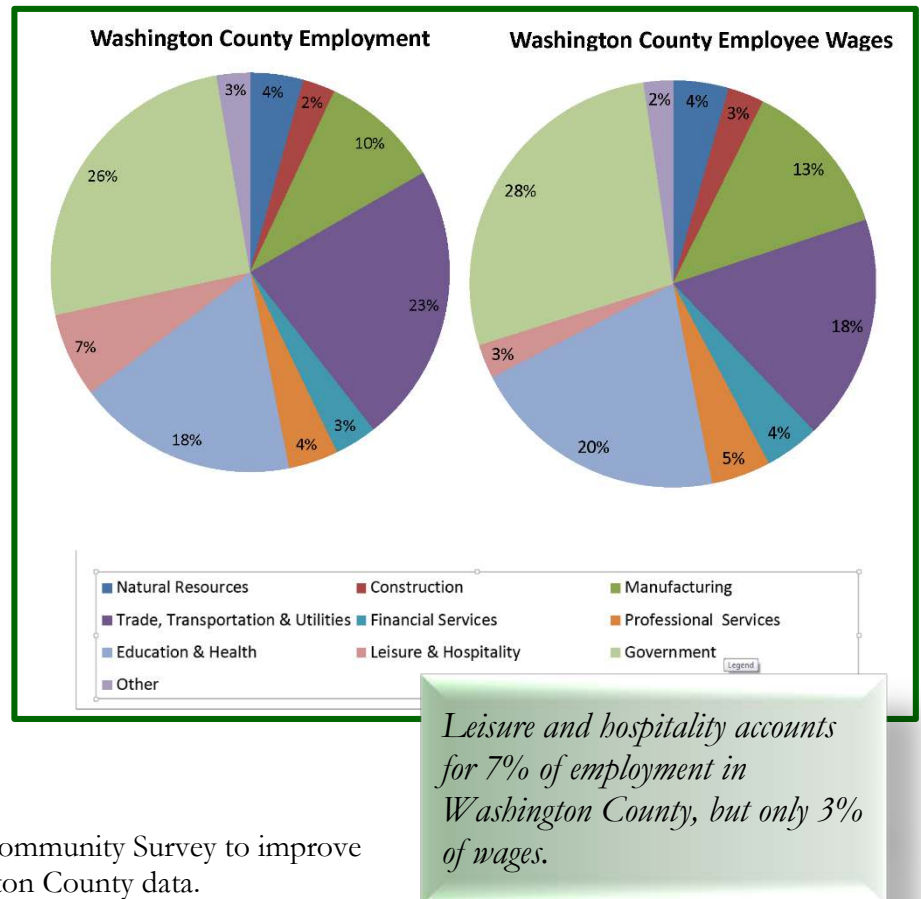
G. Collaborate with Mano en Mano and others to continue and expand pro-active strategies which attract and support new immigrant communities.

H. Create a [Building Bridges](#) leadership development program for educators to Washington County.

I. Explore creating a Washington County version of the [Bangor Fusion model](#) to attract, connect and retain young professionals.

6. Use data to tell the Washington County story as an information leader and policy advocate.

- A. Identify indicators and build comprehensive datasets that reflect socio-economic conditions in Washington County.
- B. Partner with University of Maine Machias, Margaret Chase Smith Center, University of New England, Muskie School and other research institutions to:
 1. Develop data that addresses Washington County socio-economic information gaps.
 2. Carry out economic development R & D projects.
- C. Provide socio-economic research as a contracted service for other non-profits and businesses that align with SCEC's mission.
- D. Collaborate with the American Community Survey to improve the quality and value of Washington County data.
- E. Create a continually updated Washington County online Fact Book with an annual print edition.
- F. Maintain contacts with state-wide coalitions and initiatives aimed at effective public policy including, but not limited to Maine Better Transportation Association, Economic Development Council of Maine, Maine Community Development Association and Maine Municipal Association.
- G. Maintain ongoing relationships with the Washington County state delegation, state officials and congressional representatives.
- H. Monitor relevant state and federal legislation and policy-making.
 1. Provide a digest to Washington County audiences.
 2. Provide information and testimony on pertinent legislation and regulation.



7. Build the organizational and financial capacity to achieve SCEC's strategic plan.

- A. Monitor progress on the strategic plan and work with management to update the plan annually.
- B. Maintain an active Board of Directors that is broadly reflective of all sectors of the Washington County economy.
 - 1. Conduct a board self-assessment and take action to maintain strengths and address opportunities for improvement.
 - 2. Ensure board members are well-informed ambassadors who help to connect SCEC with emerging opportunities, important contacts and potential resources.
- C. Increase loan capital and operating revenues to meet the goals of the strategic plan - see the attached financial projections
- D. Expand SCEC's grants income, annual fund results with businesses and individuals, leadership giving and fees for service.
 - 1. Conduct foundation, corporate and government grants research and significantly increase the numbers of proposals submitted.
 - 2. Act as a local match-maker for Slow Money.
 - 3. Initiate an ongoing major and planned gifts program.
 - 4. Assess the annual fund and implement enhancements as determined.
 - 5. Market professional services: project management, financial management, data collection, analysis and reporting.
- E. Continue to serve as an economic development arm of Washington County and act on opportunities to expand SCEC's role.
- F. Implement a staffing growth plan based on strategic plan goals.
 - 1. Update current position descriptions.
 - 2. Integrate professional development into all employees' annual work plans.
 - a. Ensure necessary technology and communications skills.
 - b. Emphasize fluency in languages used to conduct business in Washington County, i.e. Spanish, French, Japanese, etc.
 - 3. Implement a staged hiring and promotion plan.




Sunrise County Economic Council
Initiating and facilitating the creation of jobs and prosperity in Washington County, Maine

Do you need help with start-up, business planning, financing, or have other commercial needs?


Resources are available to help you succeed!

We offer technical assistance, access to business resource networks, and financing to help make your dream a reality.

Assisting Businesses...
to encourage prosperity, increase incomes, and create and retain quality jobs.



Helping Communities...
to advance local leadership, work toward common goals, and inspire regional cooperation.



Supporting Individuals...
to become highly educated leaders who create and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

For information or assistance: 207-255-0983
www.sunrisecounty.org ♦ www.facebook.com/sunrisecounty

2015 SCEC Staff

1. Executive Director (1.0 FTE)
2. Assistant Director (1.0)
3. Program Manager, Loan Programs and Unorganized Territories (1.0)
4. Program Manager, Communications and Development (1.0)
5. Coordinator, Governance & Special Projects (1.0 FTE)
6. Finance Manager (1.0 FTE)

2016 SCEC Staff

7. (New) Grants Writer/Grants Manager (1.0 FTE)
8. (New) Communications and Development Coordinator (1.0 FTE)
- (Shift) Program Manager, Local Food (from Pr. Mgr, Comm & Dev)

2017 SCEC Staff

9. (New) Program Coordinator, Local Foods Licensing, Planning, Capitalization TA (1 FTE)
10. (New) Administrative Assistant (1 FTE)

2018 SCEC Staff

11. (New) Program Coordinator, Dairy (.5 FTE)
12. (New) Program Coordinator, Seafood (.5 FTE)

- G. Continue to refine SCEC's financial systems and reporting.
1. Meet regular P & L, Balance Sheet, 990, Audit and 3rd party reporting schedules.
 2. Implement a financial dashboard.
 3. Confirm long-term loan capital repayment plans.
- H. Enhance ongoing marketing to increase awareness of SCEC's mission and goals; and responses to services and initiatives.
1. Update brand identity, website and social media.
 2. Expand range of media and communications capabilities to include targeted campaigns and statewide public relations.
 3. Assess and update content and schedule of regular publications.
 4. Create and implement annual communications plans with metrics to assess effectiveness.
- I. Assess needs for ongoing updates in technology, information management and communications systems; implement plans accordingly.
- J. Develop and implement facilities to meet growth needs.



Thanks to SCEC's Strategic Planning Committee Members:

Shirley Erickson
Susan Corbett
Sean Daye
Felicia Newman
Betsy Fitzgerald
Josh Bragg
Dianne Tilton
Charlie McAlpin

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