

# Training Webinar: Turning Ideas into Impact – Part 1

## *National Community Action Partnership*

*April 15, 2026*

*2:00pm ET / 1:00pm CT / 12:00pm MT / 11:00am PT*

# Disclaimer

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This presentation is supported by Grant Number 90ET0502 from the ACF Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant within the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Neither the Administration for Children and Families nor any of its components operate, control, are responsible for, or necessarily endorse this presentation (including, without limitation, its content, technical infrastructure, and policies, and any services or tools provided). The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Administration for Children and Families and the ACF Office of Community Services, Community Services Block Grant.

# Agenda

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- Welcome
- CEM Project Overview
- Promising Practices
- Community Action in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock Counties
- Upcoming Tools and Resources

# Project Overview

# Purpose

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*“The Collaborative on Economic Mobility is intended to highlight emerging and promising practices in economic mobility for low-income communities and to expand the capacity of the Community Action network to deliver services that promote economic mobility.”*

# Key Focus Areas

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Community  
Asset Building

Innovative  
Community  
Programs and  
Organizations

High-Quality  
Education

Two-Generation  
and Whole  
Family  
Approaches

Workforce  
Development

# Promising Practices

# Two-Generational and Whole Family Approach

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- Supports for working parents, including early childhood education and development
- Focus on outcomes for working families and their children
- Training and technical assistance to help agencies understand and implement service integration
- Technology solutions that aid staff in integrating data
- Highlighting promising practices

# Innovative Community Programs & Organizations

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- Opportunities in Housing
- Opportunities in Transportation
- Opportunities in Health



# **Community Action in Aroostook, Washington, and Hancock Counties Presentation**

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# TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT

Implementing Innovative Approaches  
to Advance Economic Mobility

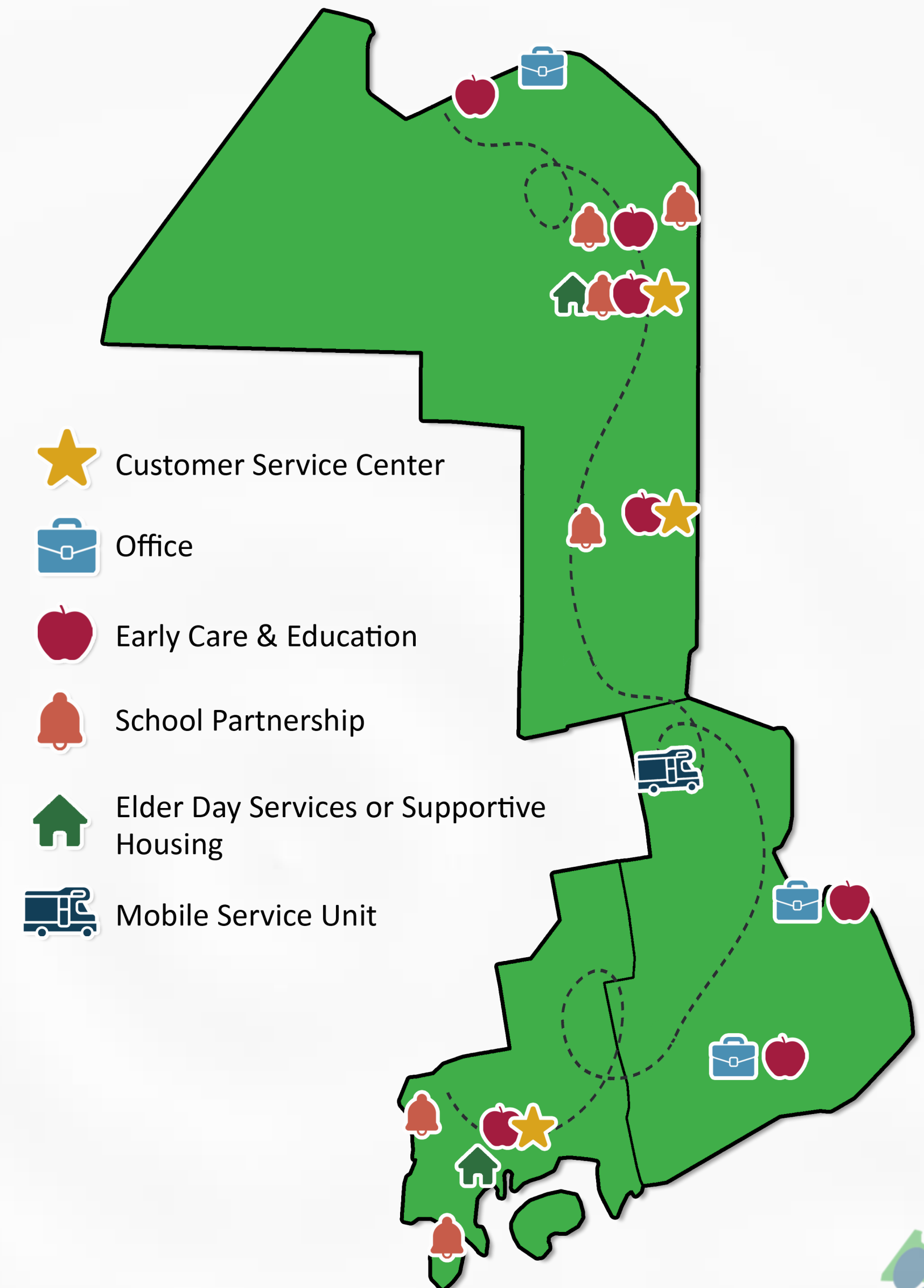
NCAP National Webinar | April 15, 2026



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# Who We Are

- Community Action in Aroostook, Washington & Hancock Counties
- Regional Community Action Agency serving ~35% of Maine's geography
- More than 40 integrated programs serving 25,000+ households
- Focus areas: early childhood, energy & housing, health, aging, workforce



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# Why Innovation Matters Here

Extremely rural geography and long travel distances

Aging population and limited transportation infrastructure

Families facing overlapping economic and social challenges

Innovation is necessary to deliver access, quality, and outcomes



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# Today's Focus

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Three case studies demonstrating innovation in action

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1. Whole Family Approach transformation

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2. Formation of a new three-county Community Action Agency

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3. Development of the Mobile Service Unit



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# Case Study 1: Whole Family Approach

Shift from program-centered services to household-centered support

Built in response to staff insight, customer experience, and outcomes data

Grounded in coordinated coaching across the full range of family needs



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# What Wasn't Working

- Programs operated in silos
- Staff limited by program-specific rules
- Families required to repeat their story multiple times
- Missed opportunities for deeper, sustainable impact



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# The Turning Point



Leadership shadowed frontline staff



Observed unmet needs beyond program eligibility questions



Recognized tension between mission and daily practice



Began building a culture that supported innovation



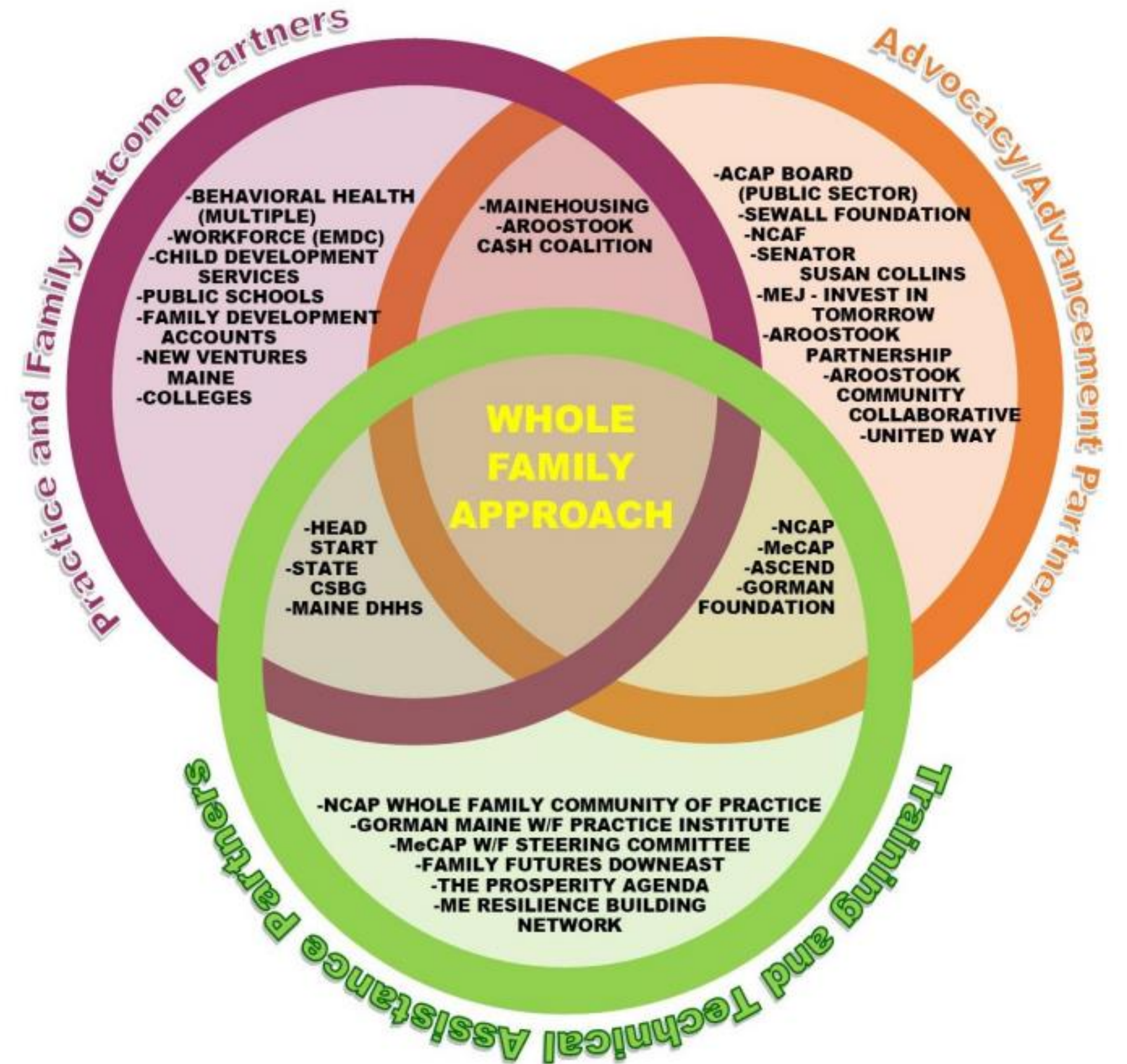
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# How the Model Works

- Creation of a Family Coaching team (nearly 20 coaches)
- Single point of contact for families
- Coaching spans housing, energy, education, employment, health, nutrition
- Families set goals; staff support the roadmap



- ❑ Internal Team Change – T/TA and Culture Change
- ❑ Building an Understanding and Changing Regular Operating Expectations of Funding Sources
- ❑ Working Collaboratively to Advocate for Change in Public Policy and Legislation to Better Support the Whole Family Approach



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# What Families Told Us



They value trust  
and consistency



They want help  
breaking goals  
into manageable  
steps



They stay  
engaged when  
they feel  
believed in, not  
judged



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# Why This Matters

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Addresses multiple needs at once

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Reduces duplication and inefficiency

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Improves retention and long-term outcomes

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Strengthens economic mobility



# Customer Intake Progression Timeline

Agency Intake	2024	Every customer coming to ACAP has opportunity to connect with all services
Comprehensive Intake Pilot - Agency Training Modules	2023	Goal: Maximize positive customer experience with the least number of return visits to reach desired eligible services
Coaching and Related Program Review - Employee Survey (Navigator Slide)	2022	
Consultant Climate on Comp. Intake - Changes to Administrative Support	2021	
Navigators Introduced - Cross Functional Teams	2020	More Customers/Greater Intensity - CARES ACT- Pandemic Response
Presumptive Eligibility/Push Intake - Employee Survey "Lets Go"	2019	Mostly Main St. - PI/ECE - Low Participation Customer Follow-Through
Coaches Added County-Wide	2018	ECE Families with Coach
First Coach Hired	2017	Central Aroostook Pilot Families in Early Head Start

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# Case Study 2: Expanding to a Three-County Agency

2025: Downeast  
Community Partners  
faced severe  
operational challenges

Risk of service  
disruption for  
thousands of families

Federal, state, and  
local partners aligned  
to ensure continuity



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# The Transition

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Programs transitioned into our organization between July and October 2025

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Included Head Start, Energy, Housing, Whole Family, Aging Services

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This was not a merger — services transferred to protect communities



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# What Guided the Work



Uninterrupted  
services



Clear and  
consistent  
communication



Retention of  
trusted staff



Speed with care



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# Building the New Agency

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REGIONAL COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSIONS

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NEW BOARD RECRUITMENT ACROSS ALL COUNTIES

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STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR 2026–2031

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DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW NAME AND SHARED IDENTITY



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# Case Study 3: Mobile Service Unit

Born from lessons learned during the pandemic

Virtual access increased reach for rural families

Customers asked us not to lose that accessibility



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# The Challenge

- Transportation consistently identified as a top barrier
- Many households lack reliable vehicles
- Brick-and-mortar expansion was not feasible



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# The Solution



An office on wheels — services traveling directly to communities



Fully connected mobile workspace



Staffed by cross-trained intake and service professionals



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# What the MSU Delivers

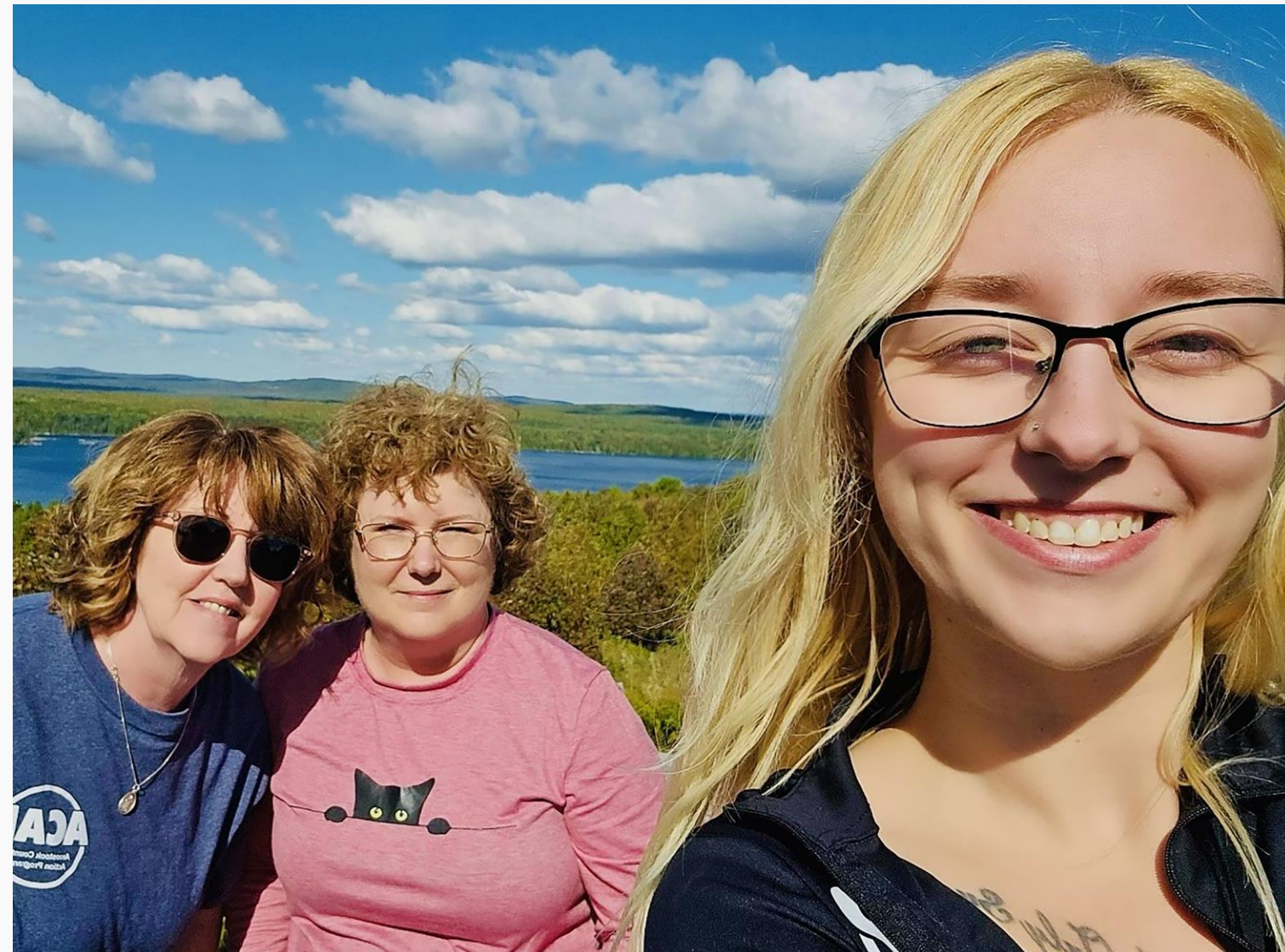
- Energy and housing assistance
- Whole Family coaching
- Early childhood and nutrition services
- Employment and prevention programs





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# Early Results



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56 service days

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25 rural communities

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460 completed applications

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Reduced barriers for working adults and older residents



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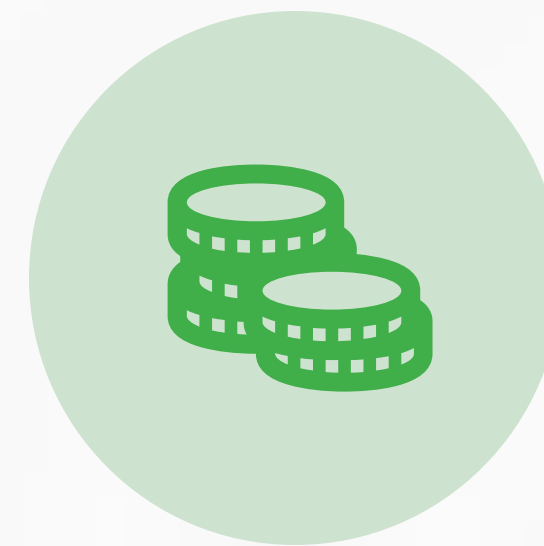
# Crosscutting Lessons



Innovation is essential for rural service delivery



Culture and staff alignment matter



Leveraging funding enables sustainability



Local responsiveness improves outcomes



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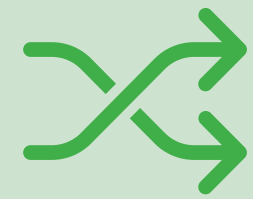
# Advice for Other Agencies



Start with culture



Listen to customers and staff



Pilot, learn, and adapt



Communicate clearly during change



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# Closing



Innovation is possible anywhere



Accountability and quality drive impact



Thank you for your partnership and interest



# Tools and Resources



# **TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT: IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO ADVANCE ECONOMIC MOBILITY**

**Part 1 - April 15<sup>th</sup>    Part 2- May 20<sup>th</sup>**

**2:00pm ET/1:00pm CT/12:00pm MT/11:00am PT**

**Advancing economic mobility requires Community Action leaders to implement innovative solutions to address complex challenges. This two-part webinar series explores practical strategies for transforming innovative ideas into measurable community impact. Participants will gain insight and advice from peers in the Community Action network, along with tools and resources to foster innovation, align resources, build capacity to adapt and scale approaches over time.**

**REGISTER TODAY!**



**[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/CEMIDEAS](https://tinyurl.com/cemideas)**



# FRESH FINDS

**DISCOVER THIS RESOURCE!**

**LEARN**

**EXPAND**

**IMPLEMENT**

The “Fresh Finds” Newsletter is offered quarterly through the Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM). Sign up and be the first to know about new tools, resources, and training opportunities!

Are you interested in expanding the capacity of your organization to implement innovative programs and services?

Are you interested in improving outcomes for the individuals, families, and communities in your service area?

Are you interested in learning from the experiences of other community leaders across the country?



**TINYURL.COM/FRESHFINDS25**

# Collaborative on Economic Mobility

**NEW NCAP WEBPAGE!!!**

**Explore the new Collaborative on Economic Mobility (CEM) Webpage!**

**You can find tools and resources related to CEM key focus areas and sign up for our Fresh Finds Newsletter here!**

## CEM Key Focus Areas:

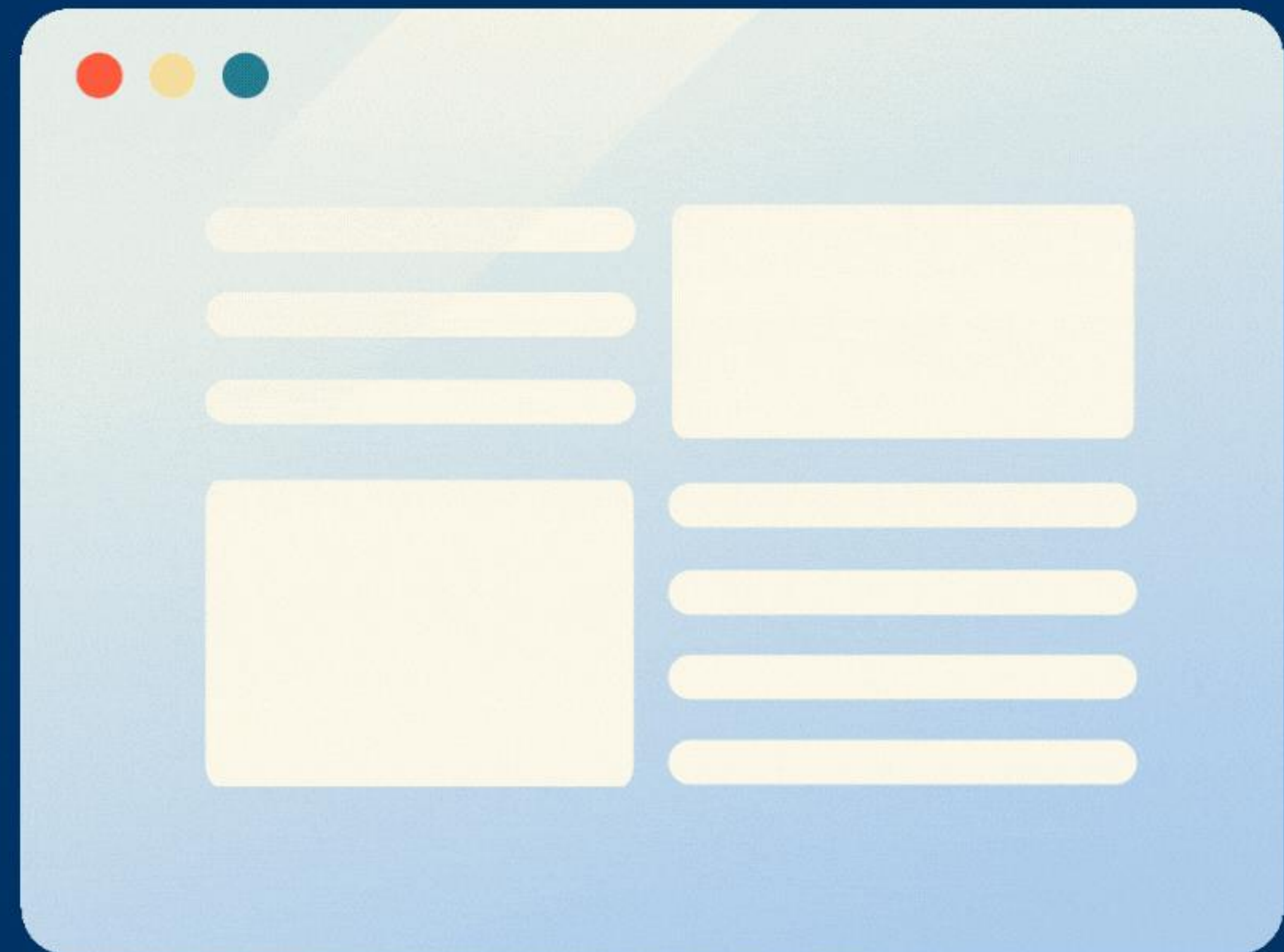
WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH

HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION

COMMUNITY ASSET BUILDING

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAMS  
& ORGANIZATIONS



[tinyurl.com/lookatCEM](https://tinyurl.com/lookatCEM)



# PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Workforce Development focusing on Pre-Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility shaping a brighter future not only for individuals but

In today's rapidly evolving job market, workforce development is essential for building strong, resilient families and fostering long-term economic growth. It's about creating meaningful opportunities and drive long-term economic growth. By investing in workforce development, employers can empower individuals to:

- **Increase Earning Potential:** Skilled workers can improve financial stability.
- **Enhance Job Security:** In-demand skills provide job market.
- **Contribute to Community Prosperity:** A skilled workforce drives growth and strengthens local economies.
- **Break Cycles of Poverty:** Access to quality training leads to upward mobility.

# APPRENTICESHIP WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE



This guide is designed to accompany the webinar Innovative Approaches to Workforce Development focusing on Registered Apprenticeships as pathways to economic mobility. This resource is designed to deepen your understanding of Registered Apprenticeships and provide you with additional resources to support your next steps, whether you're launching a program, expanding an existing program, or exploring how Registered Apprenticeships can strengthen your Workforce Development program goals.

**What is a Registered Apprenticeship?**  
 A Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-vetted, structured, work-based learning model that combines on-the-job training (OJT) with related instruction (RI). These programs are registered with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency, ensuring they meet specific quality standards.

Feature	Registered Apprenticeship	Apprenticeship	Pre-Apprenticeship
Registration	Registered with DOL or State Apprenticeship Agency and abides by 23 established standards	Any apprenticeship that is not formally registered with DOL	Not necessarily registered
Wage	Paid employment	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid	May be paid a stipend, starting hourly wage, or unpaid
Credential	Nationally recognized credential upon completion	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized	May or may not lead to credential, but not always nationally recognized
Duration	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Typically 1-5 years depending on chosen industry	Shorter term, often a few weeks to months
Purpose	Provides industry-vetted, paid job training that leads to full occupational proficiency while earning a portable, nationally recognized credential	Offers structured, paid or unpaid job training to prepare individuals for skilled careers, potentially leading to industry-recognized credentials	Foundational program designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeships

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR SERIES

Dive deeper into apprenticeship pathways with the Workforce Development webinar series!

Explore action steps, strategies, and resources to strengthen your understanding and implementation of Pre-Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships through this two-part webinar series and accompanying companion guides from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility.

**EXPLORE MORE HERE!**



<https://tinyurl.com/WORKFORCE-DEVELOPMENT1>



# NORTH EAST COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

Bowling Green, MO

necac.org



## Agency Context

### Organizational Capacity

North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) is a Community Action Agency, a Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (Rural LISC) grantee, and a NeighborWorks chartered agency located in Bowling Green, Missouri. The service area spans across 12 counties in Northeast Missouri, including three counties that are part of the metropolitan statistical area adjacent to St. Louis, as well as nine rural counties. The agency's annual budget is approximately \$26 million. This includes over 30 different funding sources, including a mix of both state and federal funding. NECAC is governed by a 36-person volunteer Board of Directors which includes three representatives from each of the 12 counties in the service area. The representatives from each county

include an Elected Official Representative, a Civic Interest Representative, and a Low-Income Representative. The agency has approximately 95 full-time staff and 100 part-time staff. The management team is comprised of 10 individuals including the President/CEO, Deputy Director of Housing Development Programs, Finance Operations Director, Personnel Officer and Assistant Deputy Director, Executive Secretary and Office Manager, Public Relations Officer, Information Technology (IT) Operations Director, Rent Assistance Programs Director, Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Operations Director, and Weatherization Director.

### Service Delivery

NECAC operates over 60 different programs across the areas of Community Service, Housing Development, and Community Health. Programs within the area of Community

<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-WRKFRCDDEV>

# Spotlight On: Workforce Development

## North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC) Case Study

Discover how NECAC enhanced its Workforce Development programming through organizational change and strong partnerships. This case study highlights how improved program structure and mission alignment created a stronger, more streamlined path to economic mobility.



EXPLORE THE CASE  
STUDY TODAY



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WEBINAR SERIES



**Discover how Community Action Agencies can reimagine and strengthen strategic partnerships to deepen trust and align goals for lasting community impact.**

**Unlock your potential and advance economic mobility by exploring this two-part webinar series with supplemental companion guides from the Collaborative on Economic Mobility.**

**EXPLORE HERE!**  
[bit.ly/STRATEGIC-PARTNERSHIPS](https://bit.ly/STRATEGIC-PARTNERSHIPS)



Promising Practices for Building & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships **1**

## BUILDING & REIMAGINING ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS

**Re-imagining What Partnerships Can Be**

Partnerships can extend far beyond the familiar when we broaden the circle of who we consider as potential partners and reframe partnerships as relationships that contribute to building a connected community of support. This network can be fostered with diverse partnerships such as community colleges, hospitals, public health departments, small and large businesses, trade unions, cultural organizations, and alumni associations to actively support and amplify each other's shared community goals. These partnerships can bring valuable resources like funding, support, job training opportunities, and spark program innovation. Re-imagining your existing and future partnerships encourages both partners to think beyond their own scope and work towards change that will benefit the entire community.

**Building on Established Partnerships**

Don't start from scratch! Your Community Action Agency (CAA) likely has a network of existing partnerships. The key is to strategically expand and deepen these connections to pursue innovative economic mobility initiatives.



BUILDING & REIMAGINING ESTABLISHED PARTNERSHIPS | COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIP.COM | 1

Promising Practices for Building & Sustaining Strategic Partnerships **2**

## STRENGTHENING & SUSTAINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

**i Introduction**

Whether formed across sectors, within the community, or among other mission driven organizations, strategic partnerships are built on shared values, trust, and commitment to collective impact.

But building these partnerships is just the first step. Sustaining these partnerships requires you to go deeper in your relationship with your partners and build a shared sense of purpose that drives you to adapt and innovate. This ongoing effort is what transforms simple connections to collaborations that are capable of driving impact.

It is through nurturing and strengthening these relationships that partnerships can unlock their full potential and create lasting change.



STRENGTHENING & SUSTAINING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS | COMMUNITYACTIONPARTNERSHIP.COM | 1

# BUCKS COUNTY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL



Doylestown, PA

bcoc.org

## Agency Context

### Organizational Capacity

Bucks County Opportunity Council (BCOC) is a local Community Action Agency located in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. They serve over 56,000 people annually through five program areas including: Housing, Weatherization, Food, Income Tax Preparation, and Economic Self-Sufficiency. The annual budget is approximately \$15 million which consists of 67% public funding and 33% from private and other funding sources. The work is led by a 21-person tripartite Board of Directors and a 17-person leadership team including a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), three Directors (Development, Compliance, and Client Services), six Housing Site Supervisors, and six Managers (Human Resources, Volunteer and Community Connections, Self-Sufficiency Program, Food Program,

BUCKS COUNTY OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

Communications and Development, and Weatherization Program). Additionally, there are 60 employees on staff and over 1,700 volunteers who contribute over 100,000 hours of volunteer service per year.

### Service Delivery

Bucks County is a suburb of Philadelphia, with a population of approximately 650,000. The county's population has grown by 3.4% since 2010 and the current poverty rate is 5.9%. This includes nearly 17% of children under the age of 18, and 5% of senior citizens over the age of 65. The community's needs vary depending on which part of the county they reside in. For example, in the Lower Bucks County area, income tends to be lower and four of the school districts have free or reduced lunch rates for over 50% of their student body.

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# Spotlight On: High Quality Education

## Bucks County Opportunity Council Case Study

Explore how Bucks County Opportunity Council partnered with their local Community College to break down barriers for low-income students. Through personalized coaching and support services, this case study highlights a proven pathway to lasting economic mobility and student success.

<https://tinyurl.com/CEM-HIGHQUALITYED>



EXPLORE THE CASE STUDY TODAY





# FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT WEBINAR COMPANION GUIDE

This webinar companion guide highlights best practices for Community Action Agencies to further develop innovative financial empowerment programs and integrate them into other human service programs.

This companion guide outlines strategies that both public and private Community Action Agencies can take advantage of to help individuals and families achieve financial success!

**CHECK OUT THE GUIDE TODAY!**



<https://tinyurl.com/FINANCIAL-EMPOWER1>

## ADVANCING ECONOMIC MOBILITY THROUGH FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT

### **i** Introduction

A stable financial foundation is fundamental for upward economic mobility. Financial stability allows individuals and families to fully benefit from programs that support employment, education, housing, health, and overall well-being. Financial stability is more than simply getting by day to day; it is about being able to sustain a household for months and years to come. Long term financial stability depends on both financial knowledge and access to affordable financial products and services. These services can help individuals and families to plan and prepare for financial emergencies and setbacks to ensure that financial goals and outcomes are not only achieved but also maintained.

Financial empowerment strategies are designed to help individuals and families build the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions. These strategies include financial education and coaching,



supportive policies and practices, and improved access to safe and affordable financial products such as affordable banking, credit unions, and savings accounts. By reimagining the approach to financial empowerment, Community Action Agencies can implement integrated services to help individuals and families manage finances, reduce debt, improve credit scores, build

# We want to hear from you!

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We would love to hear about your experience in today's training webinar. Please take a moment to complete the webinar survey.



<https://tinyurl.com/IdeastoImpact1>