



MAINSRING

The Seacoast Social Services Collective

May 1, 2025

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Megan Shapiro-Ross, and I serve as Executive Director of Footprints Food Pantry. In partnership with Fair Tide, we co-founded and developed *Mainspring: The Seacoast Social Service Collective*—a hub of nonprofit organizations working collaboratively to deliver dignified, efficient, and impactful co-located services.

I'm writing to respectfully urge your support for **LD 1500, "An Act to Establish the Maine Community Development Financial Institution Fund to Support Small Businesses, Rural Economic Development, and Affordable Housing."**

Mainspring would not have been possible without a fundraising bridge loan from one of Maine's CDFIs, the Genesis Fund. The Genesis Fund partnered with our leadership team to understand the vision and potential impact of the project, and they worked closely with us to identify the capital needed. Their lending allowed us to begin construction while our capital campaign was still in progress—critical given the rising costs of building. Without that support, our project would have faced significant delays.

Today, Mainspring brings partner agencies together under one roof to address the intersecting social challenges facing individuals living in poverty or with limited assets. We provide centralized intake, case management, and wraparound services that empower individuals to thrive. Through Mainspring, individuals can access food assistance, housing, and fuel support, legal and veteran services, aging support, substance recovery services, financial literacy programs, workforce training, and more.

I am deeply grateful for the strong network of CDFIs in Maine that make projects like Mainspring possible. Any effort by the Legislature to expand resources for these institutions will support similar initiatives statewide and potentially enable the replication of Mainspring's transformative model across the state of Maine.

Respectfully,

Megan Shapiro-Ross
Executive Director, Footprints
Co-Founder, Mainspring: The Seacoast Social Service Collective