



E&T in Rural Areas: Success Through Partnerships

Ashley Puffenbarger, WV

Patty Dushuttle & Wanda Theobald, ME

Elena Tooley-Prater, CO

Moderated by: Josh McDaniel, USDA FNS

West Virginia

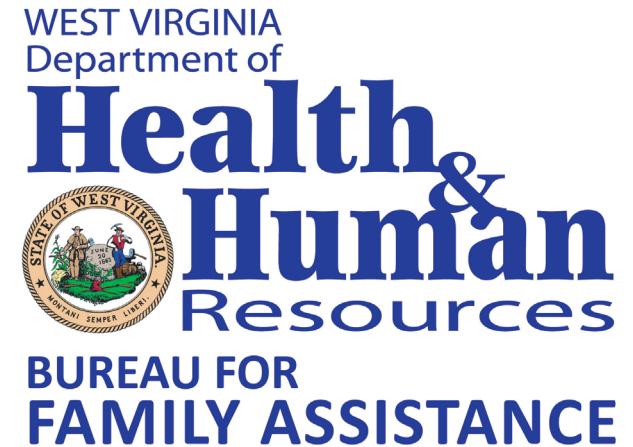
Ashley Puffenbarger



West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources

E&T in Rural Areas: Success Through Partnerships Advancing Equity in the Mountain State

Ashley Puffenbarger
Bureau for Family Assistance
SNAP E&T Program Manager



West Virginia Rural Facts

- 1.8 million general population; 64% reside in rural areas with less than 2,500 individuals
- The only state that lies completely in the Appalachian Mountain range; the most mountainous state per square foot
- The 3rd largest county is considered 100% rural with a population of 7,841 individuals

Challenges West Virginia Must Overcome

- Transportation; the distance from home to training/employment
- Reliable cell phone service
- Reliable Broadband service
- Accessible childcare
- Food deserts
- Education level
- Waning drug epidemic
- Aging workforce

Job Developers

- Four statewide designated positions responsible for connecting SNAP E&T clients to training and employment services
- Seeks out resources in every county that can assist the full person in a holistic manner
- Responsible for identifying potential E&T providers
- Works closely with county eligibility staff to educate DHHR about training resources available in local communities
- Assists the ABAWD population with activities that can help to meet work requirement hours

WV State Initiatives

- WV Invests Grant
 - Statewide free education for credential and Associate degrees
 - Participants must agree to live and work in WV for two years
 - 2,810 has received tuition assistance; since 2021 1,192 students have received a credential/Associates degree
- Jobs and Hope
 - Targets individuals in the substance abuse population; offering training and services statewide
 - Works to remove stigma in recovery population
 - 21 felony expungements; 1,413 driver's license reinstated; 527 participants no longer receiving SNAP benefits
- Amending the state WIOA plan from unified to combined



WIOA Combined Plan

- SNAP E&T is now a primary partner in the overall statewide workforce system
- The goal is to remove barriers to service, while not duplicating similar work offered through multiple programs
- Working closer with statewide partner agencies and organizations to address the full person
- Address seamless entry to programs and resources
- Co-enrollment with E&T and WIOA
 - Braided funding model; using WIOA to pay training and E&T for participant reimbursements

ET Partners Meeting the Needs of Rural Communities

- Coalfield Development
- West Virginia Women Work
- Goodwill of Kanawha Valley
- West Virginia Rural Water Association

Coalfield Development

- “Rebuilding the Appalachian economy from the ground up.”
- A non-profit organization that focuses on employment-based social enterprises, community-based revitalization and creating new programs in emerging sustainable sectors.
- Provides paid on-the-job-training and pre-apprenticeship opportunities to the southern coalfields.
- Workforce Readiness and Professional Success (WRAPS)
 - 33 hours paid employment, 3 hours of professional development, 3 hours of personal development

Coalfield Development

- 78 WRAPS trainees in ET since 2020
- 175 goals set and 139 goals met
- With the ET partnership Coalfield is providing trainees with \$200 in additional resources to meet basic needs or reach goals
- 0% loans for car repair for some ET participants
- Improving the state's recidivism rate
- Replicating the WRAPS program
 - 6 new WRAPS organizations working with individuals with barriers
 - The goal is to provide the 33/3/3 model within all regions of WV

West Virginia Women Work

- WV WW is a non-profit organization whose primary goal is to help women explore, train and secure employment in non-traditional occupations that are considered male dominated.
- Step up for Women Programming
 - Construction
 - 12-week course that cycles through trainings in intro to Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing and Welding. 8 credentials are achieved.
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - 10-week course that focuses on high-tech CNC machines.

West Virginia Women Work

- Women's Resource and Empowerment Network (WREN)
- Assists employers with providing quality workers who are just as skilled as their male counterparts
- Teaches durability and independence
- 90% placement rate among participants immediately following program graduation in either construction/manufacturing positions or recognized union apprenticeships
- Average hourly range of program graduates is \$19.36 - \$26.78

Goodwill of Kanawha Valley

- Provides mission, career and business services
- SNAP 2 Success Program
 - Focuses on soft skills, career readiness and employment exploration
 - On-the-job-training opportunities for under employed individuals
- Expanding during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - A second Prosperity Center opened in 2021
 - Now serving 20 counties at 16 locations
 - Goodwill travels to rural areas on a weekly basis to offer training/resources to individuals with transportation barriers
- Keys to Success – participant vehicle program



West Virginia Rural Water Association

- Provides career pathways to match candidates with host utility companies in water and wastewater industries in all 55 counties
- 2-year nationally recognized paid apprenticeship program
- Pay increase every 6 months with passing exam scores
- Provides classroom education while receiving OJT experience
- WV has one of the highest concentration of jobs in this field
- Allows SNAP participants to remain in rural and remote areas
- 40% of current workforce is eligible for retirement in 5-10 years



The COVID-19 Pandemic and Service Delivery

- Now serving SNAP participants in-person and virtually
 - More participants use smart phones than have reliable transportation
 - All E&T case managers have Google Meet technology available
 - Participants are more likely to attend initial Orientation
- E&T providers moving some or all training online
 - Soft skills moved out of a physical classroom
 - Use of new technology such as CaseWorthy

Thank You

Questions?

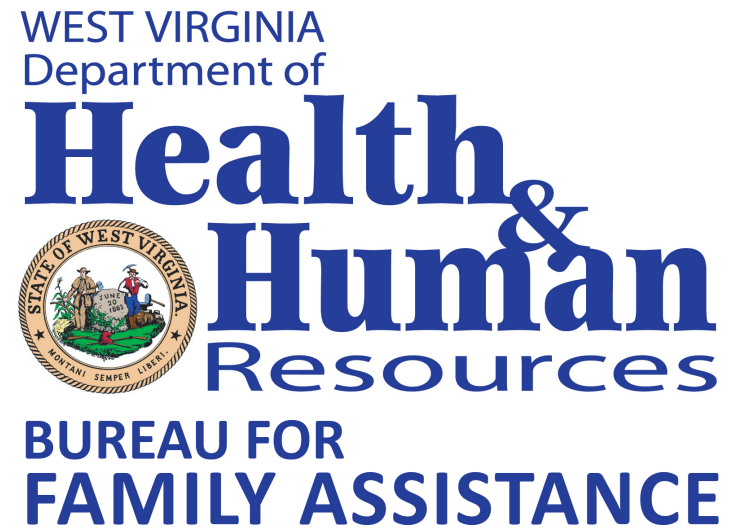
Contact:

Ashley Puffenbarger

304-352-4553

Ashley.N.Puffenbarger@wv.gov

MONTANI SEMPER LIBERI



Maine

Patty Dushuttle
Wanda Theobald

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

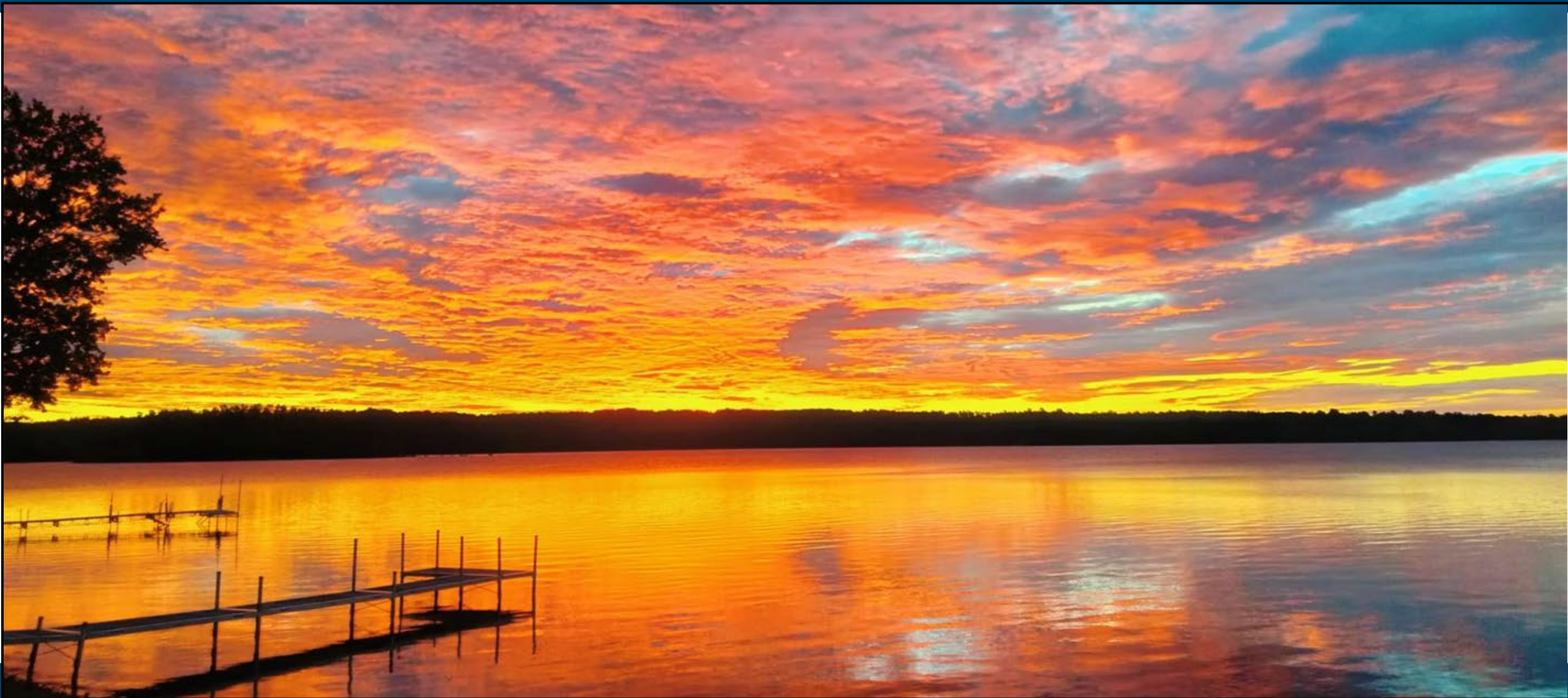
Office for Family Independence
SNAP E&T Program

Patty Dushuttle
Wanda Theobald

December 2022



Brief Overview of Maine SNAP E&T



How Rural is Maine/Demographics*

- In 2010 Maine was the most rural state in nation.
- Maine covers 30,843 miles.
- Maine's 2022 population is **1,381,441**.
<https://www.populationu.com/us/maine-population>
- About 61.3% of Maine's population resides in rural areas (national average is about 20%) with only three urbanized areas of state: Portland, Bangor, Lewiston, along I-95 corridor.
- Maine is also the oldest state, with median age 44.6 (US median is 38).



*Source: US Census, 2010, 2020

Setting the Landscape: Maine's SNAP Program

In September of 2022, there were **171,754** individuals receiving Maine SNAP benefits, residing in **98,025** households.

- Source: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/of/about-us/data-reports>

This is about **12.4%** of Maine's population, or about 1 in 9 people.

- Source: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-state-by-state-data-fact-sheets-and-resources>

Maine's September 2022 benefit issuance was **\$46,421,239**.

Source: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/of/about-us/data-reports>

OFI SNAP TEAM:

SNAP Director: Ian Miller, Senior Program Manager

Special Projects Manager-SNAP: Patty Dushuttle

P-EBT Manager: Michael Downs

SNAP E&T and Special Projects Coordinator: Wanda Theobald

Eligibility Specialist (P-EBT): Melissa Brann



Setting the Landscape: Maine's SNAP E&T Program

- Maine's State administered SNAP E&T is Voluntary, primarily reverse referral process.
- All Participants receive JST and Case Management and may also receive other components. 219 Participants served in FY'22, and 132 Participants also enrolled in an educational component (47%).
- Average age of Maine SNAP E&T participants is 36.7.
- Maine has 5 providers, 2 providers exclusively serve households with Two-Gen or Whole Families model.
- Maine uses a Third-Party model- \$1.85 million Plan in FY'23 with \$352,186 in 100% funds. This will serve 300 Participants.



Tuition and Participant Reimbursement Caps*

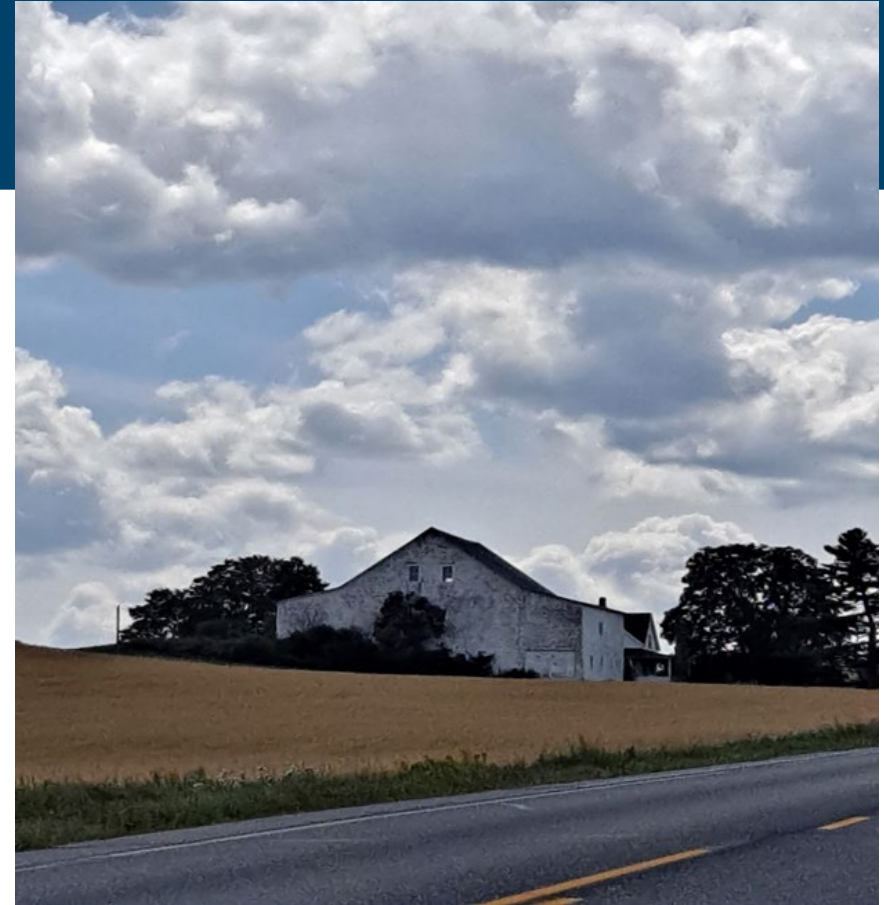
Tuition	\$6000 per federal fiscal year for full-time students and \$3000 for part-time students
<u>Specific Caps for Supports:</u>	All Supports are capped by federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) to reflect annual federal funding.
Transportation	Mileage at .45\$ per mile and other modes of public transportation, with a cap of \$50 per week unless otherwise approved by the Department.
Eyecare	\$200
Dental Care (not covered by other insurers)	\$500
Books and Supplies	\$2000
Uniforms, Tools, Equipment, and Automobile Repair	\$1000

*These caps are generally standard across SNAP E&T and TANF funded programs in Maine.

Maine SNAP E&T Providers

- ACAP (Aroostook County)*
- Goodwill NNE*
- Sunrise County Economic Council*
 - Family Futures Downeast
 - Start-Up Downeast
- Maine DOL Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)
- Strengthen Lewiston/Auburn
- Collaboration with HOPE Program, a scholarship program for TANF Eligible families.

* Focus of Today's presentation on rural service providers



Snapshot: Aroostook County Community Action Program



Aroostook County Action Program, Inc. (ACAP), is a 501c3 non-profit organization founded in 1972. ACAP provides guidance to the community in responding to emerging human needs in the areas of Prevention and Wellness, Early Care and Education, Energy and Housing, and Workforce Development.

- ACAP's Mission:
- Aroostook County Action Program, Inc. leads or collaborates to provide services that support, empower and improve lives. ACAP provides SNAP E&T to families who are co-enrolled in SNAP E&T and a DHHS "Whole Families" contract similar to Two-Gen programming, that wraps services around the whole family and also provides case management for the entire family's service needs.
- Case Study Examples from ACAP's Whole Families and SNAP E&T Contract:
- Nick – Has gained full time employment and is working 40 hours per week @ \$30 per hour. ACAP supported him with purchasing tools required for his new position as a journeyman electrician. Other assistance included assisting him to work with DHHS to update information and advocated to retain Mainecare after his baby was born.
- Judy – She continues to be enrolled as a full-time student @ local community college with two semesters left before she graduates with a degree in business. ACAP assisted her with housing issues and exploring returning to part-time work that she can do at home as childcare continue to be an issue for her.



Snapshot: Maine's Largest E&T Provider



Mission

- Goodwill Northern New England invests in people who need support to achieve their work and life goals.

Vision

- Everyone can achieve and maintain personal stability with the help of Goodwill's holistic approach to services and employment.

Goal

- Goodwill will move 10,000 people into personal stability by 2027.
- Goodwill's motto is, "a hand up, not a hand out." It's part of the mission to teach people the skills to achieve personal stability; skills like job preparedness and career training. Personal stability looks different for everyone, which is why Goodwill Northern New England provides supports and services through healthcare, workforce and cleaning that help any person get to stability.
- SNAP E&T program is built around The Goodwill-designed Job Connection model, which combines best practices of social work (a life navigator) with those of workforce development (a career advisor). Life navigators and career advisors are based in three targeted geographic areas along with a life navigator specific for SNAP E&T participants seeking community college education and training statewide.

Successes:

- Served over 100 participants in most recent program year
- Average wage at placement over \$15/hr
- Job Retention services after Job Placement increased sustainability of employment.
 - **Example:** One Participant was 4 months into retention when their only family vehicle was hit and totaled in a snowstorm. Although they did receive an insurance pay out, it was nowhere near the cost to replace the vehicle with current (second-hand) market prices. The team supported with budgeting assistance with a goal of rapidly building a car replacement fund. Support service funds were used to provide gas cards that the Participant used to obtain rides from natural supports to both work and full-time in-person studies; leveraging other resources a public transportation pass was obtained which covered some commutes. Multiple conversations were had around open communication with both the employer and course instructors. Over time the household stability rebounded: a replacement vehicle was purchased, and bills were caught up. This Participant was also supported throughout a college externship; ultimately resulting in full-time employment opportunities for both this Participant and their spouse! To date, the Participant is at the tail end of their time in retention, maintaining employment in line with their degree program, scheduled to graduate with a B.A in May of '23, and has transitioned off SNAP EBT benefits.



**EMPLOYMENT
& TRAINING
NATIONAL FORUM**

Snapshot: Maine's Two-Gen and Small Business Development Provider



Sunrise County Economic Council www.sunrisecounty.org

- **2 Generation Strategies: Helping Parents & Children together.**
- Family Futures Downeast creates access to postsecondary and workforce opportunities for parents with young children. In the first year, parents enroll in specially-designed college classes while their children benefit from outstanding, high-quality early education programs at on-campus and through home visits. Students receive transitional supports in their second year, as they continue in a degree program or as they move to increased employment opportunities, cohort and peer supports and intensive structured coaching that builds skills, and by removing logistical and financial barriers, FFD gives parents the opportunity to imagine and pursue the future they want for themselves and their children. FFD students may be participating in SNAP E&T, TANF or be TANF-eligible families, and is coordinated through a single provider agreement with Maine's Office for Family Independence. SCEC is the lead agency in a formal partnership with the University of Maine at Machias, Washington County Community College, Washington County Adult & Community Education, the local CAP agency and a local social service organization.
- **Responding to the needs for small business opportunities in rural communities.**
- Start Up Downeast is a partnership with the community college to support individuals from college to career to small business development. SNAP E&T-eligible individuals who have aspirations toward small business ownership receive additional business coaching and counseling. While they complete their certification or degree, Start Up participants also working on credit recovery, business plans or micro-loan or seed grant opportunities with their coach. A career pathway may include a Heating/Plumbing certificate, to job with local company, to development of their own business. It could also mean a Pathways workforce training certificate that moves into an associate's degree in business while a student writes a business plan and applies for capital.

www.familyfuturesdowneast.org

www.startupdowneast.org



EMPLOYMENT
& TRAINING
NATIONAL FORUM



What Challenges do Rural E&T Providers Have?

- Large geographic area adds a lot of miles and commute time for Providers and Participants
- Fewer job opportunities in rural areas for Participants
- Few Registered/Licensed Childcare opportunities
- Limited or non-existing Internet/Remote access in many areas
- High Transportation Costs for Participant Reimbursements
- Fewer Providers available/Serving larger catchment areas

Challenges and Solutions: Large Geographic Areas

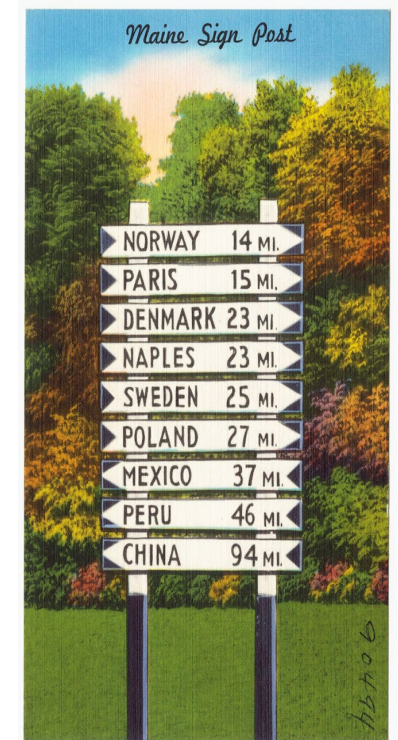
Challenge: Providers and Participants have long commutes and costs are both in gas and time.

Example: Our ACAP provider covers all 6828 square miles of Aroostook County!

Solutions:

- Continue Remote services and use of technology post pandemic, benefiting providers and participants

Example: GWNNE Statewide Learning Network



Challenge and Solution: Fewer Job Opportunities



Challenge: There are fewer jobs available in rural areas.

Solutions:

- SCEC's Start Up Downeast Program focuses on training for Participants who want to become self-employed or own their own business. Training includes vocational training in various fields at Washington County Community College in addition to Business Planning, Financial Literacy.



Challenges and Solutions: Affordable and Available Childcare



Challenge: Childcare availability is limited and expensive, but necessary for Participants.

Solutions:

- Two of Maine's SNAP E&T Providers deliver services through a Two-Gen or Whole Families approach. Onsite childcare is available through Two-Gen and Whole Families, programs.
- Agencies leverage other resources **such as** Maine Childcare Subsidy Program to assist with childcare costs.
- Transportation to family caregivers is allowable if necessary and part of the IEP.

Challenges and Solution: Internet Access



Challenge: Internet Access is limited or unavailable in some Maine areas.

Solutions:

- Maine developed a Laptop Loaner Program.
- Hotspots are also loaned when necessary and have increased access for some areas.

Challenge and Solution: Higher Transportation Costs

Challenge: Rural areas in Maine have increased transportation costs and little public transportation.

Solutions:

- Automobile repairs are covered Participant Reimbursements up to \$1000 per year if registered to Participant and results in safe transportation.
- Gas cards are provided upfront for mileage reimbursements.
- Continue to encourage remote access of services to extent possible.



Challenges and Solutions: Fewer Providers



- **Challenge**: Maine has fewer providers available to partner with.
- **Solutions**: **Leverage the Strengths of Providers!**
 - Partner with Providers with larger scopes of services such as
 - Community Action Programs (CAP Agencies- LiHeap, childcare, housing)
 - GWNNE (large array of services and retail operations)
 - Partner with Providers with multiple funding/braided approaches
 - Partner with Providers that are creative in meeting these challenges of rural services.
 - Partner with Providers with strong understanding of their local community and needs and strong ties to their community partners.
 - SCEC (Economic Council understands local needs and develops opportunities with eye on local isolated community)

Leveraging Strengths of Each Provider Through Intermediary Approach

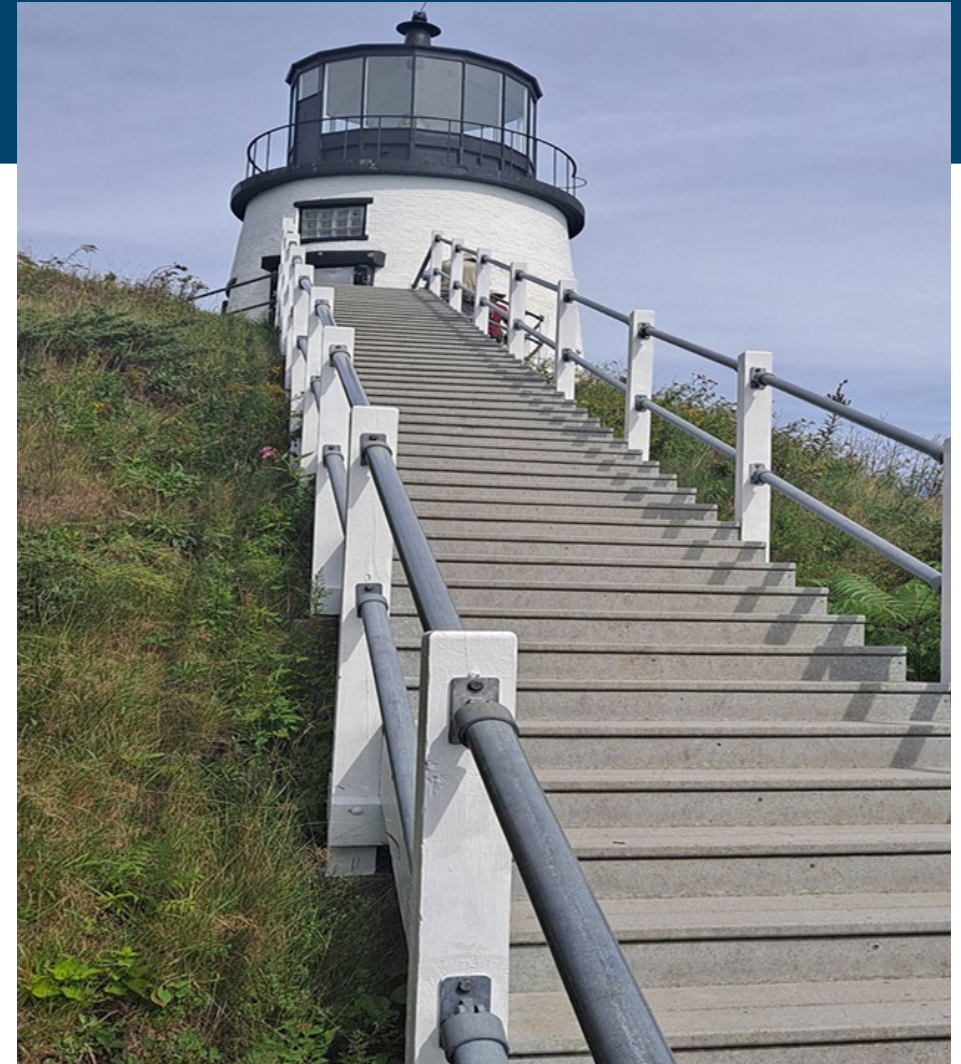


Examples:

- Database/Technical Assistance of one Provider
 - Job Connection Tool used by All Providers
- Strong Case Management as Role Models:
 - GWNNE two-pronged approach: Life Skills Navigator and Job Coach
 - Two-Gen/Whole Families: recognize needs of whole family impact the successes of the SNAP E&T Participant
- Training Strengths- Provider Training by one Provider Agency for all Providers:
 - Substance Use Disorder and its impact on SNAP E&T
 - Culture of Poverty
 - Cultural Competency of Services
 - Adverse Childhood Effects/Trauma Informed Services
 - Motivational Interviewing
 - Self-Care/Stress

Next Steps?

- Develop More Rural Job Opportunities:
 - Self-Employment/Small Business
 - Develop Subsidized and Apprenticeship Opportunities in rural areas.
 - Develop Remote Job Opportunities and connections with Employers
- Develop Training for all Participants in:
 - Digital Literacy
 - Financial Literacy



Maine SNAP E&T Rural Services

Questions?

For More Information contact:

Patricia.Dushuttle@maine.gov

Wanda.Theobald@maine.gov



- Visit our webpage: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/programs-services/food-supplement/fset>

Colorado

Elena Tooley-Prater

Welcome to Colorado



Elena Tooley-Prater
E&T Employment Specialist



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



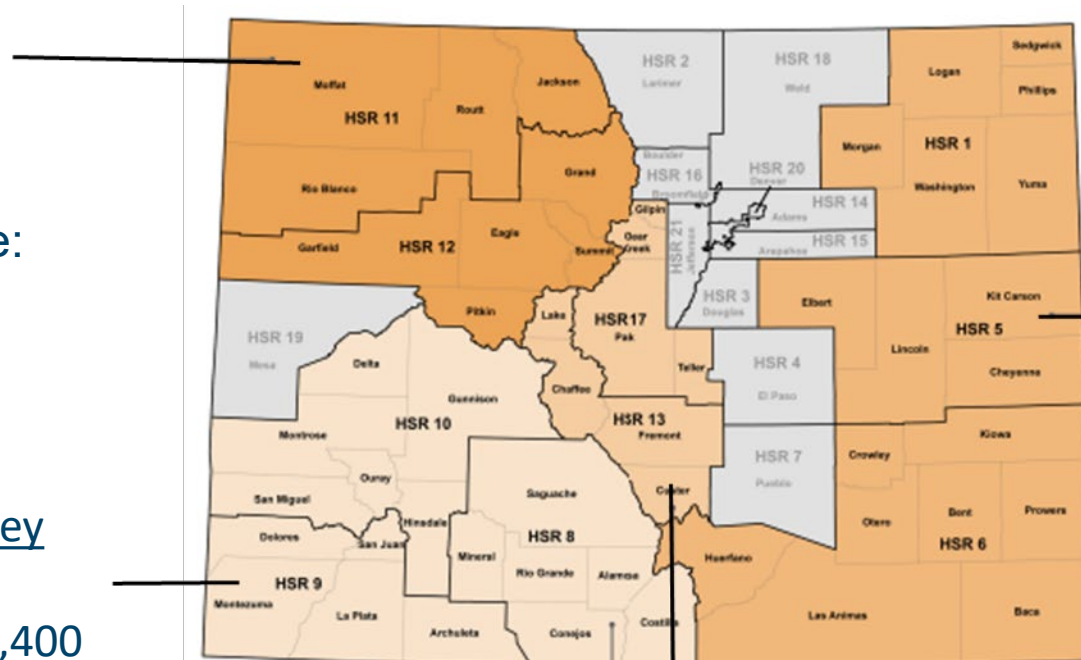
Mapping Rural Colorado

Northwest

- Population: 214,000
- Median income: \$63,900

Southwest/San Luis Valley

- Population: 239,000
- Median income: \$43,400



Central

- Population: 131,000
- Median income: \$54,700

- Colorado population 2016 census: 5,198,000
- Median income: \$59,400

Eastern Plains

- Population: 181,000
- Median income: \$42,500

Welcome to Colorado's SNAP E&T Program



- Human-centered Design
- E&T components
- E&T Partnerships



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Colorado's SNAP E&T Partnerships



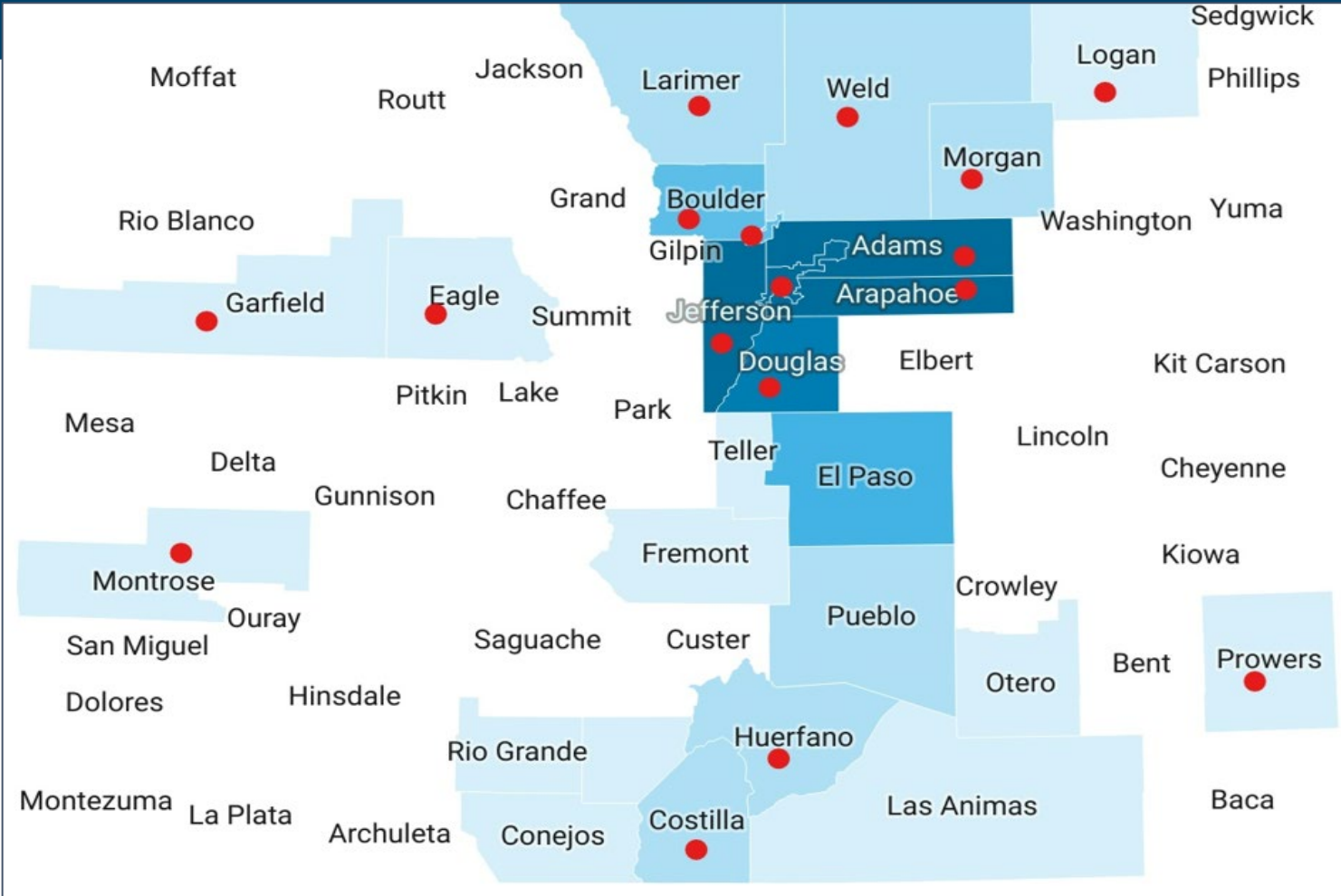
COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Colorado's SNAP E&T Partnerships



- Employment First services are offered in a total of 26 counties
- TPPs operate in 21 of the 26 counties



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Services in Rural Counties



- Re-entry programs
- Housing Assistance
- Workplace training for in-demand occupations
- Education/certifications
- Family strengthening and stability
- Virtual workshops



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Challenges in Rural Counties

- **Transportation**
- **Child Care**
- **Internet**
- **Housing**



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Success Stories



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support



Questions?

Thank you from Colorful Colorado!!

[EF Website](#)



COLORADO

Office of Economic Security

Division of Economic & Workforce Support

