



Megan Hannan, Executive Director
Maine Community Action Partnership
176 Washington St.
Bath ME 04530
207-831-9893

Jason Parent, CEO/Executive Director
Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.
771 Main St.
Presque Isle, ME 04769
207-764-3721

James Martin, CEO
Community Concepts, Inc.
240 Bates Street
Lewiston, ME 04240
207-739-6553

Rebecca Palmer, Executive Director
Downeast Community Partners
248 Bucksport Road
Ellsworth, ME 04605
207-610-5904

Suzanne Walsh, CEO
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program
97 Water Street
Waterville, ME 04901
207-859-1579

Claire Berkowitz, President & CEO
Midcoast Maine Community Action
34 Wing Farm Parkway
Bath, ME 04530
207-442-7963

Joe Everett, President & CEO
Opportunity Alliance
50 Lydia Lane
South Portland, ME 04106
207-523-5055

Kara Hay, President & CEO
Penquis
262 Harlow St.
Bangor, ME 04402
207-973-3500

Donna Kelley, President & CEO
Waldo Community Action Partners
9 Field St.
Belfast, ME 04915
207-338-6809

Jim Trundy, Executive Director
Western Maine Community Action, Inc.
1A Church St.
East Wilton, ME 04234
207-743-7763

Carter Friend, Executive Director
York County Community Action Corporation
6 Spruce St.
Sanford, ME 04073
207-324-5762

Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 1609 An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness

April 21, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, members of the Committee on Housing, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership, the membership organization of the ten community action agencies in Maine, and we support LD 1609 An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness.

I want to thank Senators Pierce and Rafferty for their amendment, which while not in legal language, outlines the intention behind the bill is to work through existing channels and to fund them to support students.

In my Community Action Agencies, we do work with the McKinney-Vento program more than occasionally, because as you see from the data provided by the program, the problem is real. It is also too often hidden from view – parents do not want their children's teachers to know, or even suspect, that they are homeless, or on the brink of being homeless.

That is, of course, the unfortunate thing; early intervention can often avert a crisis and homelessness. The programs and services we provide to support families, using a Whole Family, or Two Generation, approach, can do a lot to help families in need and in crisis, but we cannot do it all. We partner with and depend on other community resources to help each family's well-being and to meet their potential.

For children, homelessness, missing school for any reason, feeling "othered" for their "wrong" shoes, is a form of trauma. It causes adverse childhood events (ACEs) and the results are clear later in life. Children with higher ACE scores, the number of events added up, are more likely to do less well in school, find lower wage jobs, misuse substances and grow into poverty, which is what we all want to avoid.

A little over one million dollars a year can go a long way to preventing that. Reducing our children's exposure to ACEs, helping families to weather the storms that come with life and to stay stably housed, is a proven upstream, poverty prevention measure.

Please support LD 1609, direct funding to the experts we have in place, and help children and families to thrive.

Thank you for your time and attention, I am happy to answer your questions if I can.

Megan Hannan
mhannan@mecap.org
207.831.9893