



**MAINE
DOWNTOWN
CENTER**



**Maine's Main Streets and
Downtowns: Success Strategies &
Lessons Learned**

April 18, 2024

Talking Points

- **Who is MDF?**
- **Measures of Growth- Economic Indicators**
- **Maine Downtown Center**
- **Entrepreneur Ecosystem Development in Rural Maine**



Statewide non-profit, non-partisan membership organization uniquely established by the Legislature and the Governor in 1978 to drive economic growth in Maine. We are conveners who bring leaders together across sectors to find common ground, explore new approaches to persistent challenges, solve problems and improve the lives of all Mainers

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Economic Policy & Research



Leadership Development



Programs & Partnerships



Trusted Research. Leadership Development. Creative Partnerships.



MEGC

Maine Economic
Growth Council



- Created in statute in 1993 to develop a long-term vision and indicators for Maine’s economic growth
- Members jointly appointed by the Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate
- Administered by MDF



The Council’s vision of “high quality of life for all Maine people includes: a vibrant and sustainable economy, thriving communities and a healthy environment.



MEGC

Maine Economic
Growth Council

Key themes of the Council's work:

Skilled, educated, and entrepreneurial workers

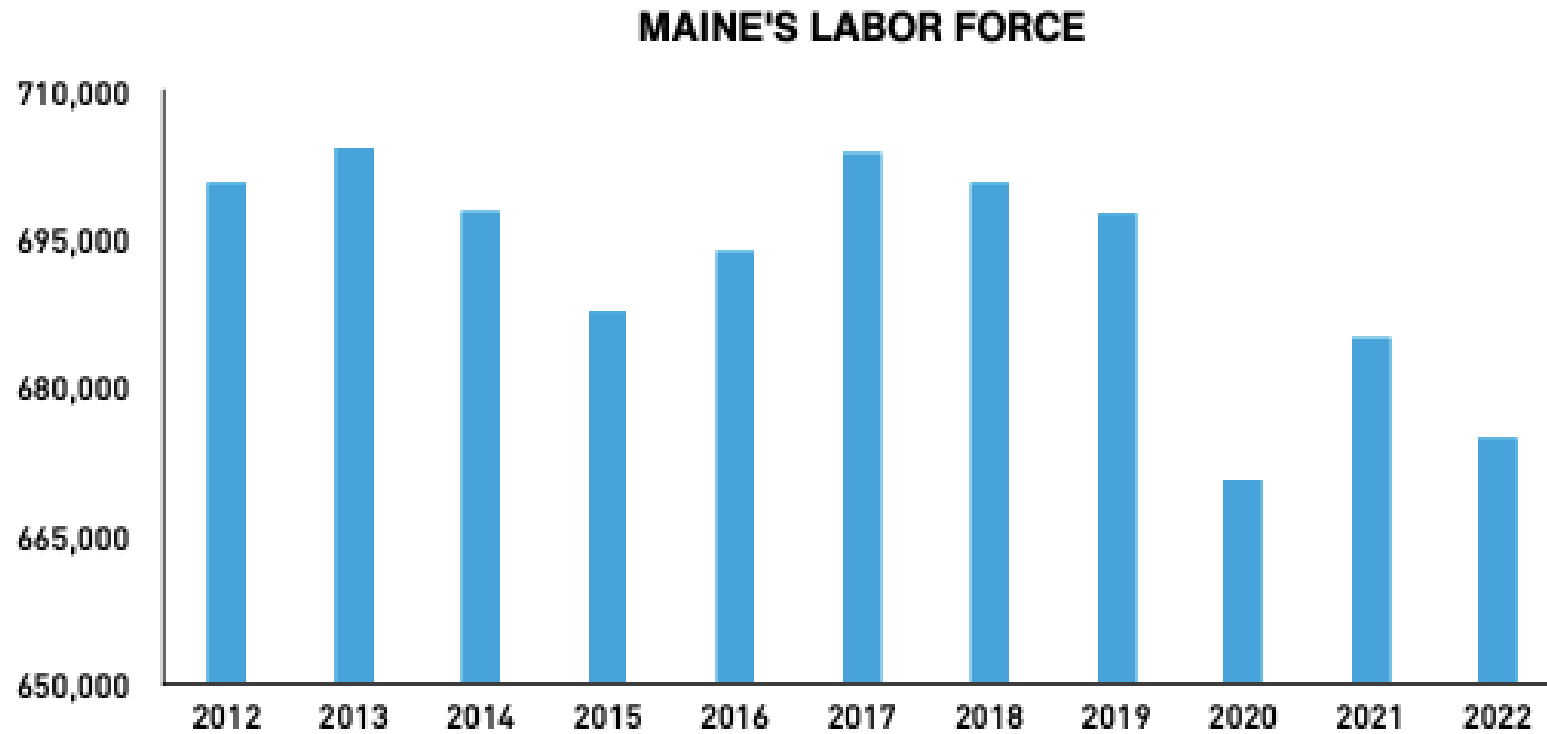
Foundational issues that significantly affect outcomes

Controlling costs for businesses and people

Targeted investment in areas that support our economy and quality of life



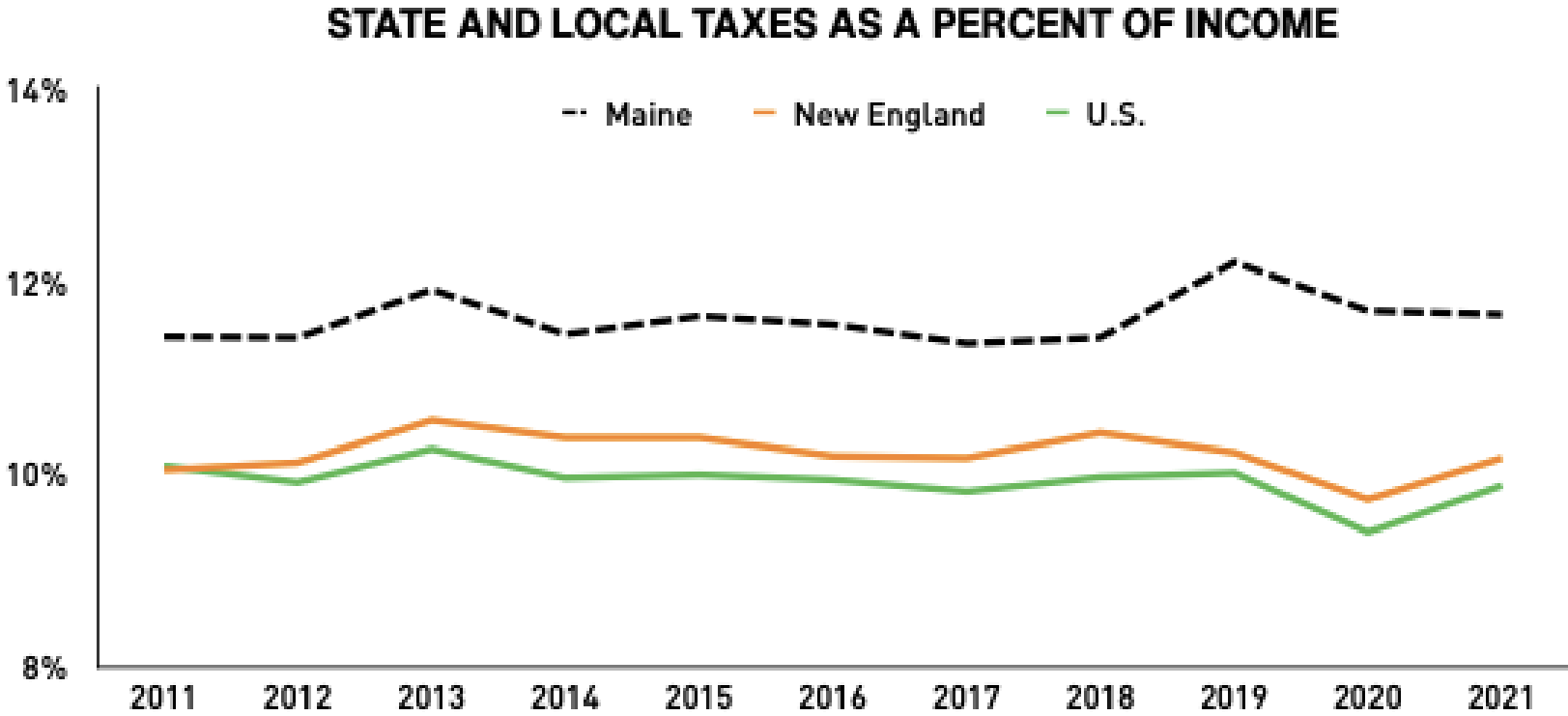
Fundamental Performance Indicator: Labor Force



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



State and Local Tax Burden



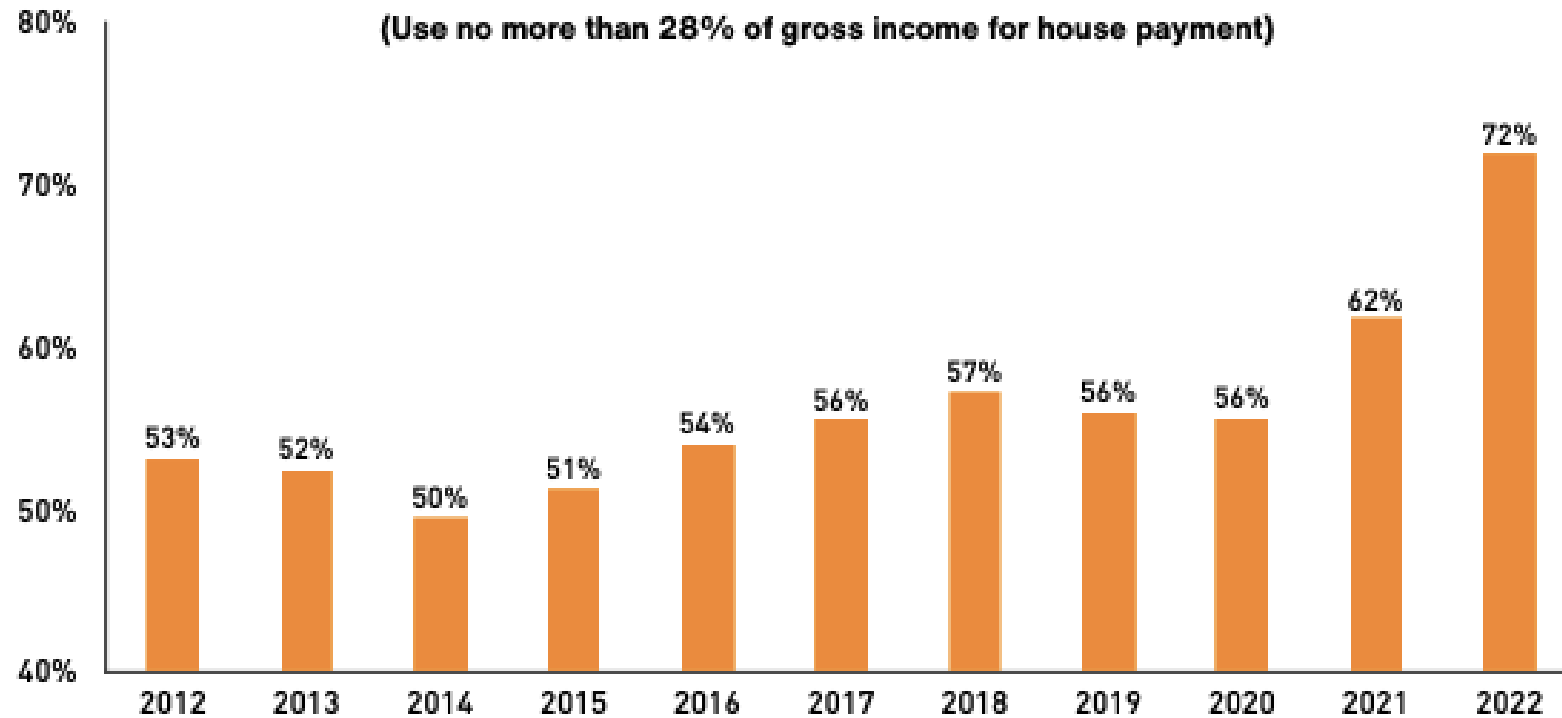
Source: U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis



Housing Affordability

MAINE HOUSEHOLDS UNABLE TO AFFORD MEDIAN-PRICED HOME

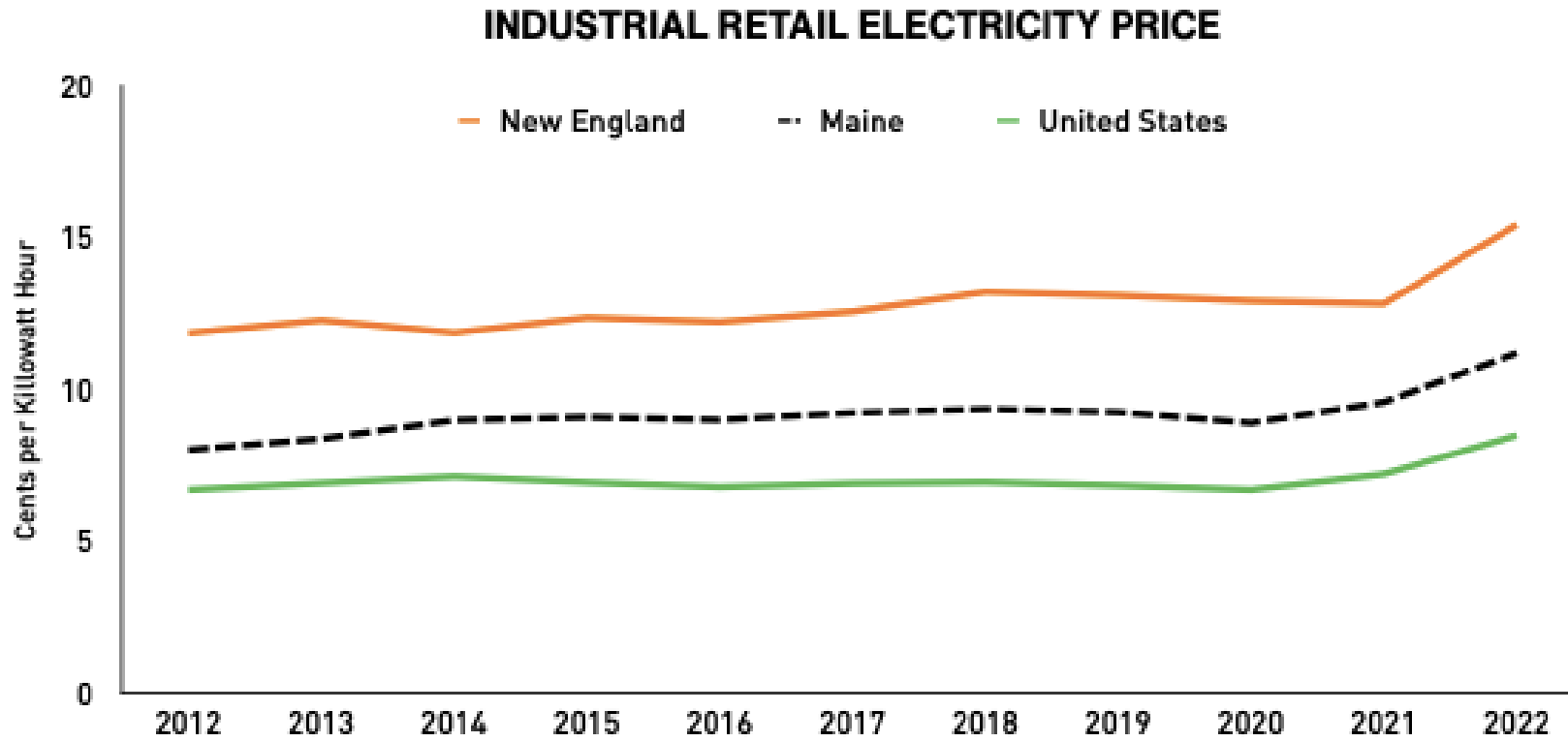
(Use no more than 28% of gross income for house payment)



Source: MaineHousing



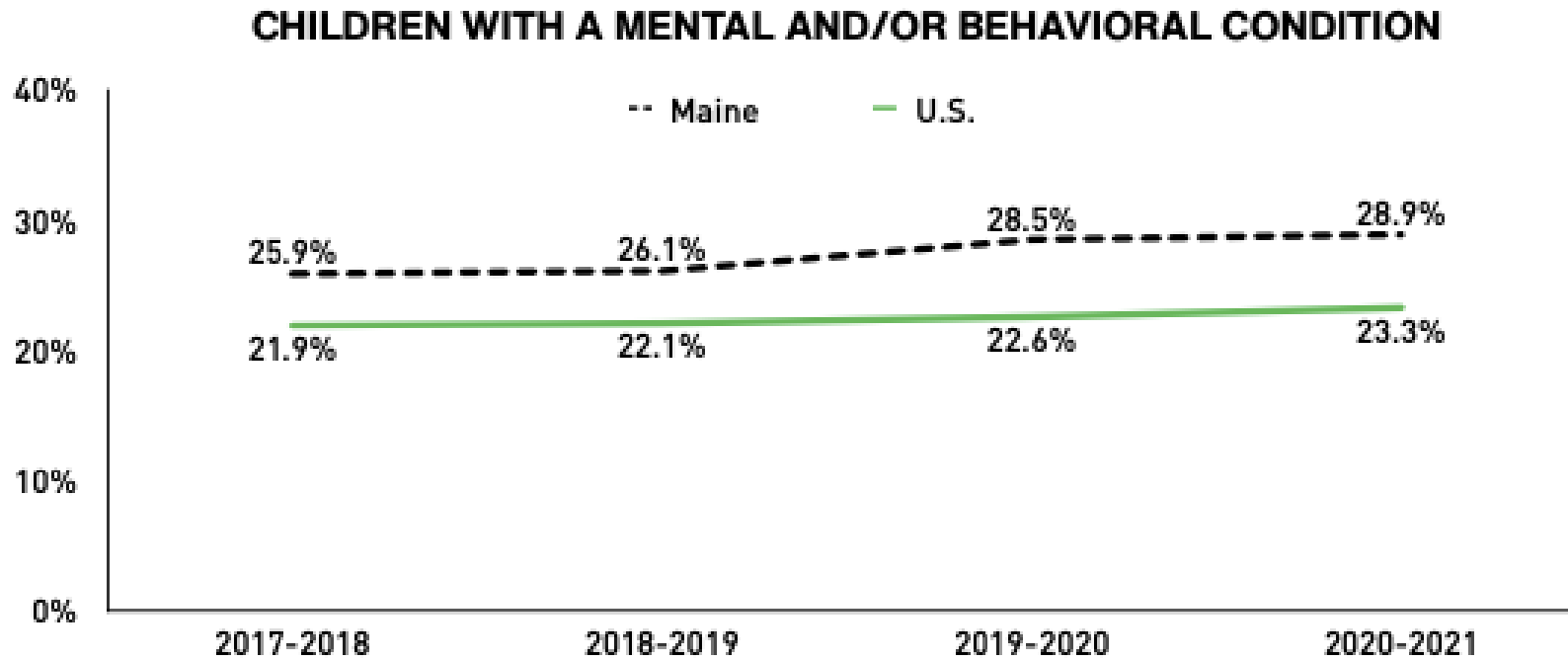
Cost of Energy



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration



Mental & Behavioral Health

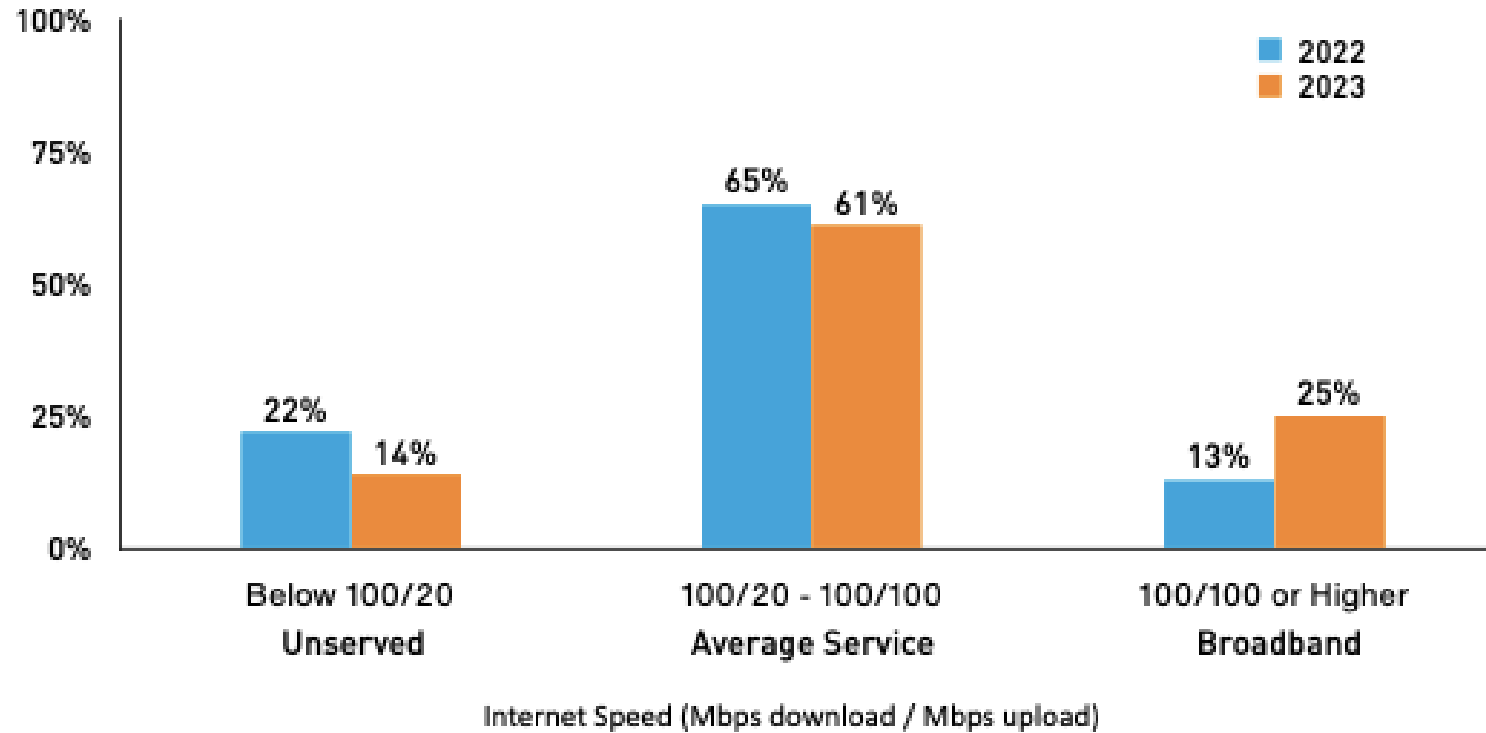


Source: National Children's Health Survey



Internet Connectivity

PERCENTAGE OF MAINE LOCATIONS WITH INTERNET ACCESS BY SERVICE LEVEL

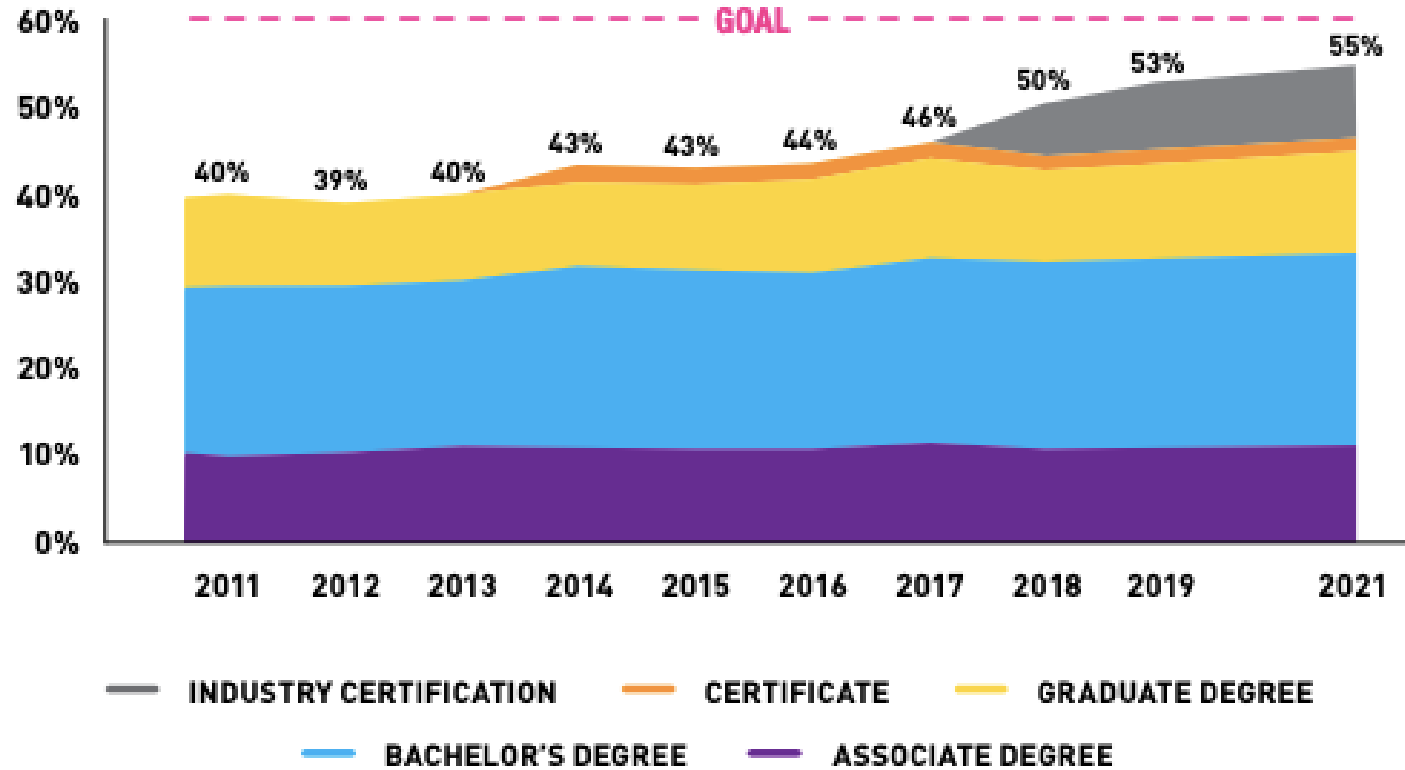


Source: Maine Connectivity Authority



Postsecondary Degrees and Credentials

POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT OF MAINE ADULTS, 2021



Source: Lumina Foundation



Takeaways

- We see reasons for optimism and proof that we must chip away at our deficits and connect the pockets of excellence and progress across our state.
- The time is now to utilize this 28-year body of research to continue building a long-term economic plan for Maine.

State coordinator for the National Main Street Program

Statewide resource for any community interested in downtown revitalization



Current as of January 2024



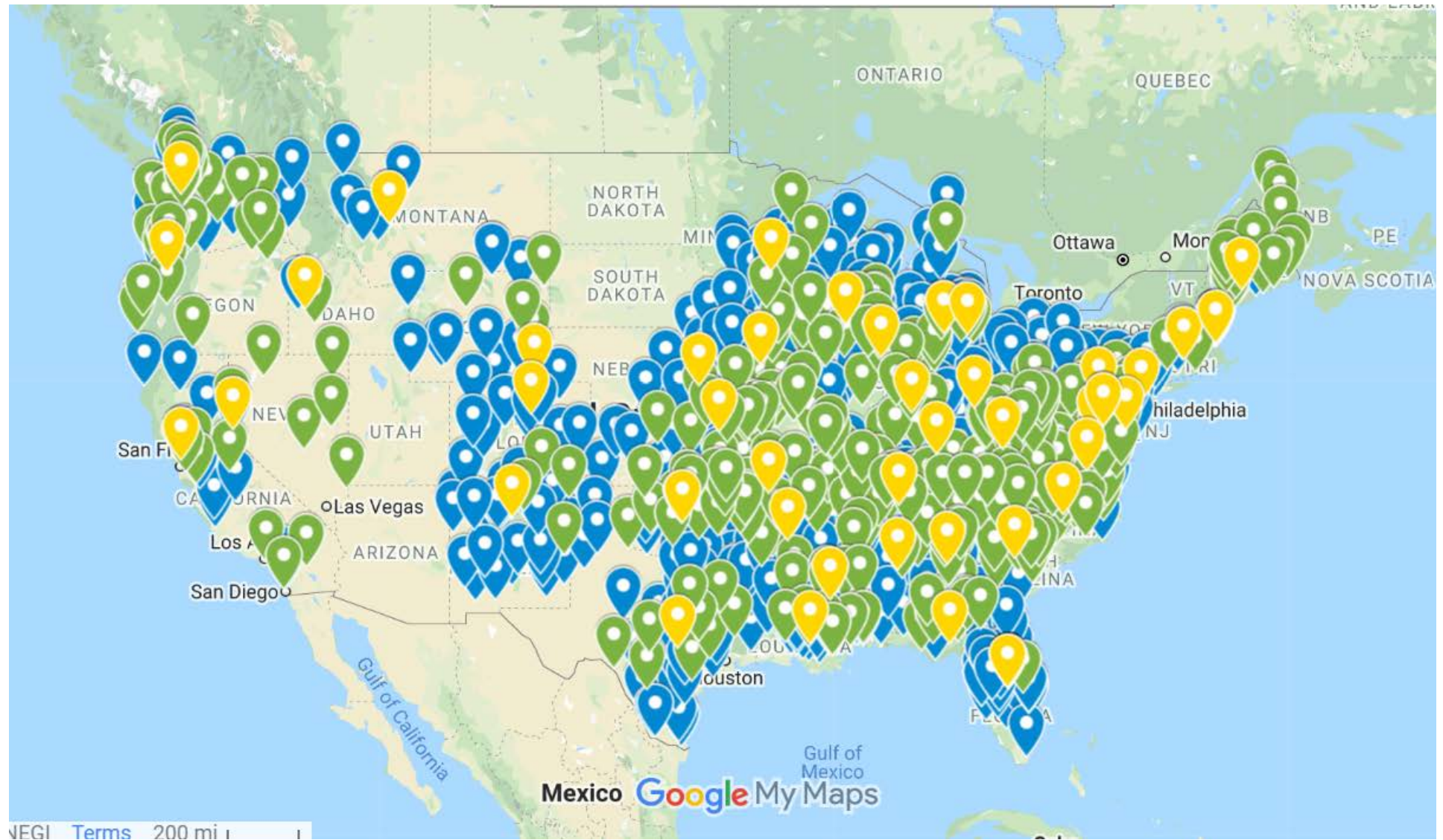


MISSION: To foster downtown revitalization that is dynamic and community-based, and results in economic development, business growth, job creation, historic preservation, housing revitalization and cultural enhancement. At the core of our approach to revitalization is a commitment to creating places of shared prosperity, equal access to opportunity and inclusive engagement.

40 year-old
approach to
downtown
revitalization

Over 1200
programs
across the
country

Implementing
the 4-point
approach



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.™



The Main Street Four Point Approach

- COMMUNITY VISION
- MARKET UNDERSTANDING



DESIGN

ORGANIZATION

PROMOTION

ECONOMIC VITALITY

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

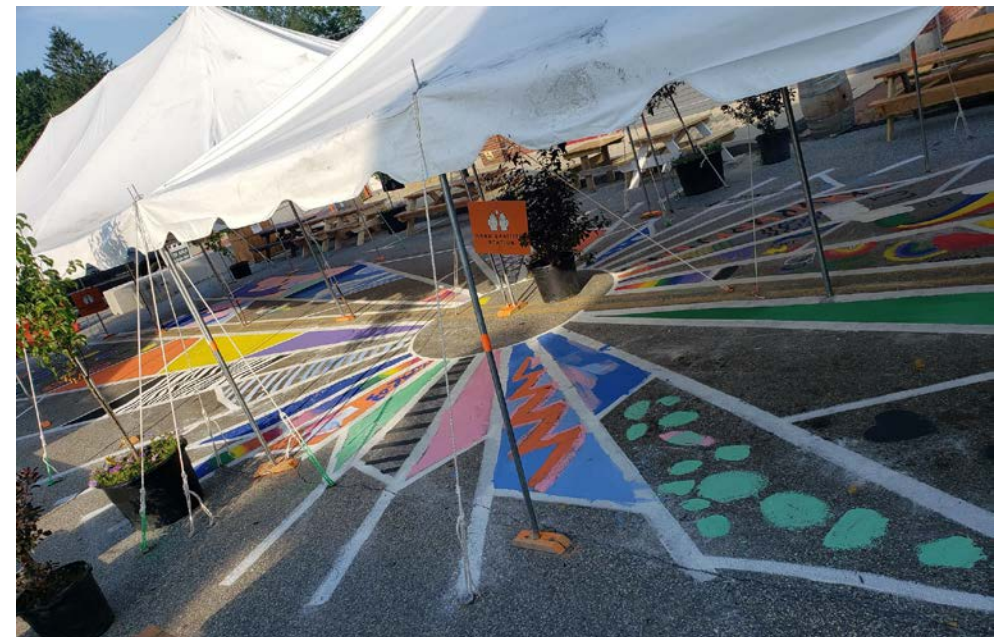
TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY

- QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES
- QUALITATIVE OUTCOMES

Good Design and Historic Preservation



Placemaking, and lots of it.





Organization:
Volunteers That Get it Done!



Events





Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners



Survey for your Needs



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Recent Highlights



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Entrepreneur Ecosystem Building in Rural Maine



Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development *Findings and Recommendations*

Skowhegan, Maine
November 16, 2020

Prepared by Matthew Wagner, PhD
Vice President of Revitalization Programs
National Main Street Center





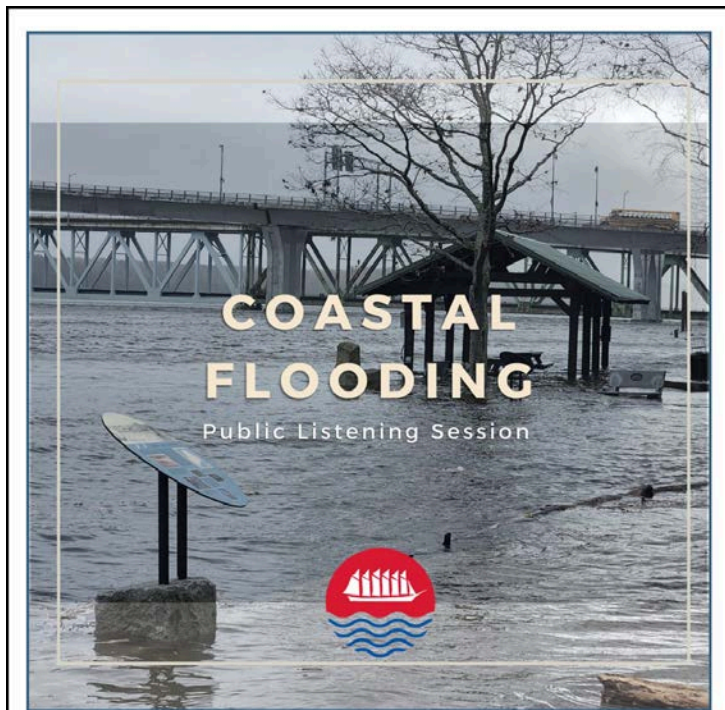


*Paul Bruhn Historic
Preservation
Subgrant Program*



Challenges

Rural
Communication
Organic
Funding/Resources
Climate
Demolition by neglect



What's working

- Partnerships/Relationships
- Entrepreneur Ecosystem Building
- Increased local capacity through grants and Tif's
- Intensive hand holding
- Collecting good data
- Participation stipends



Entrepreneur Ecosystem Building



3 Pilots 2019-2021: MCF
\$240,000

9 Replication Sites
2022-2024: CDS through
SBA \$747,000



LaKosha Evans, Owner of Klassically Kute Designs, LLC. Photo courtesy Heart of Biddeford

The Importance of Place in the Ecosystem



“A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics – visual, cultural, natural, and social – that provide meaning to a location.”
– MSA

Main Street Entrepreneurs are Central



99.2%

suger[®]
MAINE MADE COMFORT

Relationships & Human Capital are Priceless



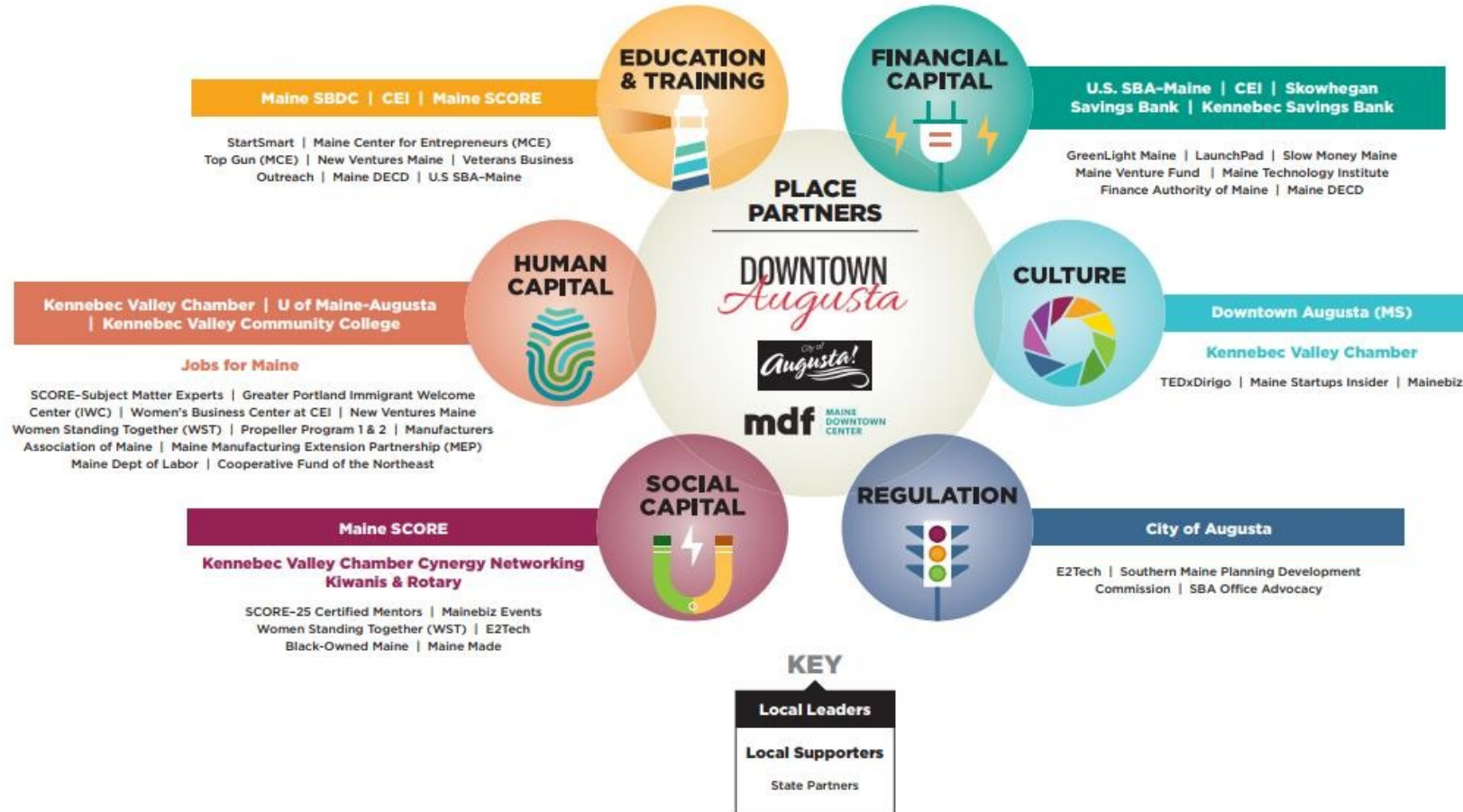
Intersection
between
**quality of
place**
& broader
**economic
development**



Hyper-local Meets Regional/State

Augusta, Maine

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem



Implementation Projects

- Central Resource Directory
- Trainings & Pitch Competitions
- Local Infrastructure Improvements, i.e. wayfinding, digital engagement, pop-ups
- Storytelling, i.e. podcasts
- Working with the underserved



Lessons Learned that translate to anyone working on rural economic development

- Build relationships
- Take the time for handholding and follow-through- it's worth the investment
- Replicate and share models that are working
- Be inclusive. Who is not at the table?
- Always measure

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Thank you and Questions

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