The More Local, the Better: Spreading Innovation and Building Leadership in Piscataquis County, Maine

Susan Foster

S. E. Foster Associates

February 2020

MeHAF

MAINE HEALTH ACCESS FOUNDATION

Contents

1. Introduction

Too often, interventions intended to improve the health and well-being of people with the fewest resources never reach those who most need them. Services and supports are offered in economic hubs or urban centers far from people's homes, and there are few mechanisms in traditional service systems to ensure that services and supports are distributed in an equitable fashion. In 2014, the Maine Health Access Foundation began a multi-year initiative to support communities in finding homegrown solutions to complex health issues through community-informed system change. The program is intended to "provide Maine communities with the commitment and the capacity to engage stakeholders across multiple sectors, including vulnerable populations in conversations about the health of people in their community and the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to how healthy people can be."

Healthy Community grants aim to transform communities into supportive environments that enable people to live healthier lives. Eleven grantees received grants to align programs and services of multiple partners to select a priority health issue, develop goals and strategies to address the issue, and work collectively, across partners, to implement their plans. Based on the idea that system change efforts are more effective when communities actively participate in their design and implementation, grantees aimed to meaningfully engage people who are often marginalized in identifying and prioritizing the health issue they would work on and the community's response.

The Foundation hired an evaluation team to assess the development and impact of the community-based health initiatives as they unfolded, and to share what was learned along the way with the funder and the grantees. As the team traveled to rural communities around Maine, they noticed that for many grantees, their greatest challenge was reaching people living in the most isolated, remote communities in their regions. Local leaders sought creative solutions to overcome barriers to accessing services and supports such as transportation and being homebound.

Some of the most successful and sustainable strategies the evaluators observed across grantees involved *spreading innovative ideas* from larger to smaller towns. Expanding programs that work to new locations involved learning from local residents what might work best in their communities, piloting a program, demonstrating its feasibility, and applying the lessons learned to new locations. Another emerging strategy they observed

was *distributing leadership away* from the grant leaders to local community members by helping them build leadership capacity, and then gradually ceding control of project planning and activities to local leaders.

Constructs that help tell the story:

Diffusion of innovation[1] *explains how an idea gains momentum and spreads through a population or social system. The innovation must demonstrate success on a small scale, must be responsive to the concerns of people in that social system, and must be perceived as innovative. When these conditions are met, ideas tend to be adopted. Recently, diffusion of innovation has been applied to health care delivery within organizations, but the theory is less well documented in community-driven system change initiatives, especially in rural areas.*

Distributed leadership[2] *happens when leadership is shared, rather than centralized. This leadership practice assumes that leadership is found at all levels of experience and that reconfiguring complex systems requires collaborative arrangements to ensure that ideas and insights are shared. The theory was developed in the context of organizations, but the concepts apply to larger cross-organizational systems as well. Distributed leadership has also been associated with program sustainability. Networks may begin with a single leader, but when new leaders are nurtured and assume responsibility for specific pieces of work across a system, initiatives tend to be more stable.*

These strategies are producing positive outcomes: larger, regional agencies or municipalities are adopting local programs and sustaining them over time; agencies are funding training for local leaders to provide group programs like Matter of Balance and tai chi to elders close to their homes; civic organizations are providing financial support and volunteers; and local leaders are becoming champions for programs catalyzed by the grantees. In this way, grantees are spreading innovative services and supports to rural communities all over Maine. This case study focuses on one grantee that was particularly effective in expanding programs to alleviate food insecurity to rural towns across their county: Piscataquis Healthy Food for All.

Information for this case study was gathered over the past four years from two visits to Piscataquis County, interviews with grant staff and VISTA volunteers, community members, and organizational partners including food cupboard managers, hospital staff, and a town manager. The evaluators also conducted additional phone interviews and reviewed four years of grant progress reports.

---

1   Boston University School of Public Health (www.sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otit/MPH-Modules/SB/BehavioralChangeTheories/BehavioralChangeTheories4.html)

2   Spillane, J.P. (2006). *Distributed leadership.* San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

2. Piscataquis Healthy Food for All

Nowhere was the spread of innovation better demonstrated in MeHAF's Healthy Community grants than in Piscataquis County, the least populated county in Maine with a population of 4.4 people per square mile and a total population of 16,800[3]. Over one-quarter (26.7%) of the population is over the age of 65, and the region has been featured in articles about Maine's aging population. Its biggest town is Dover-Foxcroft, population 4,077[4]. Because it is the county seat, many county-wide services and supports are located there.

In 2013, MeHAF awarded a Healthy Community grant to the Piscataquis Regional YMCA to conduct a community-informed, cross-sector assessment and planning process to collectively identify a health issue that the community could work on together. Since 2017, the grant has been operated by the recently created Piscataquis Regional Food Center (PRFC). PRFC works with community partners to connect farms and people in need with programs, services, and facilities to help them produce and acquire healthy food (www.prfoodcenter.org). The grant is led by its only full-time staff person, Erin Callaway, supported by an AmeriCorps VISTA member and a part-time PRFC employee.
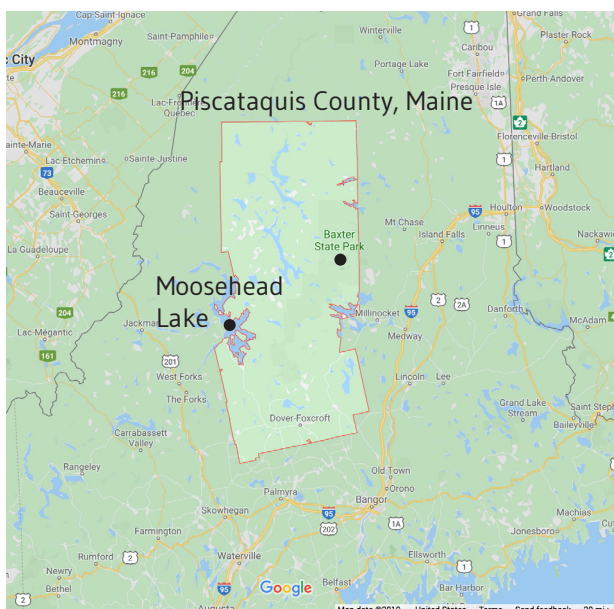
The Approach

The grant staff knew that they had to learn more about what health issues were most pressing in the minds of health care and other providers, community organizations, and the people living in the County. They learned through building partnerships, engaging community members in conversation, and facilitating a process to reach consensus on the health issue they would work on over the next three years.

---

3   Source: U.S. Census. 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

4   U.S. Census, Quick Facts.

Building Partnerships and Engaging Community

Learning how to build lasting community relationships was an essential early lesson. In 2014, the grant convened a steering committee comprised of organizational representatives primarily from Dover-Foxcroft that conducted surveys and community meetings to learn what community members were most concerned about from a health perspective. Although they were building fruitful relationships in their town, the team had more difficulty getting people from smaller towns far from the county seat to attend community gatherings.

Some towns were not engaging in the process at all, and local partners began to question whether or not to continue to reach out to them. Over time, the project learned that slowing down and focusing on individuals and small groups was more effective than holding large meetings. They learned to set realistic expectations about community involvement and the time that it takes to build strong relationships with potential partners. The early, patient work of building relationships in outlying towns became the springboard for catalyzing the spread and adoption of innovative food insecurity solutions across the county.

Identifying a Common Health Issue

Following a two-year planning process, local stakeholders coalesced around food insecurity and access to healthy foods as their designated health issue. This focus garnered the interest of a large, diverse group of people. The project lead made additional connections and learned about innovative strategies they could adapt for use in Piscataquis County by joining local food networks and attending conferences. The Maine Network of Food Councils, Food Research and Action Center events, aging conferences, and student events were particularly helpful. By 2016, the project was exploring opportunities for action by:

» Assessing the reach of summer meals programs;

» Working with the farmer's market on improving distribution of produce to people in need;

» Investigating ways to provide healthy food to homebound seniors;

» Exploring the idea of food insecurity screening by the local hospital and primary care; and

» Improving the quality of food in food cupboards.

Once specific areas of work had been identified, workgroups formed according to participant interests. Some original participants left the network when the work became focused on food but remaining members viewed this shift in the composition of the network as a natural evolution, not a concern.

These exploratory activities helped define the current goals of the project:

1. Increase the number of people who have access to and benefit from hunger relief programs via summer meals program, FarmShare for Homebound Seniors, and SNAP application training and application clinics; and food insecurity screening in health care settings;

2. Help build the capacity of local hunger relief agencies to provide healthy foods; and

3. Link and integrate delivery of social, medical, and public health services that help people gain access to healthy food.

Early on, the group identified two major obstacles:

1. How to bring systemic change to the food system in a vast, sparsely populated region with significant health challenges and small, isolated communities with few formal resources?

2. How to reach and engage organizational partners and community members from towns beyond Dover-Foxcroft?

With such a small staff, the challenge lay in balancing awareness of the need to reach the whole county with realistic expectations of what they could achieve.

Summer Meals Program Offers a Test Case

Children living in poverty can go hungry once school lets out for the summer. The USDA's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to fill that gap. This Federally-funded, state-administered program reimburses local operators who serve meals to children and teens in low-income areas. The state Department of Education provides written guidance on how to implement summer meals programs, but the municipality is responsible for implementation and sustainability. In Piscataquis County, over 90% of students qualify for food assistance, but the program was only operating in Dover-Foxcroft and had died out in Milo. Milo, a town of 2,500 residents, is described as the oldest, poorest town in the county, with a per capita income of $22,000. Concerned that children were not getting a much-needed benefit, the state Department of Education encouraged grant leads to facilitate the expansion of meal sites.

The grant team responded by convening key leaders in Milo such as the director of food services, the schools, and the Town Manager to develop a plan to ensure that at least 30 children received five meals a week over eight weeks during the summer.

A mother of six from Derby, the poorest neighborhood in Milo, reported that her children's friends often came to her house hungry. The information prompted action by the grant program and community leaders.

External partners such as the Maine Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program provided technical assistance, and the Full Plates Full Potential Coalition[5] provided grant money for coolers. That first summer, the small grant team coordinated the program, from marketing to delivering the food to recruiting the volunteers to cleaning up. On the first day, two children showed up; on the second day, eight attended, and by the third day, 18 children came for lunch.

Damien Pickel, the Town Manager and Police Chief, was aware of the need but initially skeptical of the program. By the end of the first summer, his perspective changed and he ultimately agreed to establish the Town as a summer meals program for the 2018 season. Once people in the community realized that Milo would own its summer meals program, local leaders began to donate to it; for example, Kiwanis gave $2,000 and provided volunteers, and a local brewery donated a portion of their Sunday receipts. With kids gathered in one location, health care providers saw an opportunity to serve a captive audience and began to provide tick checks and conduct activities such as a tour of the ambulance.

In 2018, Damien Pickel and the Town of Milo won a $500 prize from the Full Plates Full Potential for the biggest increase in summer meals in Piscataquis County, and Kiwanis made its $2,000 gift an annual line item in its budget. Now, Erin and Damien are sharing the story of Milo with other nearby towns such as Dexter and Guilford to promote summer meal expansion. By 2019, the program in Milo was so popular that they served 800 lunches in the first two weeks of the summer and were on target to serve 2200 meals by the end of August. Erin has only been to Milo twice in 2019, a sign that the program runs independent of the grant program.

Pilot Testing Works Out the Kinks

A key lesson learned from the summer meals pilot was to start small in order to grow. Rolling out new systems across multiple communities and a large geographic region necessitates testing new ideas with a small group first. Beginning with a small pilot is a low-risk, low-resource way to identify hitches in the process, demonstrate effectiveness, and show that the project engages the community. Starting with a pilot project allows for adjustments before one invests fully in the program, and if it doesn't work as intended, it can be adapted or discontinued.

The success of the summer meals program did not come without challenges. In its first year, it was hard to find volunteers and manage communication among key collaborators to avoid gaps and duplication. Starting small helped the team learn which processes worked well and not as well, identified specific functions and steps in the process, and helped identify resources they would need to create a sustainable project. In a debriefing meeting

---

5   Full Plates Full Potential is a non-profit organization whose mission is to end child hunger in Maine (https://www. fullplates.org)
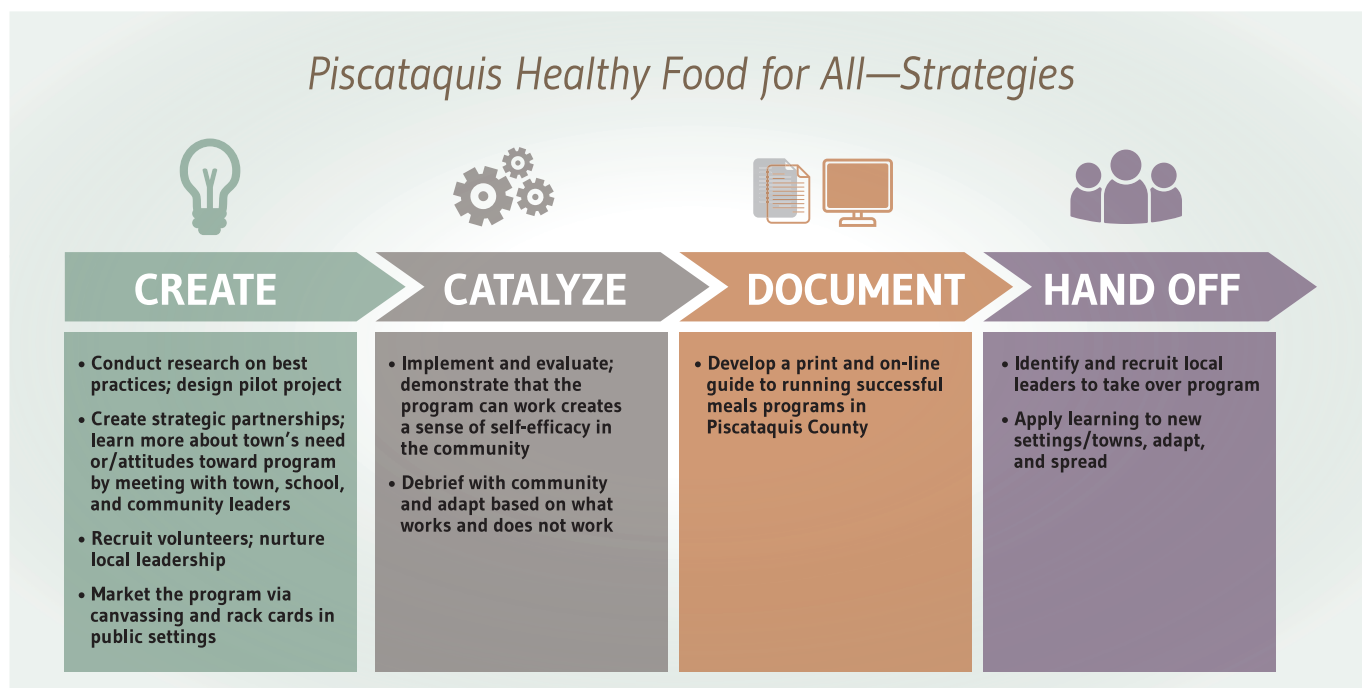
at the end of the summer, the team met with local leaders, participants, and volunteers to obtain their feedback. Volunteers shared that they are more likely to take on tasks that are well-defined, occur at a specific time, and have a delimited time frame, so these expectations were built into the recruitment process for the coming year. As volunteers took over key functions, the grant staff were able to step back.

Learning to Let Go

Through this process, the Healthy Food for All team learned that in order to sustain each project activity, they needed to cede responsibility to local leaders. With few staff resources, one of the most important and necessary steps in transferring leadership included nurturing local leaders to assume responsibility for the initiative. In order to do so, potential leaders like the Town Manager needed to embrace the notion that the innovation would help the community, and be willing to take full responsibility for its implementation, inclusive of key functions previously performed by the grant such as volunteer recruitment, logistics, marketing, and meal delivery. Erin had to let go and trust local community members and organizational partners to move the project forward. Organizational partners have described Erin as a great partner because she helps organizations respond more effectively and reach more people, gets to the point, and breaks down complex information into a problem potential partners feel they can address.

Perhaps the most critical piece of wisdom to come out of the pilot project was to *design for sustainability*. When establishing new systems, they should be designed from the beginning to continue past the grant funding period. Making sure the activity is owned and operated by multiple entities that are already well established in the community enables the outside leaders to step away, knowing that the program will carry on without them.

By 2017, Piscataquis Healthy Food for All synthesized what they had learned about piloting and expanding summer meals programs for low-income youth into a set of common strategies:

Piscataquis Healthy Food for All—Strategies

CREATE	CATALYZE	DOCUMENT	HAND OFF
• Conduct research on best practices; design pilot project • Create strategic partnerships; learn more about town's need or/attitudes toward program by meeting with town, school, and community leaders • Recruit volunteers; nurture local leadership • Market the program via canvassing and rack cards in public settings	• Implement and evaluate; demonstrate that the program can work creates a sense of self-efficacy in the community • Debrief with community and adapt based on what works and does not work	• Develop a print and on-line guide to running successful meals programs in Piscataquis County	• Identify and recruit local leaders to take over program • Apply learning to new settings/towns, adapt, and spread

The pathway from creation to handoff is almost never linear, and it entails overcoming unexpected obstacles, doubling back, and rethinking one's approach.

Applying the approach to other food insecurity interventions

With guiding principles and practices in place for piloting and spreading workable food projects, Piscataquis Healthy Food for All expanded its work to people of all ages, with activities focused primarily on children and older community members, whom they found were most affected by poverty and food insecurity. Starting with small pilot projects enabled the grant team to work on multiple activities at once with a goal to catalyze local ownership of each project.

» **FarmShare for Homebound Seniors:** Modeled after the Maine Senior FarmShare Program, the local program provides $50 in free produce to qualified seniors, delivered to home. In its first year (2016), Erin and the VISTA volunteer delivered all meals, which was not sustainable. They then created a partnership with Rite Aid, whose ambassadors took food orders, which were delivered by Meals on Wheels. The 2016 pilot served 12 seniors; in 2017, the program served 28 people, and in 2018 it served 45 people across nine towns. Project staff have developed a "how to" guide for communities wishing to start a similar program that details steps in the process, success factors, and anticipated hurdles they may face. The John T. Gorman Foundation funded the initial project, and MeHAF supported its expansion.

» **Increasing Healthy Food in Food Cupboards:** In 2016, the grantee learned that food cupboards lacked fresh food and that there was no way for farmers and grocery stores to distribute excess fresh fruit and vegetables to people who most need them. The project partnered with the dietician from Mayo Hospital to collect information from food pantry customers about their dietary concerns and needs. Their input informed the types of foods the project would help to provide and guided development of nutrition classes. This information was also used to guide potential donors to give healthier food to food cupboards. After testing ideas in Dover-Foxcroft, the team applied what they had learned to food cupboards in Sangerville and Greenville. Experience with the

Developing a healthier food cupboard system

Before they started working with Piscataquis Healthy Food for All, the Sangerville food cupboard provided mostly canned goods; after four years, they have more fresh food and have quadrupled the number of people they serve. The grant team delivered fresh food that they helped glean from farms in the first year, rescued food from grocery stores, improved communication about the food cupboard through advertising and a food cupboard guide, and gave the food cupboard reusable, sturdy bags for customers.

food cupboards generated a significant system change in the way food was gleaned from farms. This year, PRFC is partnering with local farms and Piscataquis County Cooperative Extension Office to create a formal gleaning program: *"In the past, we'd get a call from a farm saying we have a field full of potatoes; a few weeks ago, we got 300 lbs. of eggplant and 200 lbs. of peppers, already cleaned and sorted, that we took the next day to the Dover-Foxcroft food cupboard."* (Erin Callaway, Project Coordinator). In that way, they moved from opportunistic to intentional and organized.

» **Spice Drive:** A local community member who was engaged in the project found a creative way to make flavorful, healthy meals out of food cupboard products. She designed a Spice Drive, in which local businesses contribute a "spice of the month" featuring a different herb or spice. Food samples featuring the spice, along with recipes, are displayed to encourage customers to try new preparations. Samples are prepared by participants of a day program for people with cognitive and behavioral health disabilities, which gives them an opportunity to enhance their cooking skills while providing an important service to the community. This project remains firmly planted in Dover-Foxcroft, as it has been difficult to introduce in other sites due to space limitations and more work for local volunteers.

» **Food Insecurity Screening:** In partnership with Mayo Hospital's dietician and community outreach coordinator, this pilot project seeks to increase patient screening for food insecurity. In 2015, Mayo Hospital staff knew that some of their patients were going hungry, and some used their own money to give out food. They wanted to conduct food insecurity screening with their patients but had no means to systematically respond to those who screened positive. Erin connected them with the resources to pilot a food insecurity screening routine, free food bags, and a food resource guide for those demonstrating need for assistance. The pilot project began at a Milo family practice, where a total of 168 people in 2017 reported severe difficulty obtaining food. The pilot helped staff routinize and document the screening process. This project remains in the pilot phase.

The table below summarizes growth and spread of selected activities.

Spread of Piscataquis Healthy Food for All Projects, 2016 – 2019

Project	2016	2019
Summer meals	• Pre-existing meals program in Dover-Foxcroft. • 2017: Piloted in Derby neighborhood of Milo and served an estimated 100 meals; spread to Greenville • 2018: Town of Milo opens 5 additional sites and serves 870 meals.	• Town of Milo serves 3,000 summer meals, an increase of 29% over 2018. • Meals delivered to theatre camp kids in Sangerville and Monson for the first time. • Outreach planned for Guilford in 2020
FarmShare for Homebound Seniors	• 2016: Pilots in Dover-Foxcroft, Milo, and Guilford • Serves 12 customers.	• Spread to additional 6 towns: Brownville; Dexter; Sangerville; Greenville; Shirley; Monson. • Serve 45 customers, an increase of 27% from 2016
Increasing Healthy Food in Food Cupboards	• 2016: Tested ideas for increasing availability of healthy foods	• 2019: Applied new practices to food cupboards in Sangerville, Greenville. • Developed formal gleaning programs with farmers
Spice Drive	• 2016: Pilot/implementation in Dover-Foxcroft	• Expanded number/type of partners: dietitian from hospital; clients from Penquis volunteer to cook, promote Spice Drive, collect spices from stores. • Did not spread geographically due to space limitations in food cupboards
Food insecurity screening—Mayo Regional Hospital	• 2016 – 17: Pilot at Milo Family Practice, spread to limited degree to hospital	• Food insecurity screening continues at Milo Regional Hospital and one primary care practice; program remains in pilot phase due to major changes at hospital

This exhibit shows how some programs spread geographically and/or expanded numbers served. Others have moved more slowly due to contextual and structural factors Demonstrating program efficacy through piloting is a determinant of spread, but not a guarantee.

3. Key Roles in Facilitating Spread of Innovation

Piscataquis Healthy Food for All staff and partners agree that this initiative's success in spreading innovative programs throughout the County is attributable in no small measure to the Piscataquis Regional Food Center and the community members who stepped forward to volunteer their time and adopt various food access activities in their towns. Having long-term support from MeHAF, along with the flexibility to adapt their program to respond to emerging needs and opportunities, was a key contributor to its success.

Piscataquis Regional Food Center promises systemic solutions for regional food system

The Piscataquis Regional Food Center (PRFC) is the brainchild of the grant's project coordinator. The Center addresses three key barriers in the food system: coordination of programs, food distribution, and storage. PRFC also works with regional farms to help them realize more business opportunities in the regional food system and to get better connected with the hunger relief system. PRFC is partnering with Good Shepherd Food Bank, Maine's largest food bank, to become a hub for receiving food from various sources and then distributing it to food cupboards. To that end, Good Shepherd loaned a refrigerated truck to PRFC, which expedites deliveries of food to multiple towns around the county. The hope for the PRFC is that as a regional hub, it will be able to take all of the individual work and coalesce it into a comprehensive system.

> Marilee, PRFC's Food Services Coordinator, recently wrote that having a truck supports their FarmShare for Homebound Seniors program, which delivers food from multiple sources. Seniors can now get fresh produce, Commodities Supplemental Food boxes, and dog food from the Furry Friends Program at Eastern Area on Aging in one trip. Marilee says that the best part of the trip is making connections with seniors living in rural areas who don't have many visitors. Food on the Move blog, 9/27/19 (https://www.prfoodcenter.org/single-post/2019/09/27/Food-on-the-Move)

Community members

Reflecting on what has made expansion possible in the rural communities around the County, Erin says that it is about building relationships slowly: *It's like filling a tool box full of people.* At the initial meeting, staff learns about the people in the room and their communities and tests out their ideas to get people's initial reactions. Gradually, they become a familiar presence in the setting or community and eventually, they demonstrate that they are committed.

Even if people don't immediately sign up to help, the team has a cadre of people they can go back to later to help implement the work, assess its effectiveness, and help improve it over time. For example, in the early days of the Spice Drive, the team talked to 10 people at a food cupboard to guide its design, and went back to the same group three years later to gather ideas about improving the process: *"People are willing to offer real opinions once they know and trust you."* (Erin Callaway, Project Coordinator). Project staff learned that community engagement requires more hands-on shepherding than anticipated; being available to support new community partners over time is necessary to ensure that local volunteers follow-up on the great ideas that they generated.

Community members were instrumental in educating the project team and their partners about the role that stigma plays in preventing people from using food resources. People living on limited incomes shared stories of how they had been shamed by health care providers for the food choices they were forced to make that adversely impacted their health, ashamed of being on SNAP, and feeling ashamed to go to food cupboards. To dispel misconceptions about hunger and who it affects, the project initiated a hunger awareness campaign with activities and communications targeted to multiple audiences that spread the idea that people experiencing food insecurity need healthy food. Piscataquis Regional Food Center's Facebook page and website contain content on events, food sources, and schedules, as well as blogs and articles that raise awareness about poverty and food insecurity. One article provided poverty statistics for the County and emphasized that many people are one life event away from poverty[6].

As a result of these efforts, people living in Piscataquis County are learning that hunger can happen to anyone, that people experiencing food insecurity need to be treated with respect, and that people who visit the food pantry are "customers." One food cupboard does not screen clients for eligibility: "If someone has the courage to come through the door, we make them as comfortable as possible. So many people won't come because they won't take handouts." (Food cupboard volunteer) With more awareness of food insecurity around the County, more people are initiating new ideas about addressing hunger in their towns.

---

6   (https://www.prfoodcenter.org/single-post/2019/01/07/Poverty-Isnt-What-You-Think-It-Is)

The Funder's Contribution to Success

Erin says *"The MeHAF process made it work."* by "MeHAF process," she means a) identify the right partners by building relationships and take the time to find out where people's interests lie; b) conduct research into what works; c) use existing resources that won't go away; d) employ a sustainability mindset—always ask how to keep the program going without a grant; and e) adapt the process along the way. Small numbers often plague rural grantees, whose funders do not understand what it takes to serve people in rural areas. MeHAF recognized this and continued to fund communities for the impacts they were making, irrespective of the numbers served.

> "MeHAF invested in the long-term process necessary for us to learn about systems and partnerships and to work out the kinks. Other foundations would not be happy with an "n" of 12."
>
> —Erin Callaway, Project Coordinator

MeHAF went beyond a traditional funding role by supporting local capacity building. For example, grant funds could be used flexibly for things like exploratory research and conference attendance. Foundation staff connected Erin to beneficial partners in Maine such the Maine Hunger Initiative[7], facilitated a power mapping process in which community partners identified opportunities and barriers associated with their system change efforts, sponsored grantee learning community meetings, and provided technical assistance to help the project create a work plan. *"MeHAF supports really showed me they understood the difference between rural and urban issues."* (Erin Callaway, Project Coordinator). Finally, MeHAF funding and other support has also influenced the mission of PRFC, in which the practices promoted by MeHAF are now standard operating procedure: doing the slow work of creating partnerships, committing to learning along the way, accepting that making mistakes is part of the process, and perpetually nurturing relationships with partners and community members.

---

7   Maine Hunger Initiative was created in 2008 to meet immediate food needs, offset food supply shortages, and develop long-term solutions to hunger. The initiative also provides technical assistance to food programs around the State. (https://www.preblestreet.org/what-we-do/advocacy-programs/Maine-hunger-initiative)

4. Conclusion

The story of Piscataquis Healthy Food for All demonstrates that with relatively few resources, a community can have an impact on food insecurity and on the entire food system. The benefits have been seen not only by children, families, and elders who now have access to healthy food, but by farmers, food cupboard coordinators, hospital staff, and the statewide food bank, which now has a central repository and distribution system for food. More people understand that hunger is a serious problem in their communities and are stepping up to do something about it. New leaders have emerged who are sustaining critical screening and feeding programs. Piscataquis Healthy Food for All's experience shows that building partnerships, piloting innovative ideas, promoting local ownership, and creating the evidence base for their adoption helps to spread great ideas to small communities that would not be able to start them on their own. Staff and partners learned that piloting brought operational problems to the surface, enabled a team with limited resources to experiment with multiple ideas at once. Intentionally designing for sustainability involved identifying emerging local leaders, sharing tools and resources, and coaching them until they were ready to take over has resulted in many free-standing, locally-supported projects across the County. Ultimately, people will more easily get the food they need, when they need it, and there will be greater understanding and support for eradicating food insecurity.