

Updates – DHHS Commissioner Lambrew, DOL Commissioner Fortman, and DOC Associate Commissioner Theriault

- Covid Update
 - Number of cases for past 3 months have not changed significantly; most counties are low/green
 - Hospitalizations remain relatively low; 2 children currently in hospital
 - Watching number of cases as children return to school and people return to offices
 - Only one outbreak to date since classes resumed
 - Vaccinations for children are relatively low, but when compare nationwide, Maine ranks:
 - 4th for first dose for children under age 5
 - 8th for fully vaccinated children ages 5-11
 - 13th for fully vaccinated youth ages 12-14
- Child Care Infrastructure Grants
 - July – Grants for family child care providers to open new or expand became available at the end of July. Will be on a rolling basis.
 - August – Grants for child care centers to open new or expand became available at the end of August. The first stage of the new construction grants are due at the end of September. The second application will be due at the end of December.
 - Child Care stabilization transition grants will be available for all licensed child care programs. The official ARAP Child Care Stabilization Grants end this month with transition grants running from October through May.
 - The state funded stipends of \$200/month per child care worker go into effect in October.
- Help Me Grow – continue to build infrastructure and advance activities. Will launch in November
- Youth Behavioral/Mental Health - moved \$14 million from general fund to providers to address children/youth behavioral/mental health-related issues stemming from the Covid 19 pandemic
 - Working on a comprehensive plan to improve children behavioral/mental health services/activities
- DOL - advancing training programs building on career exploration model
 - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/adulted/wioa> - requirement to provide services for at-risk youth

- Vocational services targeted youth during the summer including college bus tour, participation in college programs for youth with autism, robotics camp, No Barriers program for visually impaired youth, and paid work experience opportunities.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program - every school has an assigned vocational rehabilitation coordinator who works closely with DOE staff
- Public Safety in process of hiring 8 behavioral health positions
- DOC has one youth in the Unity transitional living program in Auburn. DOC runs the program and has contracted with Day One (<https://day-one.org/>) to staff the program. Program is for youth transitioning out of Long Creek or youth on probation struggling in the community. Current capacity: 4 male in-transition beds and 2 attendant care beds-short term (72 hours) to avoid detention of youth
- DOE – working on programing for system-involved students including mentoring, building out restorative practices, meaningful work experiences
 - Maine Outdoor Learning Initiative (<https://www.maine.gov/doe/MaineOutdoorLearning>) – 16 summer programs, ongoing, with site visits

Two Generation/Whole Family Approach

Maine Children’s Cabinet Early Childhood Advisory Council (CCECAC) (<https://www.maine.gov/future/initiatives/childrens-cabinet/advisory-council>) – advises the Children’s Cabinet; meets monthly; consists of members across a broad range of experience

The Council has been discussing the Whole Family Approach and wanted to share with the Children’s Cabinet an overview of the program.

- Key Components of Whole Family Approach - Jen Beck, Vice President of Programs, John T. Gorman Foundation; member of the CCECAC (see attachment)
 - Vision - to create a legacy of educational success and economic prosperity that passes from one generation to the next
 - Simultaneously supports children and parents of the same family so that improve outcomes can be achieved – draws from research that well-being of parents is linked to well-being of children
 - Involves whole family and in practices and polices
 - There are multiple ways of executing Whole Family approach
 - Puts whole family on path to economic security and entails five components:
 - Social capital (e.g., networks, family, friends)
 - High-quality early childhood education
 - Postsecondary and employment for parents/caregivers
 - Health and well-being (e.g., physical/mental health, addressing adverse childhood experiences)
 - Economic supports (e.g., asset building such as match savings, housing)

- Expected Outcomes – defining outcomes on the onset allows for accountability
 - Parent/Caregiver (less stress, stronger parenting skills, build confidence)
 - Child (positive interactions, improve social emotional development, meet school milestones)
 - Family (meet basic needs, financial and housing stability)
- Hallmarks of engaging the whole family
 - Parent leaders – decision making
 - Relationships – building social capital
 - Holistic approach to supporting families – family developed goals/plans
 - Strength-based coaching strategies
 - Integrated approached and break down silos
 - Inter-agency cooperation, enhanced data sharing, MOUs
- Resources
 - *Whole Family Approach to Jobs: Helping Parents Work and Children Thrive: Lessons From The Field*
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oro/whole_family_approach_to_jobs_lessons_learned_and_outcomes_acfnov2019.pdf
 - *The Two-Generation Approach: Recommendations for Bridging Practice and Policy in Maine*
<https://www.jtgfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Gorman-Two-Generation-Brief-FINAL-6-17-20.pdf>
 - *The 2GEN Approach* <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/>
- Maine’s Whole Family Approach Contracts (Tim Sturtevant, Office for Family Independence, DHHS – manages Maine Whole Family contracts)
 - Legislated in 2019, implemented in July 2021
 - Funded \$2 million annually through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant
 - Eligible families up to 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) with children
 - Providers/Community Action Programs serving all 16 Maine Counties:
 - Aroostook County Action Program - Aroostook
 - Community Concepts - Oxford and Androscoggin
 - Downeast Community Partners - Washington and Hancock
 - Kennebec Valley Community Action Program - Kennebec and Somerset
 - Midcoast Maine Community Action - Lincoln and Sagadahoc
 - Penquis - Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Knox
 - The Opportunity Alliance - Cumberland
 - Waldo Community Action Partners - Waldo
 - Western Maine Community Action - Franklin
 - York County Community Action Corp. - York
 - Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services - Androscoggin (specifically serves new Mainer population in Lewiston)
 - Coaching vs Case Management
 - No specific/ideal set of goals/outcomes for children and parents, broad definition of stability, family drives plan

- Self-sufficiency matrix (housing, child education/development, physical/mental health, financial management, education/skills/career development)
 - Family plan includes short/long-term goals, activities for participants/coach, goals specifically for children, career plan, transportation plan)
 - Case load size 18-25 families per coach, includes family visits, safety/wellness checks, weekly contact
 - Outcomes – year one
 - Served 437 families, 556 adults, 799 children
 - 86% of families have stable housing/on waitlist for housing voucher (of which 50% have stable housing)
 - 61% referred to medical services accessed services
 - 68% have adequate child care to support their other goals
 - 25% unemployed adults enrolled in post-secondary educational program
 - 28% of families increased income through employment
 - 51% of families accomplished goals in two or more areas
 - 80% of school-aged children attended school regularly
 - 87% of children had age-appropriate literacy skills
 - Families enrolled in Program (longer than 6 months) were 62% more likely to have adequate child care
- Benefits Cliff Effort by the Cross Agency Whole Family Approach to Jobs Team at DHHS and DOL (Beth Hamm, Association Commissioner, DHHS)
 - Partnered with Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta to test/evaluate tool (see attachments)
 - Tools include:
 - Calculator (shorter term planning) - primarily used for families in immediate crisis/need stabilization; coach provides snapshot to calculate changes in net financial resources for different work hours and wages and explains benefits
 - Dashboard (longer term planning) - models lifetime career choices for hypothetical family types, generalized coaching information
 - Maine piloted by partnering with 7 organizations (Augusta CareerCenter, Family Futures Downeast, Fedcap, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE), McAuley Residence, and Southern Midcoast CareerCenter)
 - What was learned - easy to use/understand; showed participants how wages would impact their benefits' while good for long-term planning, families in crisis needed to see career path options now vs long-term
 - Most feared lost of benefits for families were health care and child care
 - Planner - a resource for more individualized career planning and budgeting

- Employer Edition (not currently being using) - customized for employer job pathways and specific employee benefit packages
 - Next step - Maine is ready to launch a second pilot and train coaches
- Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) - Sue Powers
 - Social and economic mobility critical for families to stabilize
 - Build strategies to change family trajectory to make lasting impact
 - Build partnerships work collaboratively to break silos/eliminate barriers
 - Working with Federal delegation – Senators Susan Collins and Martin Heinrich introduced the Two-Generation Economic Empowerment Act to increase opportunities for families living in poverty
 - Will link existing funding streams to support families
 - ACAP is the recipient of a federally directed spending award through Senator Kings office to increase capacity of Whole Family/Two-Gen within partnerships with CAP agencies, Head Start and Tribal Head Start programs
 - Bring consistency in how Whole Family is delivered across Maine
 - MECAP secured grant funding in partnership with Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium to implement a family engagement system to engage new Mainers
 - Data shows that the Whole Family approach works
 - Work still needed to broaden program across Maine

Question from DOC Associate Commissioner Theriault - Would the program be appropriate for adults transitioning out of DOC back into the community?

Tim Sturtevant – Not currently working with any DOC-involved families, but interested in exploring how Whole Family could serve that population

Next meeting
November 15, 2022
10:30 am to 11:30 am

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a black and white striped shirt, smiling warmly as she reads a book to a young child. The child, with their hair in two small buns, is looking intently at the book. The scene is set in a bright, indoor environment, likely a living room or bedroom, with soft lighting and a blurred background.

WHOLE FAMILY APPROACH TO JOBS AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF ATLANTA (CLIFF Tool)

CLIFF DASHBOARD – MAINE

SUITE OF CLIFF TOOLS

1. CALCULATOR (shorter term planning): Used primarily for families who need stabilization
 - Coach can provide the most accurate snapshot and work with the family to compare their current situation to what they would like to move to- calculates changes in net financial resources for different work hours and wages
 - Explain benefits if they don't already have them and can coach the individual on how they may transition off programs through wage growth
2. DASHBOARD (longer term planning): Models lifetime career choices for hypothetical family types – generalized coaching information
3. PLANNER: Used as a resource for more individualized career planning and budgeting (provides more customization)
4. EMPLOYER EDITION: Customized for employer job pathways and specific employee benefit packages (not using currently)

CUSTOMIZATION FOR MAINE

- ❑ Maine became an early adopter of the Benefit CLIFF Tool and partnered early on with the Atlanta Fed to customize the Tool for Maine
- ❑ Maine is one of several States that have partnered with the Atlanta Fed and one of a handful that has evaluated the Tool
- ❑ Louisiana is the first to test the Calculator the CLIFF's newest tool
- ❑ Seven Maine organizations piloted the CLIFF dashboard: Augusta CareerCenter, Family Futures Downeast, Fedcap, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE), McAuley Residence, and Southern Midcoast CareerCenter

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Easy to Use and Understand
- Informative and Encouraging
 - Jobs/Careers: most popular
 - Benefits: participants gained a better understanding of how wages impact their benefits
 - Financial Self-Reliance: Combined outlook for benefits and income showed paths to financial self-reliance
 - Good for Long-Term Planning – while the dashboard can help people think about the future, it wasn't detailed enough to be a reliable tool for individuals facing critical near-term job decisions that might impact their benefits

WHAT'S NEXT? Benefits CLIFF 202

- ❖ Calculator was developed to address feedback given by participants in the first pilot
- ❖ The Planner is now ready for use
- ❖ Second pilot with several of the same organizations to:
 1. Try out the calculator wage/hour tool alone, and see if it is helpful for the coach and for participants
 2. Try out the suite of tools as a progression with participants, probably over a few months

QUESTIONS?

You can read the complete evaluation by double clicking the Photo.

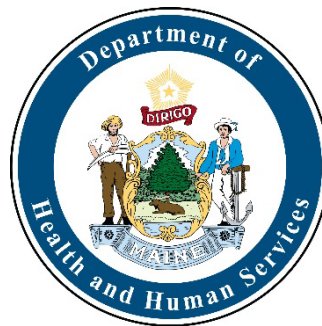


Prepared for the Maine Whole Family Approach to Jobs Team
By Maine Applied Research
June 2022

Maine's Whole Family Services Programs

Tim Sturtevant

9/20/2022



Maine's Whole Family Services Programs

- Legislated in 2019
- \$2 million annually
- TANF block grant
- 200% FPL with children



Whole Family Services Providers

Whole Family Services	County
Aroostook County Action Program	Aroostook
Community Concepts	Oxford and Androscoggin
Downeast Community Partners	Washington and Hancock
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	Kennebec and Somerset
Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services	Androscoggin
Midcoast Maine Community Action	Lincoln and Sagadahoc
Penquis	Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Knox
The Opportunity Alliance	Cumberland
Waldo Community Action Partners	Waldo
Western Maine Community Action	Franklin
York County Community Action Corp.	York

Whole Family Services

- Coaching vs Case Management
- Broad definition of stability
- Goals for children and parents



Program Elements

Self-Sufficiency Matrix

- Housing
- Child education and development
- Physical and mental health
- Financial management
- Education and skills
- Career development

Family Plan

- Short- and long-term goals
- Activities for the participants *and* the coach
- Goals specifically for the children
- Career plan
- Transportation plan

Caseload Size

18-25

families per Family Coach

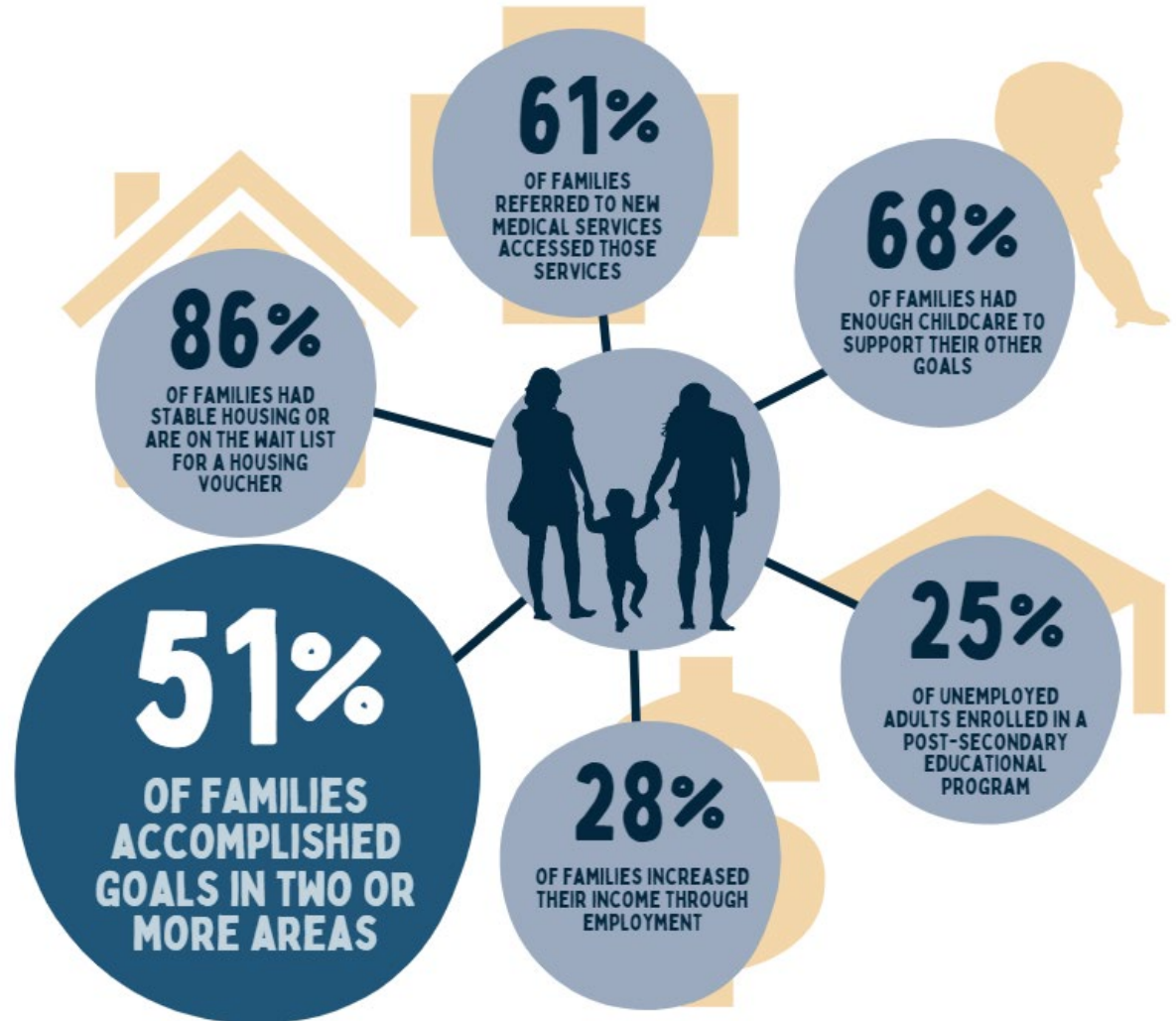


Y1 Program Outcomes

437 Families

556 Adults

799 Children

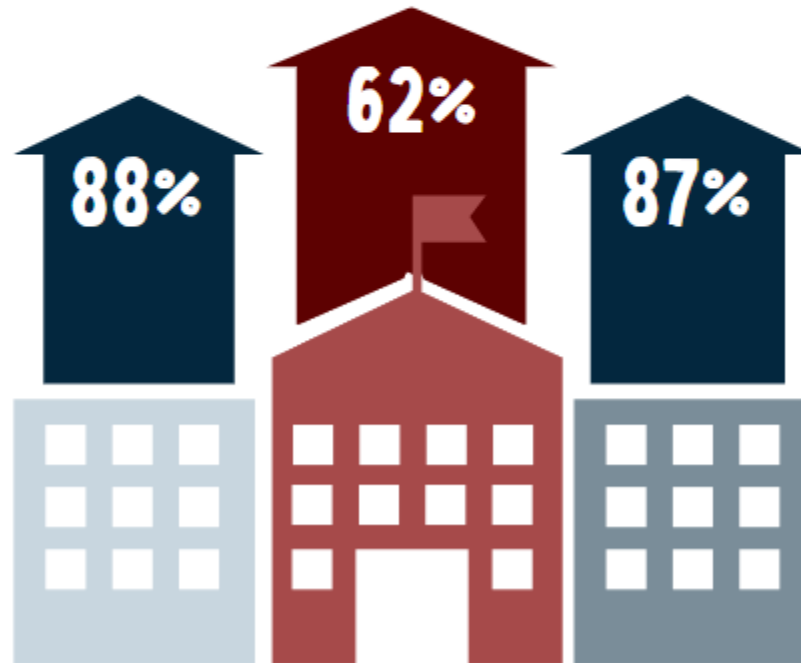


Y1 Child Outcomes

88% of school-aged children attended school regularly

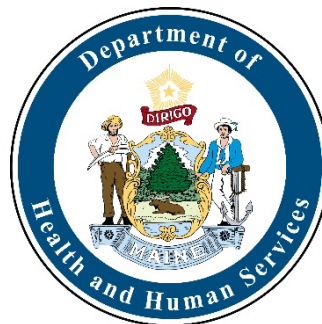
Families enrolled in WFS for longer than 6 months were **62%** more likely to have enough childcare to cover their needs

87% of children had age-appropriate literacy skills



Questions?

Tim Sturtevant
Whole Family Services Program Manager
timothy.sturtevant@maine.gov



JOHN T. GORMAN
FOUNDATION

Maine Children's Cabinet Presentation

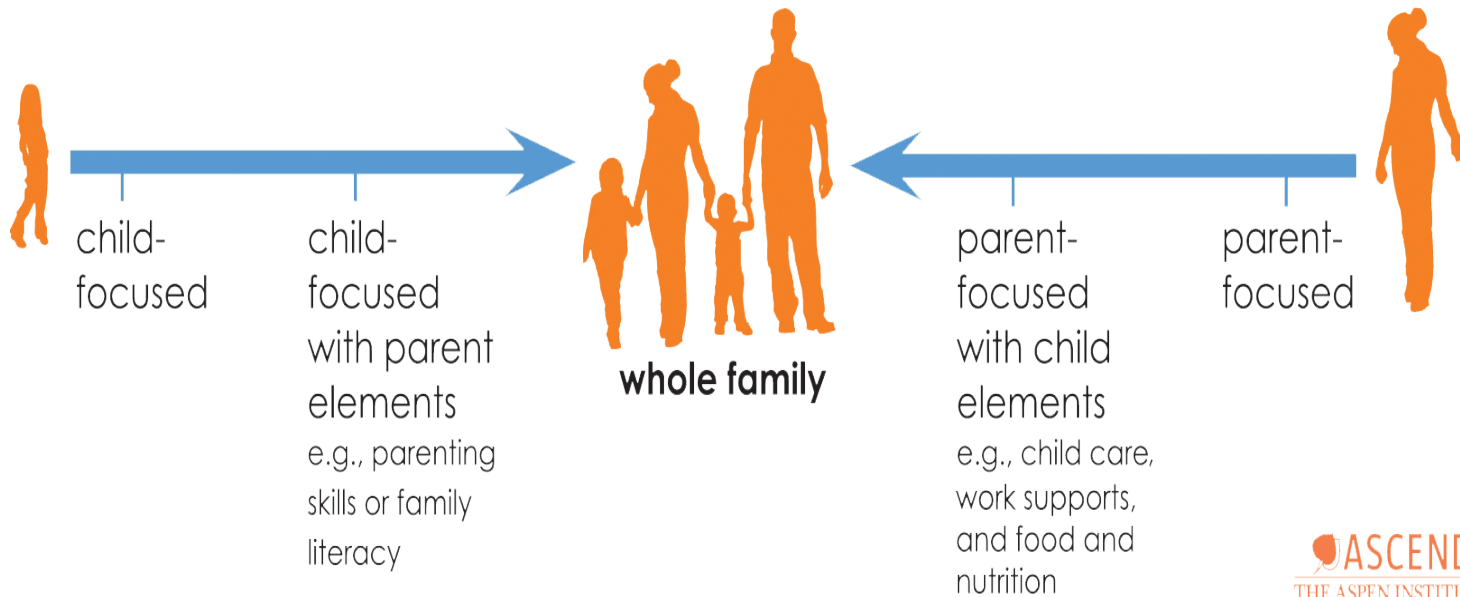
September 2022

*Advancing ideas. Promoting opportunities.
Improving lives in Maine.*

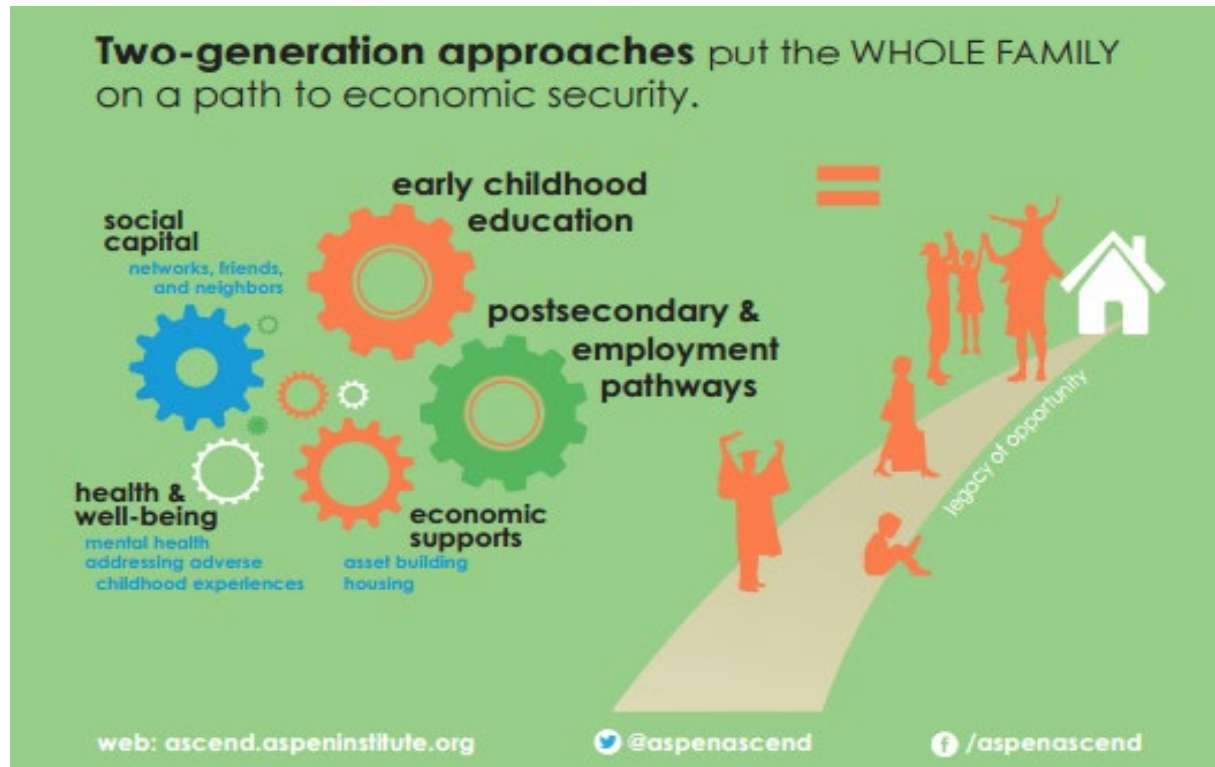
A Whole Family Approach

Creating a legacy of educational success and economic prosperity that passes from one generation to the next.

The Two-Generation Continuum



Key Components



More Opportunity for Families



PARENT/CAREGIVER OUTCOMES

- Less parental stress
- Stronger parenting skills to better support children
- Parents develop confidence as their child's first teacher and best advocate
- Parents recognized as leaders and experts on caring for their kids

FAMILY ECONOMIC OUTCOMES

- Better able to meet basic needs such as food, housing, transportation
- Greater income = financial stability, ability to achieve major economic outcomes (i.e., buying a car, getting out of debt)
- Housing stability

CHILD OUTCOMES

- More positive, high-quality interactions with parents and caregivers
- Improved social-emotional development
- Ready for school
- Continue to meet school and life milestones

Engaging the Whole Family

- Parent leaders
- Family goals
- Strength-based coaching
- Comprehensive and integrated supports
- Breaking down of siloes

Resources

- https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/oro/whole_family_approach_to_jobs_lessons_learned_and_outcomes_acfnov2019.pdf
- <https://www.jtgfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Gorman-Two-Generation-Brief-FINAL-6-17-20.pdf>
- <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/>

Understanding 2Gen



WHAT IS 2GEN?

Two-generation (2Gen) approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives *together*. As children, parents, and families grow and change across their lifespan, 2Gen approaches align opportunities to help families pursue their goals and thrive, optimizing each person's potential along the way. The results are healthy parents with family-supporting jobs, healthy children meeting developmental milestones, and better-connected individuals able to participate in civic and family life.

WHY USE A 2GEN APPROACH?

Communities do better if everyone achieves their full potential. Two-generation approaches help achieve that goal and ensure that everyone can contribute to the community and the economy. Family members don't live in a vacuum. What happens in one generation affects the other, both positively and negatively. That's why the 2Gen approach helps adults and the children in their lives set whole-family goals and work on them together. It is a common-sense strategy. By generating a legacy of family well-being that passes from one generation to the next, 2Gen helps communities become stronger and more vibrant, socially and economically.

CORE COMPONENTS OF 2GEN FAMILY WELL-BEING

The 2Gen approach helps families achieve five different aspects of family well-being.

- 1. Physical and mental health.** Health has a major impact on a family's ability to thrive. If a child is unwell, it can affect attendance and learning in school. A parent's illness can affect their ability to earn or perform at work – and to be the good parents they want to be. Moreover, research shows children experience spectacular brain development in their early years, and that new parents undergo major brain structure changes just as babies do. Steady emotional development – and the treatment of any trauma or stress throughout family life – are critical to ensuring families get off to a good start and progress.
- 2. Early childhood education.** Research from Nobel-winning economist James Heckman indicates each year of *high-quality* early childhood education produces a 13 percent return on investment in that child's future earnings. That's why 2Gen efforts strive to ensure that all services and programs for young children – including childcare, Head Start, home visits, K-12 education, and activities with their parents and guardians – include state-of-the-art content and meet proven high-quality standards.
- 3. Postsecondary and employment pathways.** Education boosts family well-being. A parent's educational level is a strong predictor of a child's

success. Parents who complete a college degree double their lifetime incomes, adding to the financial security of their families. Two-generation approaches help parents and adult caregivers achieve education milestones and training certifications that lead to better jobs and careers.

4. **Economic Assets.** A \$3,000 difference in parental income when their child is young is associated with a 17 percent increase in the *child's* future earnings. Striving families with low incomes face daunting costs for housing, transportation, education, food, health care – and more. Two-generation approaches help parents increase economic security and income by helping them reduce costs, access available financial assistance, and build assets over time.
5. **Social Capital.** To get ahead in life, both adults and children need helpful connections to people and information – and need opportunities to both give and receive support. Building a family's "social capital" network is a key component in a successful 2Gen approach. Years of research have shown that social capital connections *produce* for both families and community – as peer support, stronger neighborhoods, more participation in community and faith-based organizations, and school and workplace advances.

HALLMARKS OF A 2GEN APPROACH

To help parents and children set, pursue, and achieve their family goals, 2Gen approaches include the following hallmark characteristics:

- **Center on families.** Two-generation approaches engage and listen to families as equal partners in setting and achieving family goals. Family expertise and advice drive the design of 2Gen services.
- **Integrate services.** Two-generation approaches find common-sense ways to align the location and timing of parent and children activities, to provide a range of services at one-stop locations, and eliminate any duplicative hoops to access and participation that families must jump through.
- **Remove barriers.** Two-generation approaches persistently identify long-standing and emerging barriers that keep families from participating in programs and activities to meet their whole-family goals – and work to redesign systems or find partners to remove those barriers.
- **Coach.** Two-generation approaches deploy front-line staff as family coaches who help families set goals and develop solutions, rather than as case managers who only offer standard referrals or doing the work themselves.

- **Partner.** Two-generation efforts require committed and creative partnerships – with organizations, businesses, educational institutions, governments, and philanthropic investors – in order to offer families a comprehensive range of services that are targeted and timed to help them reach their full potential.
- **Commit to racial equity.** Two-generation approaches look at practices and policy – their own, their civic and education institutions, their local industries and government at all levels – to spot and tear down structural barriers that families of color or varying cultures face in accessing services, training, and employment.
- **Measure family outcomes.** Two-generation approaches develop ways to measure family progress and well-being outcomes for children, their parents, and their adult guardians.

When an effort succeeds in putting these 2Gen hallmarks in place, it fundamentally changes the way the lead organizations and partners operate. The organizational culture shifts. Staff engage differently with parents, listening and coaching as families create their own paths to well-being. Program leaders organize their work around what families experience, rather than around what funding streams or program categories allow. Staff and families redesign, and intentionally link services (and align funding streams) to create a seamless, integrated set of high-quality child and adult services. Most important, adults and children accelerate their progress towards their family goals and dreams.

2GEN SEEKS SCALE

Rigorous, continuous improvement is also a cornerstone of 2Gen approaches and the developing 2Gen field. Many 2Gen services are governed by state and federal policy – or by employer practices. These policies can either hinder or help adult and child programs work together efficiently and effectively for families. As 2Gen programs learn, they inform new and better policies to improve family and community well-being nationwide.

Understanding 2Gen was produced by Ascend at the Aspen Institute and the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group as part of 2GenACT, in collaboration with the Annie E. Casey and W.K. Kellogg Foundations.

To learn more about Ascend at the Aspen Institute and two-generation approaches, visit:

<http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org>

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CLIFF Dashboard

Maine Pilot Evaluation

Prepared for the Maine Whole Family Approach to Jobs Team

By Maine Applied Research

June 2022

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About Maine's Whole Family Approach to Jobs Team

The Whole Family Approach to Jobs (WFAJ) initiative strives to help families achieve economic security through a multi-generation approach that prioritizes family well-being. The initiative operates throughout New England under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families Region 1 Office, in partnership with the American Public Human Services Association. The Maine WFAJ team includes representatives from community service providers, state agencies, families, private foundations, and the executive and legislative branches. For the past four years, the team has focused on the impact of benefits cliffs as a barrier to individuals entering and returning to the workforce.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's new CLIFF¹ dashboard shows how education and career choices can impact a household's financial resources for decades. In early 2022, several Maine organizations used this tool with their program participants. They observed its usefulness for Maine families facing critical decisions about work, education, training, and benefits. This evaluation summarizes their findings.

Easy to Use and Understand

Staff at the participating organizations found the dashboard easy to use once they had done the online training. Likewise, 96% of surveyed participants said it was "very" or "somewhat" easy to understand. (This reflects both the clarity of the tool and the guidance offered by trained staff members as they used it alongside participants.)

Informative and Encouraging

Staff and participants alike said the dashboard's visual displays of benefits and income were highly informative. They showed paths to financial self-reliance and encouraged participants who were already striving for financial independence.

- **Jobs/Careers:** Career planning was the most popular use of the dashboard. Participants could compare salaries across multiple jobs and fields of interest. Over 80% of survey respondents said the dashboard helped them make a career plan.
- **Benefits:** The dashboard raised participants' understanding of what may happen to their benefits as they earn more from work, although some users wished it offered more specific and reliable details.
- **Financial Self-Reliance:** The combined outlook for benefits and income showed participants potential paths to financial self-reliance. "I learned how the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency works and have a better understanding of the process," wrote one participant.

Good for Long-Term Planning

Staff and participants praised the dashboard's ability to help people think about the future. By showing over 20 years of earnings and benefits, it highlights the long-term impact of education, training, and career choices. However, it is not detailed enough to be a reliable tool for individuals facing critical near-term job decisions that may impact their benefits. "In the context of what we would talk about with benefits cliffs, we wouldn't use this tool," said one staff member.

"This is definitely a tool that we will use as we walk each individual through the career planning process... It can help them make an informed decision."

Staff Member

Room for Improvement

Participants and staff offered suggestions for making the dashboard even more useful to Maine families. These include expanding the job options, adding more benefits and income sources, increasing the options for family size, being able to enter a known salary, and linking to external resources.

Conclusion

Overall, the Maine families who used the CLIFF dashboard as part of this pilot found it to be engaging and informative. Staff found it to be useful when working with individuals making long-term plans. It highlights the enduring benefits of education and training, the effect of career choices, and pathways to financial self-reliance. It is less useful for individuals facing imminent employment decisions that may impact needed benefits.

"[This dashboard] allows a person to look at the bigger picture and hopefully plan for 5 years from now instead of 5 minutes from now."

Dashboard User

¹ Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster

BACKGROUND

Benefits Cliffs

Families experiencing poverty sometimes face financial barriers to becoming self-reliant. One well-documented set of barriers are “benefits cliffs”. These occur when earning additional income makes a family ineligible for a necessary public benefit, such as health insurance or child care. If the value of the lost benefit exceeds the earnings gain, then the family’s net resources fall. This phenomenon is well-documented both nationally and in Maine, and it creates a powerful deterrent for families seeking financial independence.^{1,2}

A New Tool: The CLIFF Dashboard

To help families understand how future earnings may impact their benefits and overall resources, the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (the “Atlanta Fed”) designed the Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF).³ This online, dashboard-style tool allows users to see how their benefits may change over time and how various careers may impact their future earnings. By modeling these elements together, users can see how their future net financial resources may fluctuate based on different career choices. For instance, users can compare the short- and long-term impacts of taking one year to become a licensed practical nurse (LPN) or taking several years to become a higher-paid registered nurse (RN).

This Pilot Study

Seeing the CLIFF dashboard’s potential, the Maine WFAJ team engaged with the Atlanta Fed to customize the tool with Maine-specific data on benefit levels and eligibility criteria, and regional cost of living information. The team then initiated a pilot study in partnership with seven organizations: Augusta CareerCenter, Family Futures Downeast, Fedcap, Kennebec Valley Community Action Program, Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE), McAuley Residence, and Southern Midcoast CareerCenter.⁴ Collectively,

these organizations serve a diverse range of clients and regions, and have diverse missions and practices. This allowed the WFAJ team to understand the dashboard’s potential to assist a variety of organizations and populations.

Staff at these organizations completed an online tutorial created by the Atlanta Fed. Next, they used the dashboard with select clients and program participants from February through May 2022. In total, staff across the state reported using the dashboard with an estimated 68 participants during the pilot study. Most of these sessions occurred in-person. One site did virtual meetings during which they emailed the dashboard charts to participants.

The WFAJ team engaged Maine Applied Research to document the pilot, evaluate the dashboard’s usefulness for Maine families, and present its findings in this report. To conduct this evaluation, participants were invited to complete surveys about their experience with the dashboard and to join a focus group. Staff members shared their feedback in meetings, surveys, and interviews.

Terminology

In this report, “staff” refers to case managers and coaches who used the dashboard with their program participants and clients; “participant” refers to the individuals whose income and benefits were modeled using the dashboard, and who saw the potential impact of different jobs and careers.

Appreciation

Many thanks to the Atlanta Fed for customizing the dashboard for Maine and providing training and technical assistance. Thanks also to the participants and organizations who contributed their time, unique perspectives, and valuable feedback. Finally, thanks to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services and the John T. Gorman Foundation for funding and leadership, and to Sarah Griffen for project management.

OBJECTIVE

This pilot study sought to answer three questions:

- **Participant Experience:** How do participants experience the dashboard? How does it impact their understanding of the interplay of benefit changes and career options?
- **Staff Experience:** How can the dashboard support staff in coaching participants towards their career goals and helping them navigate anticipated benefits cliffs?
- **Staff Supports:** What training and supports can help staff best use the dashboard?

METHODOLOGY

This evaluation had five components: 1) surveys of participants, 2) surveys of staff members, 3) a participant focus group, 4) staff interviews, and 5) group meetings with staff members. Together, these components yielded both quantitative and qualitative data on how Maine organizations and individuals experience the CLIFF dashboard.

Participant Surveys

When participants met with staff members, they were invited to take one survey immediately before using the dashboard and another survey afterward. This pre-post survey method allowed evaluators to identify changes in participants' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes resulting from the meeting at which they used the dashboard. The online surveys were voluntary and designed to take about five minutes each. The pre- and post-surveys were linked using participants' location, birth month, and birth year. Upon completing the post-survey, participants received a \$15 gift card for either Walmart or Hannaford. The evaluation team received 59 complete "pre" surveys and 48 complete "post" surveys. See Appendix III for the print versions of these surveys.

Participant Focus Group

In addition to surveys, participants were invited to attend a virtual focus group. Staff extended these

invitations to participants based on interest, availability, experience of the dashboard, and representation of potential dashboard-user groups. Although there were only two focus group participants, this event provided a valuable opportunity to gain deeper understanding of how individuals experienced the dashboard. Focus group participants received \$30 gift cards to either Walmart or Hannaford to compensate them for their time.

Staff Surveys

Every two weeks, staff at the organizations participating in the pilot were invited to complete an online survey on their use of the dashboard in the previous two weeks. In all, the evaluation team received 46 complete staff surveys. See Appendix III for the print version of this survey.

Staff Interviews

Toward the end of the pilot, Maine Applied Research interviewed one staff member from every participating organization.² These individual interviews allowed staff to share the stories behind their experiences and thoroughly communicate their insights and recommendations.

² Due to a staffing change at the Augusta CareerCenter, no one from this site was interviewed.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

Before using the dashboard, participants completed a survey of basic demographic information. This information sheds light on participants' backgrounds and the context in which they experienced the tool. This section summarizes this information for the 59 participants who completed "pre" surveys.

Location

Individuals from across Maine took part in this pilot. Family Futures Downeast participants are from Washington County; McAuley residents live in Cumberland County; KCVAP and the Augusta CareerCenter are in Central Maine; and HOPE and Fedcap serve people across the state - including Aroostook County.

Gender

Despite their geographic diversity, participants had much in common. First, the group was overwhelmingly female (55 of 59 respondents). One organization, McAuley Residence, serves exclusively women in recovery. HOPE and Family Futures Downeast, support predominantly single, low-income parents working toward degrees and employment, and almost all their participants are women. Only two of the four male participants completed pre- and post-surveys, so it is not possible to compare the experiences of male and female dashboard users.

Age

Participants ranged in age from about 20 to 46 (exact birthdates were not collected). One-third (34%) of participants were in their 20s, about half (55%) were in their 30s, and 12% were 40 or older.

Race and Language

Like Maine's overall population, participants were overwhelmingly White, non-Hispanic (85%). Participants also identified as American Indian or Alaskan Native (7%), Black or African American (5%), Asian (3%), Hispanic (2%), or multiracial. This diversity is higher than Maine's overall population,⁵ but too low to make meaningful comparisons across racial groups. Seventeen percent of participants reported speaking a language other than English at home. This is higher than Maine's overall population.⁶ These ten individuals were spread fairly evenly across the pilot sites.

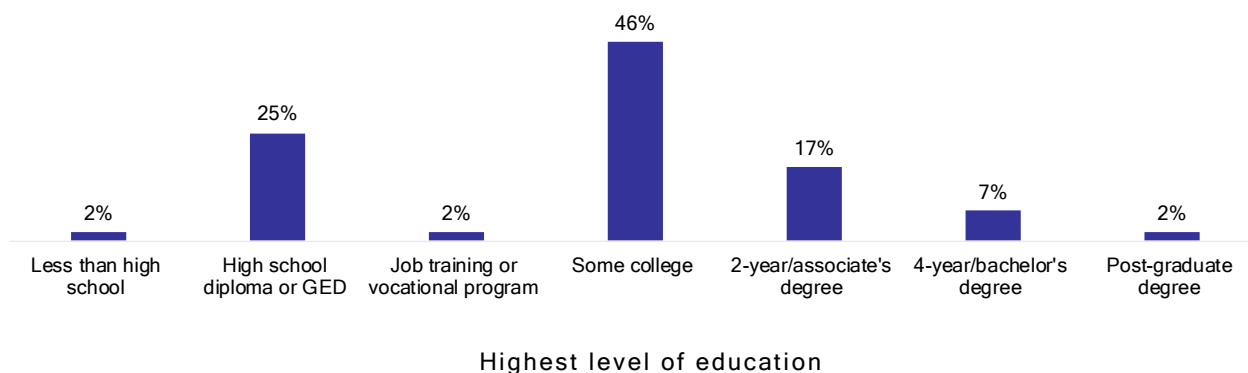
Education

Participants had a broad range of education levels - one did not yet have a high school diploma while another had a graduate degree. Almost half (46%) had some college experience and 1 in 4 (26%) had an associate, bachelor's, or graduate degree.

Income and Benefits

The survey did not collect detailed income data. Rather, participants self-described their current

Many participants had some college experience, but only about 1 in 4 had a degree.



financial situation. One in 10 (10%) said they “don’t have enough to meet basic needs”, about half (49%) “just meet basic needs”, 37% “meet basic needs with a little left over”, and 3% “live comfortably”. These responses are illuminating but subjective. Even the individuals who said they “live comfortably” were receiving multiple benefits, meaning their household incomes were low enough to qualify for public assistance.

Participants reported earning income and receiving benefits from a broad range of sources, as shown in the table below. Almost half (48%) are earning income from work. Nearly all (95%) reported receiving at least one non-work benefit, while half (50%) were receiving three or more. MaineCare was the most common benefit of survey respondents; 93% receive this public health insurance. Staff report that losing MaineCare is often one of the primary concerns of individuals working toward self-reliance. About 2 in 3 participants (64%) receive food assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Benefit or income source ³	Percent Receiving
MaineCare	93%
SNAP	64%
Earnings from work	48%
TANF	33%
LIHEAP	29%
Child Care Subsidy	12%
Disability	7%
Unemployment	2%

Benefit-Cliff Experiences

Recognizing the difficult choices individuals must sometimes make to keep their families stable, the survey asked participants if they had ever taken steps to keep their benefits. Almost half (48%) of participants report having taken at least one action to retain benefits at some point in their life. The most

common were not taking a job offer and not taking additional work hours.

Action to avoid benefit loss	Percent Reporting
Not taken a job offer	25%
Not taken additional work hours	24%
Cut work hours	14%
Not gotten married or not changed your family status	5%
Not accepted child support	3%
Not taken a raise	2%
Other	8%

Motivation

Many of this pilot’s participants were highly motivated. Even before using the dashboard, they had enrolled in a program that required them to make an ambitious personal, educational, or career goal. For example, women at McAuley Residence must desire to recover from addiction and become self-reliant, and students applying for HOPE or Family Futures Downeast must aspire to earn a college degree. At other sites, the non-random selection of participants may have been biased toward motivated individuals who staff thought might be interested in the tool. Collectively, these individuals had very positive experiences with the dashboard. However, this may partly reflect the positive reinforcement it gave them. It is not clear whether individuals who are unready or unable to engage in long-term planning experience the tool in the same way.

Stage of Life

Due to the nature of the programs involved in this pilot, most participants were at a stage of life where they were actively planning their future and choosing between multiple job or career options. One staff person observed that the dashboard is less useful to mid-career individuals for whom it is difficult to return to school or change professions.

³ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

KEY FINDINGS

This pilot study generated a wealth of valuable information and feedback. With surprising consistency, participants found the dashboard to be useful and easy to understand when presented by staff. They learned from it, were encouraged by it, and, in some cases, used it to help make important career and education decisions. While the dashboard is less useful for people facing critical short-term employment decisions, most organizations found it be valuable in discussions of long-term plans. Staff and participants suggested small improvements to make the dashboard even more useful to Maine families.

With Assistance, Participants Understood the Dashboard

Participants rated the dashboard as easy to understand when used with a trained staff member. Three out of 4 survey respondents (75%) strongly agreed with the statement, “I understood the dashboard charts.” Another 21% thought the charts were “somewhat easy,” to understand, perhaps indicating room for improvement.

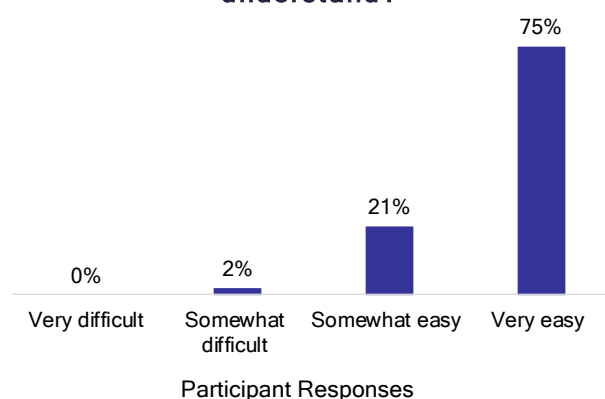
These responses reflect the performance of both the tool and the staff members who entered participants’ information and helped them interpret the charts. Staff reported taking time to carefully explain each graph and answer participants’ questions. Comprehension levels may have been different if participants used the tool on their own. One staff member observed, “Our participants have difficulty with math and things like graphs, so it took some time to explain.” They said the transition from the dashboard’s first chart, showing individual pre-tax income, to the second chart, showing household after-tax income, was particularly confusing.

Most dashboard sessions (48%) lasted over 30 minutes, with 36% lasting 20-30 minutes, and 16% being less than 20 minutes. One staff member said their best sessions lasted up to one hour. “If the person was pressed for time and we only had 30 minutes, you could tell that they were a little glassy-eyed after being barraged with all these graphs.”

“It was a great visual for how my income will both increase and decrease as my kids get older, and how my degree will provide an increasing steady income over many years.”

Dashboard User

Overall, how easy was the dashboard to understand?



All participants strongly (83%) or somewhat (17%) agreed that, “the dashboard helped me understand how income changes may impact my benefits.” One participant wrote, “[I learned] that my career path is attainable just from a graph and projections. Visual aids are extremely helpful.”

“It’s fascinating to me that this simple tool has been so impactful and opened a different dialogue, frankly, with [our participants]. We’ve always attempted to get [to self-reliance], and we do with some, but this sets the stage for a higher rate of achievement...I met with five or so [participants] who had... used the tool within the last couple of months, so it wasn’t necessarily fresh, but they were able to speak in an articulate way both about benefits as well as potential wages.”

Staff Member

Participants Learned from the Dashboard

Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents said they learned something from the dashboard. Generally, these learnings fell into three categories - how benefits change over time, how pay varies across different jobs and career fields, and how the path to financial self-reliance may look. These findings reflect the value of both the tool and the conversations between staff and participants that occurred as they used it.

Benefits

On the benefit side, all respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that “the dashboard helped me understand how income changes may impact my benefits.” The share of people who reported understanding how their benefits would change if they earned more from work increased from 76% before using the tool to 98% after (below). One respondent wrote, “I was able to look at the charts and see the difference in my future income and benefits over a period of time.” Most comments were positive; staff members noted that many of their participants are already mentally prepared to lose benefits on their path to self-sufficiency. However, a few participants were discouraged. “[I learned] how hard it is to live without benefits,” said one.

Despite liking this aspect of the tool, many staff and participants wished it provided greater detail. The dashboard appears to effectively communicate the general concept of how earnings can replace benefits over time, but it does not provide the type of reliable, specific information needed by families facing the loss of a needed benefit. One in 4 participants (25%) said the dashboard did not give specific enough information about what would happen to their current benefits. This is a known limitation of the dashboard and clearly stated on its frontpage. Nevertheless, it limits its usefulness in the eyes of some individuals.

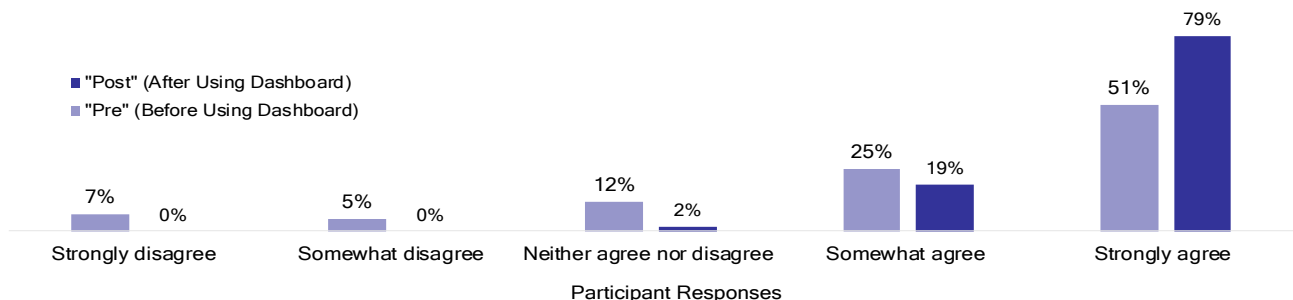
“Most of the feedback was overwhelmingly positive about how the information was presented to them and helped them make decisions.”

Staff Member

“I was able to gain an understanding of the career I’d like to go into and see how it would affect my benefits. That’s something that’s always intimidating seeing if the end result will pay off and it definitely showed me that it will.”

Dashboard User

“I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.”



Jobs/Careers

According to staff, career planning was the most popular use of the dashboard. Seventy-three percent of staff used it to help participants compare earnings of different jobs, while 69% used it to discuss career options. According to staff, these activities sparked valuable dialogs about individuals' long-term goals, and raised aspirations. "Each [chart] seemed to prompt conversation," said one staff member, "...on education or 'what do I want to do for a career'... It was super helpful."

Some participants used the dashboard to explore the benefits of additional training or education within a particular field - for instance, the salary differences between medical assistants, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses. In these cases, the dashboard showed how additional training and education can significantly increase one's lifetime earnings.

Other participants used the dashboard to explore unrelated fields of interest. One participant explained, "I recently returned back to school to get a Bachelor's in Psychology. I have been struggling with deciding if my degree and working in the substance abuse field will help me provide in the future. I was debating on changing my career plan to social work. What I learned today is to ultimately stay on the path that I am on because eventually I will have more income in the addiction field then I would with the social work." Several staff members said the dashboard would be a good tool to use with high school students.

"[A person] I did it with had just finished his degree and was just starting to look for a job. The two options that he thought he wanted to go into with his degree - one made \$20,000 more than the other! After looking at that, he actually found a job making a living wage. That was awesome."

Staff Member

"I learned that RNs make much better income than LPNs and I would now not consider LPN knowing this. I learned I could be financially independent being an RN the first year."

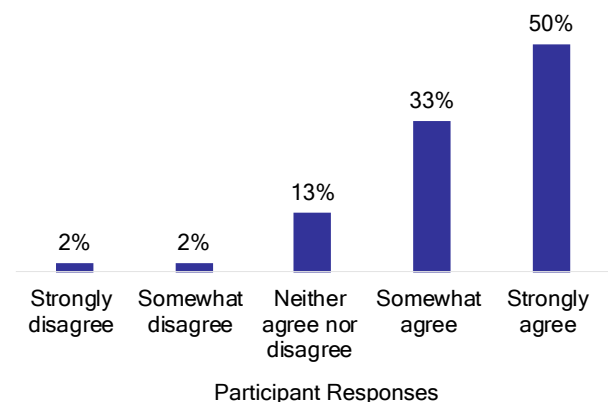
Dashboard User

"I think it's a well-designed tool... Seeing those charts showing, 'This is the path you've chosen but with the same degree you could be up here, maybe with a couple of extra classes or a certificate,' That was invaluable."

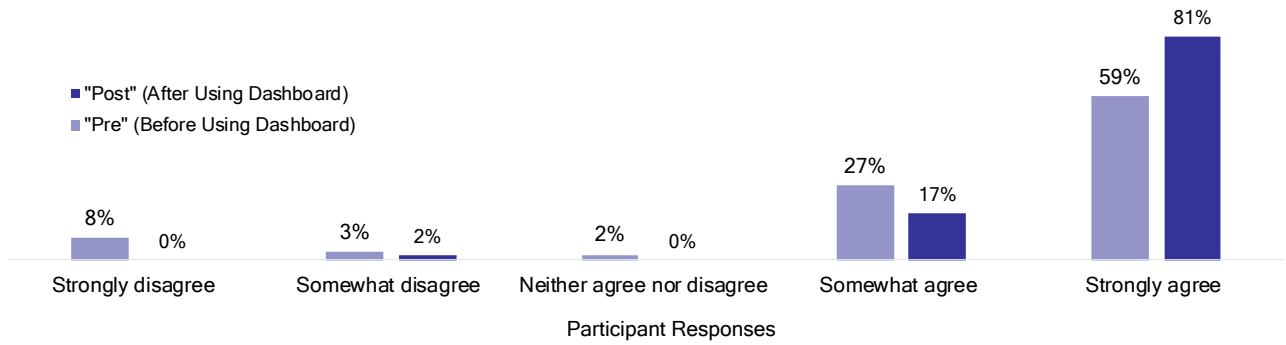
Staff Member

After using the tool, the share of participants who reported understanding how different jobs may impact their future income rose from 76% to 98%. The share who strongly agreed that they could name a "good job that interests me" rose from 53% to 81%.

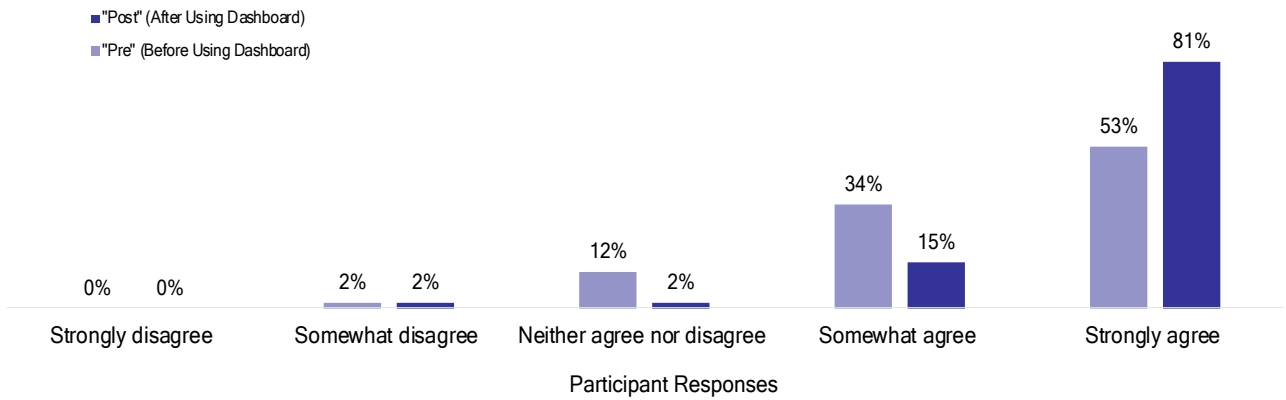
"The dashboard helped me make a career plan."



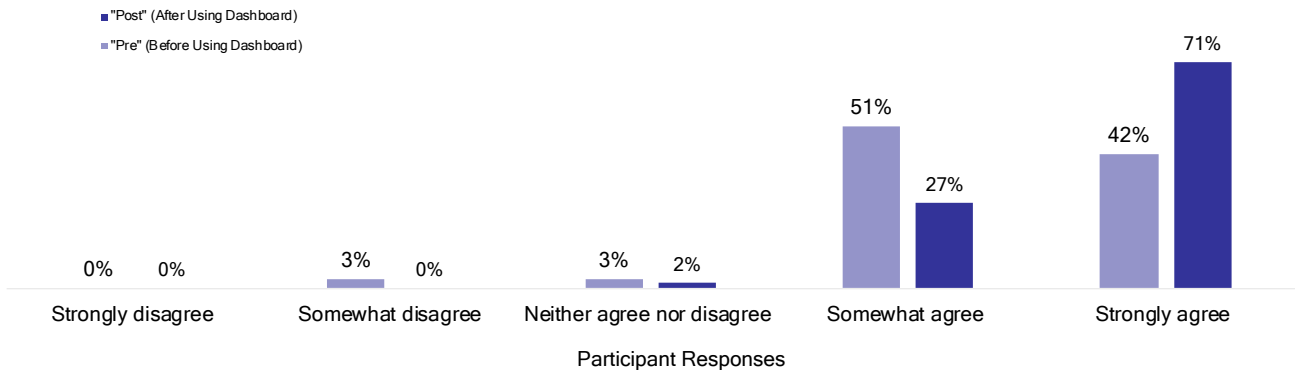
"I understand how different jobs may impact my future income differently."



"I can name a good job that interests me."



"I know what steps to take to reach a career goal."



Financial Self-Reliance

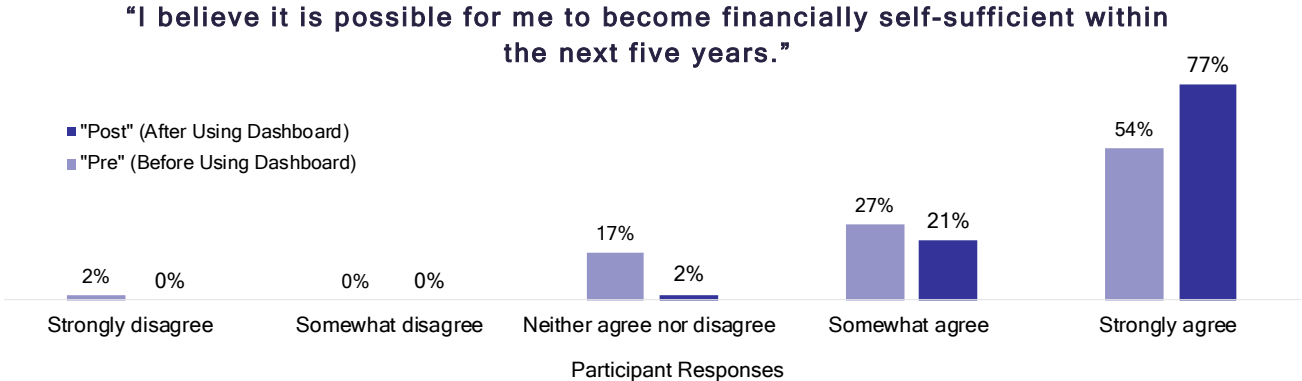
The combined outlook for benefits and income showed participants potential paths to financial self-sufficiency. According to staff, this was encouraging to most participants, particularly those who were already taking steps to achieve this goal. “It does a really good job showing the value of education and training over the course of your lifetime,” said one staff member.

Before using the dashboard, 81% of participants said they believed it was possible to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years (below). Afterward, this increased to 98%.

“[I learned] the transition from now until I’m fully self-sufficient is not as painful as I thought.”
 Dashboard User

“[I learned] if I go back to school I will be able to not only make a decent income, but I would be able to have a career and wouldn’t need all these state benefits I’m currently receiving.”
 Dashboard User

“I learned how the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency works and have a better understanding of the process.”
 Dashboard User



The Online Training Is Adequate

The Atlanta Fed created two online tutorials to teach staff how to use the dashboard. The courses are a series of videos and quizzes that explain the tool using hypothetical individuals and households. Staff can do this training anytime, and they can rewatch sections if needed. In interviews, staff members said the tutorials were clear, thorough, and gave them the information needed to use the dashboard effectively with their participants. Two staff members reported rewatching portions of the courses when they needed to better understand a specific element of the dashboard. One staff member thought the training was too slow and would have preferred it to be more concise.

"[The training] was really straightforward and clear... After my first meeting [with a participant], I went back and redid parts of the training, and then I felt comfortable from then on."

Staff Member

The Dashboard Is Best for Long-Term Planning

"[This dashboard] allows a person to look at the bigger picture and hopefully plan for 5 years from now instead of 5 minutes from now," said one participant. Staff agreed. Overall, this tool received high marks for being useful to people making long-term plans related to education, training, and careers. On the other hand, multiple staff members said the dashboard does not provide individuals who face immediate employment decisions with the type of reliable, detailed information they need about potential benefit losses. This is not possible because the dashboard asks for only basic household information, not the level of detail needed to determine eligibility for some programs (e.g., the current value of bank accounts and other assets). Furthermore, the dashboard does not include all benefits for which a family may be eligible. While it includes the most common programs (MaineCare, TANF, SNAP, etc.), it lacks smaller programs that provide critical resources to some families. These include tribal benefits, veteran's benefits, and the

"This is definitely a tool that we will use as we walk each individual through the career planning process... It can help them make an informed decision."

Staff Member

"In the context of what we would talk about with benefits cliffs, we wouldn't use this tool."

Staff Member

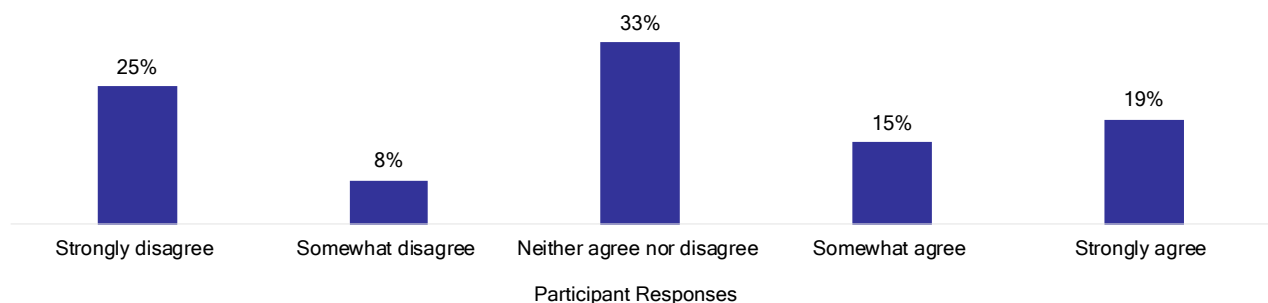
Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Having detailed, reliable information is critical to individuals trying to keep their families stable. One person explained, "...We need a tool that shows, 'If I take on ten more hours a week at my current rate, I'm going to lose [these benefits]. That's what impacts them in the moment... In the context of what we would talk about with benefits cliffs, we wouldn't use this tool."

Ideas for Improvements

Participants and staff offered valuable suggestions for making the dashboard even more useful for Maine families. The paragraphs below summarize their ideas. See Appendix II for complete responses.

- **Expand Job Options** - The most frequent suggestion of both staff and participants was to expand the number of jobs available to users. They said the categories were sometimes too broad, and staff had to creatively approximate the job their client was interested in. In surveys, about 1 in 3 participants (34%) strongly or somewhat agreed that “the dashboard did not have enough career options” (although an equal percentage disagreed). One staff member identified banking as a particularly broad sector.
- **Add Benefits, Income Sources, and Payments** - Another frequent suggestion was to add more benefit and income sources. Specific recommendations included tribal and veteran’s benefits, social security income, Pell Grants, Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment (ASPIRE), and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Staff also suggested adding payments for things like student loans and child support.
- **Increase Number of Children** - The dashboard’s “Family Type” dropdown menu includes options for one or two adults and up to three children. Several participants and staff noted that some people have more than three children, and suggested raising this number. The dashboard also assumes that a family’s youngest child is their last, even though more may be planned.
- **Add Known-Salary Option** - Several staff members wished for a way to enter the actual salary of a potential job, rather than having to show estimates. This would give staff an option in situations where the dashboard salaries do not match the local labor market.
- **Add Resource Links** - Two staff people suggested adding links to alternate resources that individuals could access if they became ineligible for their current benefits. One explained, “Being able to connect someone right in the moment would be helpful.”
- **Longer Sessions** - Several staff members noticed the dashboard “timed out” during long sessions. This can interrupt the flow of an otherwise effective session, which Maine organizations found could last up to one hour.

“The dashboard did not have enough career options.”

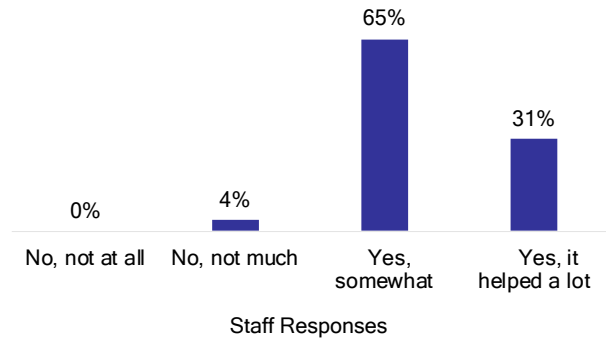


CONCLUSION

The Maine organizations involved in this pilot found the CLIFF dashboard to be a useful, user-friendly tool for working with individuals making long-term choices about education, training, and careers. It highlights the lifelong impact of these choices and shows pathways to financial self-reliance. Its visual nature can help deepen participants' understanding of abstract concepts, and the conversations it spurs can help participants consider the long-term impacts of their decisions in an informed, objective way.

Recalling the last time they had used the dashboard with someone, 96% percent of staff said it helped their client either "a lot" or "somewhat". In interviews, nearly all staff members said they would continue using the dashboard with some of their participants. Overall, it appears to be a valuable new tool for organizations helping Maine families striving for self-reliance.

Overall, did using the dashboard help your client?



"My staff loved [the dashboard]. There were a few little bumps and frustrations but, overall, I've heard really positive things... It has excited my coaches."

Staff Member

ENDNOTES

¹ Virginia Department of Social Services, [“The Public Assistance Benefit Cliff and a Study Proposal to Test the Effects of Eligibility Rules on Moving to Self-Sufficiency”](#), RD88, 2021.

² Michael LeVert, [“Benefits Cliffs”](#), policy brief presented to John T. Gorman Foundation, May 10, 2018.

³ Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, [Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster](#).

⁴ A staff change at the Augusta CareerCenter cut short the pilot at that site. No participants at Southern Midcoast CareerCenter completed surveys, but staff offered feedback based on their experience offering the dashboard to potential participants.

⁵ Maine’s population is 91% “White alone,” according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2020 Decennial Census.

⁶ On average, 6% of Maine residents age 5 and over spoke a language other than English from 2016 to 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.

APPENDIX I: PARTNERS

Many thanks to the following individuals for overseeing the pilot study at their respective organizations:

- **Family Futures Downeast:** Marsha Sloan, Director; Shane Renshaw, Transitions Coach
- **Fedcap:** Danielle Dorward, Employment Specialist; Carl Stoba, ASPIRE Regional Senior Planner; Julian Baer, Senior Program Manager TANF/ASPIRE; Dawn Croteau, ASPIRE Program Manager
- **Kennebec Valley Community Action Program:** Michelle Cesare, Somerset County Family Coach; Amanda Jandreau, Kennebec County Family Coach
- **Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE):** Carol Savoy, Social Services Program Specialist, Maine Department of Health and Human Services
- **McAuley Residence:** Melissa Skahan, Executive Director
- **Southern Midcoast CareerCenter:** Wendy VanDamme, Employment and Training Specialist III

APPENDIX II: SURVEY RESULTS

Participant “Pre” Survey Results

The following tables show results of the 59 completed surveys submitted by dashboard users before using the tool. Text responses have been lightly edited for clarity (e.g., punctuation and spelling corrections).

5. Please select the agency you are working with.

	Percent	Number
Fedcap	27%	16
HOPE	25%	15
Family Futures Downeast	19%	11
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	15%	9
McAuley Residence	12%	7
Augusta CareerCenter	2%	1

2. Please select your birth month.

	Percent	Number
January	10%	6
February	2%	1
March	7%	4
April	10%	6
May	3%	2
June	14%	8
July	12%	7
August	3%	2
September	12%	7

October	10%	6
November	8%	5
December	8%	5

3. Please select your birth year.

[Grouped responses]	Approximate Age	Percent	Number
1998-2002	20-24	10%	6
1993-1997	25-29	24%	14
1988-1992	30-34	29%	17
1983-1987	35-39	26%	15
1978-1982	40-44	10%	6
1973-1977	45-49	2%	1

4. What is your gender?

	Percent	Number
Female	93%	55
Male	7%	4
Prefer to self-describe	0%	0

5. Please specify your racial origin(s). (Select all that apply)

	Percent	Number
White	88%	52
American Indian or Alaskan Native	7%	4
Black or African American	5%	3
Asian	3%	2
Other (please specify):	2%	1

“Hispanic”		
White alone, not Hispanic [Respondents who selected “White” and no other race]	85%	50

13. What is the highest level of education you have finished?

	Percent	Number
Less than high school	2%	1
High school diploma or GED	25%	15
Job training or vocational program	2%	1
Some college	46%	27
2-year/associate’s degree	17%	10
4-year/bachelor’s degree	7%	4
Post-graduate degree	2%	1

13. How many children in the following age groups live in your home?

Respondents with at least one child in the following age groups...	Percent	Number
0-5 years old	37%	32
6-12 years old	40%	34
13-17 years old	23%	20
18 years and older	0%	0

Calculated total number of children living in respondent’s home		
0	5%	3
1	29%	17
2	36%	21

3	15%	9
4	10%	6
5	3%	2
6	2%	1

8. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

	Percent	Number
Yes	17%	10
No	83%	49

Logic - If answered "Yes" to Question 8, then Question 9:

9. How well do you speak English?

	Percent	Number
Very well	70%	7
Well	30%	3
Not well	0%	0
Not at all	0%	0

10. How would you describe your household's current financial situation?

	Percent	Number
Live comfortably	3%	2
Meet basic needs with a little left over	37%	22
Just meet basic needs	49%	29
Don't have enough to meet basic needs	10%	6

11. Which of the following do you currently receive? (Select all that apply.)

	Percent	Number
MaineCare	93%	54
SNAP	64%	37
Earnings from work	48%	28
TANF	33%	19
LIHEAP	29%	17
Child Care Subsidy	12%	7
Disability	7%	4
Unemployment	2%	1

Calculated number of non-work benefits or income sources		
0	3%	2
1	22%	13
2	24%	14
3	31%	18
4	19%	11

12. People sometimes have to make choices about benefits to keep their families stable. Have you ever done any of the following to keep your benefits? (Select all that apply.)

	Percent	Number
Not taken a job offer	25%	15
Not taken additional work hours	24%	14
Cut work hours	14%	8
Not gotten married or not changed your family status	5%	3

Not accepted child support	3%	2
Not taken a raise	2%	1
Other (please explain): “Had to have son quite job” “Settled for less, not made purchases unless fully justified to General Assistance” “Working will to be in life” “Not working” “Spent savings to not become disqualified for services”	8%	5
“I have not had to do any of this.” “N/A” “None” “None”	7%	4

Calculated number of actions taken to keep benefits		
0 or no response	53%	31
1	27%	16
2	14%	8
3	5%	3
4	2%	1

13. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.	7%	5%	12%	25%	51%
I understand how different jobs may impact my future INCOME differently.	8%	3%	2%	27%	59%

I understand how different jobs may impact my future BENEFITS differently.	3%	5%	7%	27%	58%
I believe it is possible for me to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years.	2%	0%	17%	27%	54%

14. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I can name a good job that interests me.	0%	2%	12%	34%	53%
I know what steps to take to get a good job.	0%	2%	5%	51%	42%
I have a career goal.	0%	2%	10%	32%	56%
I know what steps to take to reach a career goal.	0%	3%	3%	51%	42%
I am in the process of moving toward a career goal.	0%	2%	8%	27%	63%
I am too busy trying to meet my or my family's basic needs to think about career goals.	15%	14%	31%	19%	22%
Even if I am not able to achieve my career goal right away, I will find a way to get there.	0%	2%	7%	22%	69%

Participant “Post” Survey Results

The following tables show results of the 48 completed surveys submitted by dashboard users after using the tool. Text responses have been lightly edited for clarity (e.g., punctuation and spelling corrections).

1. Please select the agency you are working with.

	Percent	Number
Fedcap	31%	15
Family Futures Downeast	23%	11
HOPE	19%	9
McAuley Residence	17%	8
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	10%	5

2. Please select your birth month.

	Percent	Number
January	8%	4
February	4%	2
March	6%	3
April	13%	6
May	4%	2
June	15%	7
July	15%	7
August	2%	1
September	10%	5
October	8%	4
November	8%	4
December	6%	3

3. Please select your birth year.

[Grouped responses]	Approximate Age	Percent	Number
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1998-2002	20-24	8%	4
1993-1997	25-29	24%	12
1988-1992	30-34	33%	16
1983-1987	35-39	22%	11
1978-1982	40-44	8%	4
1973-1977	45-49	2%	1

4. What did you use the dashboard for today? (Select all that apply.)

	Percent	Number
To understand how my benefits may change over time	83%	40
To discuss the impact of increases in work income	67%	32
To compare earnings of different jobs	58%	28
To discuss career options	52%	25
To discuss alternatives to benefits	31%	15
To discuss training opportunities	23%	11
Other (please explain): [No response]	2%	1

5. Overall, how easy was the dashboard to understand?

	Percent	Number
Very easy	75%	36
Somewhat easy	21%	10
Somewhat difficult	2%	1
Very difficult	0%	0
Other (please explain): "It was simply enough but didn't offer enough specific details."	2%	1

6. Overall, how helpful was the dashboard to you?

	Percent	Number

Very helpful	77%	37
Somewhat helpful	21%	10
Somewhat unhelpful	0%	0
Very unhelpful	0%	0
Other (please explain): “While the dash provides some details it doesn’t allow enough customization to the program for a larger family.”	2%	1

7. Did you learn anything new from the dashboard?

	Percent	Number
Yes	88%	42
No	13%	6

8. What did you learn?

“I learned how the transition from public assistance to self-sufficiency works and have a better understanding of the process.”
“How my benefits will change over time based on my career.”
“That my career path is attainable just from a graph and projections. Visual aids are extremely helpful.”
“That going to college is worth the time it takes to get a better job and to be able to support your family better.”
“It gave me a great visual for how my income will both increase and decrease as my kids get older, and how my degree will provide an increasing steady income over many years.”
“My career is going to make me more financially stable.”
“I was able to look at the charts and see the difference in my future income and benefits over a period of time.”
“I learned how management will give me more opportunities to grow my income over a longer period of time.”
“The difference between if I had stayed with my old position and what my new opportunities will be with my education and new career.”
“My training will help me make more money!”
“The income of a hairdresser.”

“Learned how my benefits would change over time.”

“That I will definitely gain more from college and complete extra college.”

“I learned that RNs make much better income than LPNs and I would now not consider LPN knowing this. I learned I could be financially independent being an RN the first year.”

“That my chosen field is a good one.”

“I learned generally how long it would take for me to increase my income based on the profession I'd like to go into.”

“How my income can change over time.”

“How to look for different jobs”

“The transition from now until I'm fully self-sufficient is not as painful as I thought.”

“I learned that looking at the big picture and what my future may look like is very important. And can distinguish whether I will struggle or be sitting nicely.”

“How my income will change after graduation”

“I learned that I will be making a lot more money than now.”

“If I go back to school I will be able to not only make a decent income, but I would be able to have a career and wouldn't need all these state benefits I'm currently receiving.”

“I was able to see the margin of difference in minimum wage compared to my prospective career as well as a timeline representation of what my benefits could look like in the coming years. It gave me a little bit of reassurance that through my schooling I will still have resources available to aid until I am ready to enter the field of my study and earn more income.”

“How hard it is to live without benefits.”

“I learned how my earnings over time may differ and change my benefits. I also learned that the earning may drop depending on my benefits.”

“I didn't realize tools like this existed, it opened my eyes to how pursuing another 18 credit hours to achieve a PhD would benefit me.”

“Wages are low in Maine.”

“How benefits are affected by jobs or children”

“Continuing my education and obtaining a career in Medical Assisting will be more beneficial financially and comfortably in the long run.”

“How education was the best decision for me and that I really need to focus down on getting a job.”

“I could clearly see how much impact this decision would affect me over time.”

“I learned new interests.”

"I was able to gain an understanding of the career I'd like to go into and see how it would affect my benefits. That's something that's always intimidating seeing if the end result will pay off and it definitely showed me that it will."

"I learned the difference in wages throughout a lifetime for different career opportunities."

"I learned how my career goal will affect me over time."

"I was able to decide I want to go back to school instead of going back to my old job."

"The difference between self-sufficiency and working after getting my degree, also changes with benefits"

"Everything"

"I recently returned back to school to get a Bachelor's in Psychology. I have been struggling with deciding if my degree and working in the substance abuse field will help me provide in the future. I was debating on changing my career plan to social work. What I learned today is to ultimately stay on the path that I am on because eventually I will have more income in the addiction field than I would with the social work."

9. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I understood the dashboard charts.	0%	0%	0%	23%	77%
The dashboard helped me understand how income changes may impact my benefits.	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%
The dashboard helped me make a career plan.	2%	2%	13%	33%	50%
The dashboard did not have enough career options.	25%	8%	33%	15%	19%
The dashboard did not give me specific enough information about what will happen to my current benefits.	35%	15%	25%	8%	17%

10. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.	0%	0%	2%	19%	79%

I understand how different jobs may impact my future INCOME differently.	0%	2%	0%	17%	81%
I understand how different jobs may impact my future BENEFITS differently.	0%	0%	0%	17%	83%
I believe it is possible for me to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years.	0%	0%	2%	21%	77%

11. Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I can name a good job that interests me.	0%	2%	2%	15%	81%
I know what steps to take to get a good job.	0%	0%	2%	21%	77%
I have a career goal.	0%	0%	6%	19%	75%
I know what steps to take to reach a career goal.	0%	0%	2%	27%	71%
I am in the process of moving toward a career goal.	0%	0%	4%	19%	77%
I am too busy trying to meet my or my family's basic needs to think about career goals.	13%	21%	21%	25%	21%
Even if I am not able to achieve my career goal right away, I will find a way to get there.	0%	0%	6%	15%	79%

12. What suggestions do you have for making the survey better?

"I think it was efficient and well done."
"None"
"I believe that there needs to be more job choices for the state of Maine. The jobs were general and I think they should be more specific."
"Not at this time."
"None, this was great"

“None”
“Expand the job categories”
“Check current income”
“N/a”
“Keep doing it. It was very helpful to have those visuals.”
“Only suggestion I would make is to narrow jobs in more specifically.”
“Nothing, this was great.”
“na”
“Have more options to choose from for jobs and titles such as management, shift leader, fast food shift leader.”
“I'm not sure of exactly what city I will be living in in the next 5 years. I thought maybe a drop-down menu or data by county instead might be helpful because I have a general idea of some counties that I could be living in within the next five years. Also I noticed that under the benefits received option there wasn't ASPIRE listed. I utilize those services for my daughter's childcare. Maybe this is because they are working with TANF and is a subservice of FedCap through DHHS?”
“I think there should be more information about how much debt you will go into and how that will affect your future income. I also think that there should be more information about if it is better to go to school right out of high school and which scholarships you would qualify for if you went in after that or took a couple gap years to save money. I would recommend this for high school kids so they can make a plan about when they should go to college.”
“Include tribal benefits so people can see how it will make a difference. I thought some of the categories need to be defined more, they were pretty broad. Some of the charts were hard to understand.”
“The survey is not subjective to people's mental health status, natural support systems, and participation in previous programming.”
“NA”
“N/A”
“More options for jobs”
“None”
“I think it's great as is.”
“None”
“I think that when it comes to the career options tab that it could be broken up differently. It could include more career options in the career fields that are offered already. That way you can have the exact career that you would like and it wouldn't be time consuming to find it. Maybe even a search option for those questions so you can just type in the career you are looking for.”

“Show the benefits compared [to] the career goal income more in depth”

“I think it's good the way it is.”

“None that I can think of.”

“Nothing, everything was great!”

“I think that this is a great opportunity for people to see what happens when they begin working and the financial increase that comes with a college education. This allows a person to look at the bigger picture and hopefully plan for 5 years from now instead of 5 minutes from now.”

“Pre” and “Post” Participant Survey Response Comparison

The following tables compare participants’ “Pre” and “Post” survey responses to eleven questions that were asked on both surveys. Responses were assigned a numeric value from 1 to 5 as shown below.

Text answer	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Numeric answer	1	2	3	4	5

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Average response			Percent of respondents whose answer...		
	Pre	Post	Change	Decreased	Remained the same	Increased
I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.	4.1	4.8	+0.7	4%	51%	45%
I understand how different jobs may impact my future INCOME differently.	4.3	4.8	+0.5	4%	64%	32%
I understand how different jobs may impact my future BENEFITS differently.	4.3	4.8	+0.5	4%	62%	34%
I believe it is possible for me to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years.	4.4	4.8	+0.4	4%	60%	36%

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Average response			Percent of respondents whose answer...		
	Pre	Post	Change	Decreased	Remained the same	Increased
I can name a good job that interests me.	4.4	4.8	+0.4	2%	57%	40%
I know what steps to take to get a good job.	4.3	4.8	+0.5	0%	60%	40%
I have a career goal.	4.4	4.7	+0.3	4%	64%	32%

I know what steps to take to reach a career goal.	4.3	4.7	+0.4	9%	47%	45%
I am in the process of moving toward a career goal.	4.5	4.7	+0.2	4%	70%	26%
I am too busy trying to meet my or my family's basic needs to think about career goals.	3.3	3.2	-0.1	21%	57%	21%
Even if I am not able to achieve my career goal right away, I will find a way to get there.	4.6	4.7	+0.2	4%	72%	23%

Staff Survey Results

The following tables show responses to the bi-weekly surveys completed by staff members. There were 46 completed surveys. In 25 surveys, staff indicated they had used the dashboard in the previous two weeks. In these cases, the survey asked additional questions about their experiences with the tool. Text responses have been lightly edited for clarity (e.g., punctuation and spelling corrections).

1. Please select the agency where you work.

	Percent	Number
Family Futures Downeast	33%	15
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	15%	7
Fedcap	13%	6
Southern Midcoast CareerCenter	13%	6
HOPE	11%	5
McAuley Residence	11%	5
Augusta CareerCenter	4%	2

2. Have you used the dashboard with someone in the past two weeks?

	Percent	Number
Yes	56%	25
No	44%	20

3. With how many individuals (or families) did you used the dashboard in the past two weeks?

	Percent	Number
1	30%	7
2	17%	4
3	13%	3
4	17%	4
5	13%	3
6	4%	1
7	4%	1

Calculated total of individuals (or families) for entire pilot period based on staff recollection		68
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4. On average, how long did you spend on the dashboard each time you used it?

	Percent	Number
Less than 10 minutes	0%	0
10-20 minutes	16%	4
20-30 minutes	36%	9
More than 30 minutes	48%	12

Logic - If answered "No" to Question 2, then Questions 5-6:

5. Why haven't you used the dashboard? (Select all that apply.)

	Percent	Number
I didn't meet with anyone who needed the information.	48%	10
I didn't have enough time to use it.	19%	4
Clients were not interested.	10%	2
It does not have enough career options.	0%	0
It does not have enough income options.	0%	0
It does not give clients specific enough information about what will happen to their current benefits.	0%	0
It is too complicated for the client to understand.	0%	0
I don't feel comfortable explaining the dashboard.	0%	0
Other (please explain):	33%	7
Other responses: "No client meetings - school vacation" "I couldn't access it. Peer provided me with accurate link." "I had a couple cancel, then I was on vacation." "Our meetings are all this week." "Rescheduled" "Scheduled clients did not attend." "Several appointments were canceled due to illness."		

6. What suggestions do you have to improve the dashboard?

“No suggestions right now.”
“We are meeting with students this month.”
“An option if they already are participating in a training program. The dashboard assumes they haven’t started yet, but especially for someone in a 2- to 4-year program, or who might be ready to graduate soon that is trying to make choices on career opportunities.”
“None”
“I will have feedback after we use it this week.”
“Option to put in hourly wage and number of weekly hours worked and to compare that to a different set of hours worked at the same or different rate of pay.”

Logic - If answered “Yes” to Question 2, then Questions 7-12:

7. Why did you use the dashboard with your most recent client? (Select all that apply.)

	Percent	Number
To compare earnings of different jobs	73%	19
To discuss career options	69%	18
To discuss the impact of increases in work income	58%	15
To help the client understand how their benefits may change over time	54%	14
To discuss training opportunities	31%	8
To discuss alternatives to benefits	23%	6
Other (please explain): “Choose college majors” “We will be using in transition meetings this month”	8%	2

8. How easy was it to get the information you wanted from the dashboard?

	Percent	Number
Very easy	48%	12
Somewhat easy	52%	13
Somewhat difficult	0%	0

Very difficult	0%	0
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Logic - If answered "Somewhat difficult" or "very difficult" to Question 8, then Question 9:

9. What information was difficult to get? (Select all that apply.)

[No responses]

10. Overall, did using the dashboard help your client?

	Percent	Number
Yes, it helped a lot	28%	7
Yes, somewhat	68%	17
No, not much	4%	1
No, not at all	0%	0

Logic - If answered "No" to Question 10, then Question 11:

11. Why did the dashboard not help your client? (Select all that apply.)

	Number
It did not have enough income options.	1
It did not have enough career options.	0
It was too complicated for the client to understand.	0
It took too long to use.	0
It did not give clients specific enough information about what will happen to their current benefits.	0
The client's short-term needs are too severe for them to focus on long-term plans.	0
Other (please explain): "They knew the outcomes before we started."	1

12. What suggestions do you have to improve the dashboard?

"I recommend more employment sectors be added."*

“The Dashboard needs an option to input an hourly rate and number of hours per week to show how increase in pay and hours at current employment would affect benefits. Clients are often interested in advancing at current work or in taking another job with a known rate of pay and number of hours. This would often be used much more than a comparison of potential careers from a generic pool of career possibilities.”†

“More detailed description for graphs”

“More specific career options”

“It seems the dashboard only allows up to three children in a family. Definitely need to have an option to put in an actual salary of a potential job to see its effect on benefits. Career categories are quite broad and do not account for on-the-ground actual employment such as case manager or the many specific careers in banking and business.”

“The option for LIHEAP was not in the list to choose. The pay scales were not accurate to our area. The job roles were extremely vague. It would be helpful to have the ability to put a pay rate in.”

“None...it works great!”

“I have none.”

“There is no way to demonstrate available resources after the loss of Medicare - the client was worried that there was such a drastic loss of health benefits, especially when she knows local organizations in the potential field do not offer health care. While I coached her about ACA, we are not experts on healthcare.”

“Need to add Tribal benefits. Would be nice to have feature where a known salary can be used instead of the default salary settings for given occupations. This would help. Should be a way to compare effect on benefits from increase in wage at pre-existing employment to see if client would benefit from taking increased hours or promotions.”‡

“I would see this tool as being impactful for both individuals and organizations. The women that I met with described no longer being interested in mid-level roles such as Mas but aspiring for roles such as RNs.”

“The dashboard does not take Tribal Eligibility differences into account. For example, people who live on Tribal land are not bound by the 60-month TANF time limits. Benefits that are exclusive to Tribal members are not on the dashboard. The categories and occupations are very broad. In some cases, the results are very skewed, as the actual occupations that students will go into, are not there. The income looks much higher than it will be. It would be VERY beneficial to have a place to enter a known salary. This would eliminate those skewed results. There is no way to look at results if a family grows with additional children.”

“Include links to alternative resources to better prepare clients for when public assistance benefits end.”

“Links to benefit programs or DHHS eligibility. A question came up about the list of benefits, and one the client was receiving. When we added it in it made a big difference, but we didn’t know why her family was ineligible for the program. Being able to connect someone right in the moment would be helpful.”

“Variability in commercial insurance rates is a challenge to navigate.”

“A way to include more than 3 children, a way to include other income sources”

“Include Tribal benefits, ability to input actual per hourly rates of pay, be able to input more than three children - multiple families had more than three children.”‡

“Add veteran’s benefits”

“None”

“Need option for client to compare current employment with a potential increase in hourly wage at current hours or increase in hours at current wage or entirely new job with differing hours and wage. This tool would be used much more than simply comparing differing potential careers and their effect on benefits over time.” †

“More selection of careers”*

* † ‡ These symbols indicate similar suggestions submitted on multiple surveys from the same IP address.

APPENDIX III: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

This appendix shows the text and questions included in the user pre- and post-surveys, and the staff survey. Surveys were administered online via Alchemer.

Career and Benefits Dashboard | "Pre" Survey

Today you will use a new tool that shows how your benefits and income may change over time. We call it a "dashboard".

The people who built the dashboard would like your feedback to understand who it helps and how to make it better.

To get your feedback, we are asking you to take two surveys - one before you use the tool and one after.

- These surveys are voluntary and anonymous. The staff person you are meeting with will not see your answers. Your answers will be combined with other people's answers and reported as a group. Individual answers will not be reported.
- In the open-response questions, please do not write anything that could identify you or others (such as names).
- Each survey will take about 5 minutes. Some questions are the same on both surveys. This is to see if the dashboard gave you any new information.

When you finish both surveys, you will receive one \$15 gift card to thank you for your time.

1) Please select the agency you are working with.* [Drop-down selection]

2) Please select your birth month.* [Drop-down selection]

3) Please select your birth year.* [Drop-down selection]

4) What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Prefer to self-describe: _____

5) Please specify your racial origin(s). (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other (please specify): _____
- Prefer not to answer

6) What is the highest level of education you have finished?

- Less than high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Job training or vocational program
- Some college
- 2-year/associate's degree
- 4-year/bachelor's degree
- Post-graduate degree

7) How many children in the following age groups live in your home?

- 0-5 years old: _____
- 6-12 years old: _____
- 13-17 years old: _____

8) Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- Yes
- No

[Question 9: Shown only if answer to Question 8 is "Yes".]

9) How well do you speak English?

- Very well
- Well
- Not well
- Not at all

10) How would you describe your household's current financial situation?

- Live comfortably
- Meet basic needs with a little left over
- Just meet basic needs
- Don't have enough to meet basic needs

11) Which of the following do you currently receive? (Select all that apply.)

- Earnings from work
- Unemployment
- Disability

- TANF
- SNAP
- MaineCare
- Child Care Subsidy
- LIHEAP

12) People sometimes have to make choices about benefits to keep their families stable. Have you ever done any of the following to keep your benefits? (Select all that apply.)

- Not taken a raise
- Cut work hours
- Not taken additional work hours
- Not taken a job offer
- Not gotten married or not changed your family status
- Not accepted child support
- Other (please explain): _____

13) Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly agree	Somewh at agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewh at disagree	Strongly disagree
I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.					
I understand how different jobs may impact my future INCOME differently.					
I understand how different jobs may impact my future BENEFITS differently.					
I believe it is possible for me to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years.					

14) Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I can name a good job that interests me.					
I know what steps to take to get a good job.					
I have a career goal.					
I know what steps to take to reach a career goal.					
I am in the process of moving toward a career goal.					
I am too busy trying to meet my or my family's basic needs to think about career goals.					
Even if I am not able to achieve my career goal right away, I will find a way to get there.					

You're done! Thank you for taking this survey.

Career and Benefits Dashboard | "Post" Survey

Now that you have used the dashboard, we have a few more questions.

Remember, this survey is voluntary and anonymous. The staff person you are meeting with will not see your answers.

This survey should take about 5 minutes. When you finish, you will get a \$15 gift card to thank you for your time.

1) Please select the agency you are working with.* [Drop-down selection]

2) Please select your birth month.* [Drop-down selection]

3) Please select your birth year.* [Drop-down selection]

4) What did you use the dashboard for today? (Select all that apply.)

To understand how my benefits may change over time

To discuss the impact of increases in work income

To compare earnings of different jobs

To discuss career options

To discuss alternatives to benefits

To discuss training opportunities

Other (please explain): _____

5) Overall, how easy was the dashboard to understand?

Very easy

Somewhat easy

Somewhat difficult

Very difficult

Other (please explain): _____ *

6) Overall, how helpful was the dashboard to you?

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Somewhat unhelpful

Very unhelpful

Other (please explain): _____ *

7) Did you learn anything new from the dashboard?

- () Yes
- () No

[Question 8: Shown only if answer to Question 7 is "Yes".]

8) What did you learn?

9) Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I understood the dashboard charts.					
The dashboard helped me understand how income changes may impact my benefits.					
The dashboard helped me make a career plan.					
The dashboard did not have enough career options.					
The dashboard did not give me specific enough information about what will happen to my current benefits.					

10) Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I know how my benefits will change if I earn more from working.					

I understand how different jobs may impact my future INCOME differently.					
I understand how different jobs may impact my future BENEFITS differently.					
I believe it is possible for me to become financially self-sufficient within the next five years.					

11) Please rate your level of agreement with each statement.*

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
I can name a good job that interests me.					
I know what steps to take to get a good job.					
I have a career goal.					
I know what steps to take to reach a career goal.					
I am in the process of moving toward a career goal.					
I am too busy trying to meet my or my family's basic needs to think about career goals.					
Even if I am not able to achieve my career goal right away, I will find a way to get there.					

12) What suggestions do you have for making the survey better?

You're done! Thank you for taking this survey.

Career and Benefits Dashboard | Staff Survey

Thank you for taking part in this survey. We appreciate your help in testing the dashboard and making it better.

- This survey should take about 5 minutes.
- Your answers will be confidential. They will be combined with other responses and reported as a group.
- In the open-response questions, please do not write any information that could identify you or others (such as names).

If you have any questions, please contact Kate deLutio at kate@maineappliedresearch.com or 207-766-1633.

1) Please select the agency where you work.* [Drop-down selection]

2) Have you used the dashboard with someone in the past two weeks?

- Yes
 No

[Questions 3-4 : Shown only if answer to Question 2 is "Yes".]

3) With how many individuals (or families) did you used the dashboard in the past two weeks?

4) On average, how long did you spend on the dashboard each time you used it?

- Less than 10 minutes
 10-20 minutes
 20-30 minutes
 More than 30 minutes

[Questions 5-6: Shown only if answer to Question 2 is "No".]

5) Why haven't you used the dashboard? (Select all that apply.)

- I didn't meet with anyone who needed the information.
 I didn't have enough time to use it.
 Clients were not interested.
 It does not have enough career options.
 It does not have enough income options.
 It does not give clients specific enough information about what will happen to their current benefits.
 It is too complicated for the client to understand.
 I don't feel comfortable explaining the dashboard.
 Other (please explain):: _____

6) What suggestions do you have to improve the dashboard?

[Questions 7-12 : Shown only if answer to Question 2 is "Yes".]

For this section, please think of the LAST TIME you used the dashboard.

7) Why did you use the dashboard with your most recent client? (Select all that apply.)

- To help the client understand how their benefits may change over time
- To discuss the impact of increases in work income
- To compare earnings of different jobs
- To discuss career options
- To discuss alternatives to benefits
- To discuss training opportunities
- Other (please explain):: _____

8) How easy was it to get the information you wanted from the dashboard?

- Very easy
- Somewhat easy
- Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

[Question 9: Shown only if answer to Question 8 is "Somewhat difficult" or "Very difficult".]

9) What information was difficult to get? (Select all that apply.)

- Benefits checklist
- Occupation or job type
- Family type
- Other (please explain): _____ *

10) Overall, did using the dashboard help your client?

- Yes, it helped a lot
- Yes, somewhat
- No, not much
- No, not at all

[Question 11: Shown only if answer to Question 10 is "No, not much" or "No, not at all".]

11) Why did the dashboard not help your client? (Select all that apply.)

- It did not have enough career options.

- It did not have enough income options.
- It was too complicated for the client to understand.
- It took too long to use.
- It did not give clients specific enough information about what will happen to their current benefits.
- The client's short-term needs are too severe for them to focus on long-term plans.
- Other (please explain): _____

12) What suggestions do you have to improve the dashboard?

You're done! Thank you for taking the time to do this survey. Your feedback will help us improve the dashboard.