

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

LATEST INFORMATION AND UPDATES
ABOUT GATEWAY COMMUNITY SERVICES MAINE



About Us

Gateway Community Services Maine, GCSM, established in August 2016 as the non-profit arm to the already-existing Gateway Community Services, LLC that was formed in 2014. Gateway Community Services, LLC provides mental health services like Case Management, Counseling, Behavioral Health, and Personal Support Services to individuals that have MaineCare coverage. The non-profit, GCSM, was formed to address the needs of community members outside those served by the LLC. GCSM provides services in the program areas of Wellness, Community and Leadership.



Our Mission

Gateway Community Services, Maine (GCSM) seeks to encourage, support and build healthy connections within oneself and others in order to promote vibrancy and well-being, along with welcoming communities where all people feel accepted, valued and have a sense of belonging.

Our Vision

GCSM strives to help make Maine an inclusive and meaningful home for all – a place where communities are connected, and all people thrive.

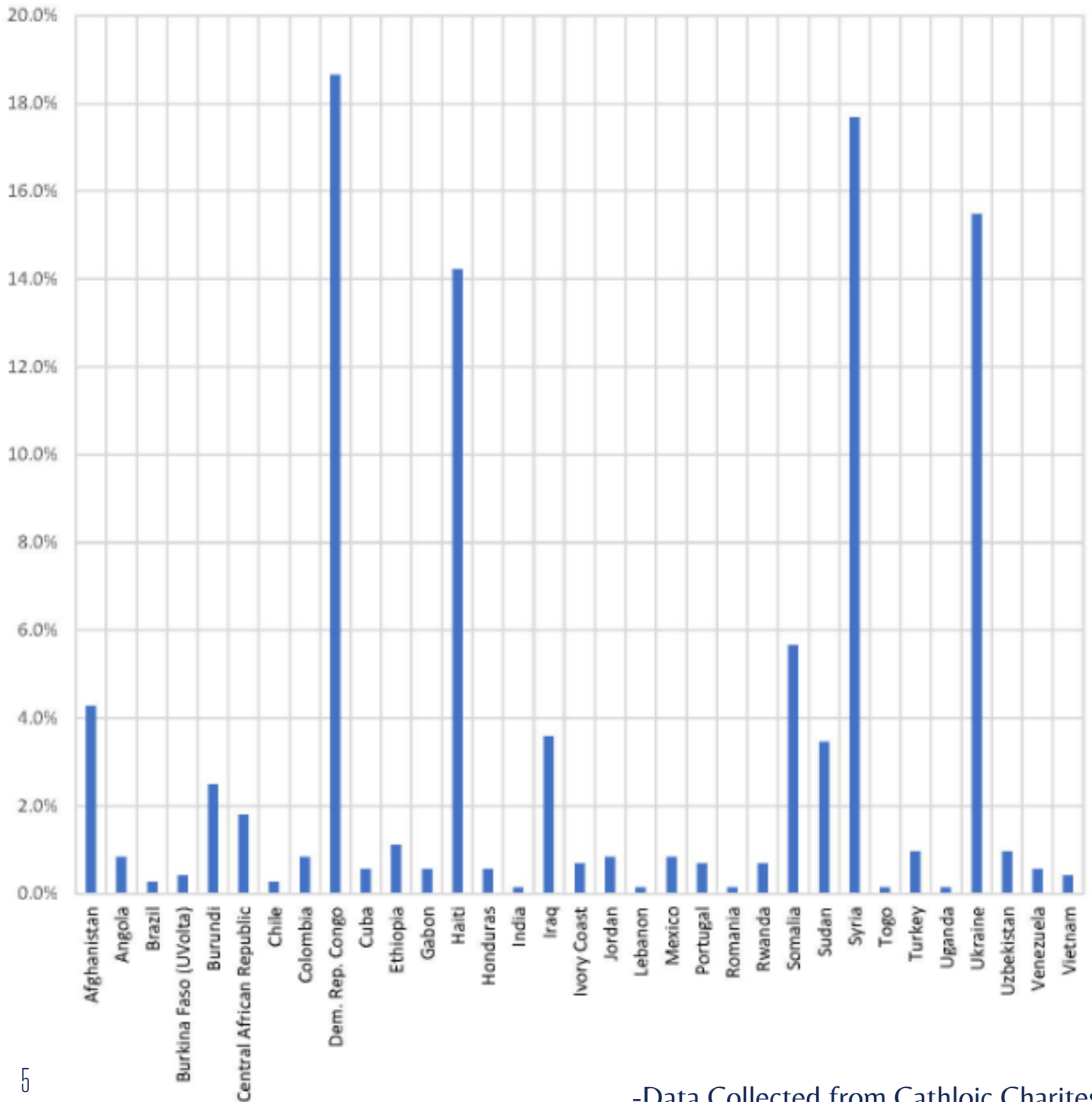


**More and more people seeking
asylum are coming to Maine.
Over 780 have arrived since
2023 started!**



YEAR 2023

FY23 In Depth Client Arrival Breakdown by Nationality



A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we reflect on the year 2023, it becomes evident that it has been a period of substantial growth for us in various aspects. This growth is a testament to the collective efforts and support from our donors, partners, and the community at large. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your unwavering support; without you, Gateway Community Services Maine would not have been able to achieve as much as we did.

In times of crisis, following the tragic Lewiston mass shooting, our teams mobilized swiftly and effectively. Coordinating with volunteer counselors, we ensured immediate assistance for those affected. This exemplifies the resilience and responsiveness of our team in the face of adversity.

To all of our staff, community members, partners, and donors—thank you. Your support is the cornerstone of the vital work we undertake. As we look ahead, we are eager to deepen our relationships with our partners and community, as well as make new connections. We anticipate sharing this momentous occasion with those who have been integral to our journey.

Once again, thank you for being an indispensable part of our mission.

Sincerely,
Abdullahi Ali

ABDULLAHI ALI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

WELLNESS PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

The GCSM Wellness Team helps support the wellbeing of immigrants and refugees in the Greater Portland and Lewiston areas by making community connections, hosting wellness events, and providing direct community health outreach. We help our clients access and navigate social services, physical and mental health care, government benefits, community support systems, and material resources essential to wellbeing in Maine.

In 2023, some of our Community Health Outreach Services work included establishing food security (support from Good Shepard and other food pantries); household essentials (including support from Maine Needs and Furniture Friends), housing (including a collaboration with Quality Housing Coalition); immigration and documentation (including collaboration with ILAP and other organizations); accessing government benefits including SNAP, TANF, and General Assistance; assisting clients in connecting with behavioral health programs including GCS and our nonprofit Behavioral Health Program launched in 2023. Organizations referring to people to our services have included Maine Health, Maine CDC, and the Office of Maine Refugee Services.

Our CHWs have provided indispensable social support to the many families and individuals they have worked with, discussing life challenges with care, understanding and cultural sensitivity.

Over the last year, our events and initiatives included but are not limited to tax preparation in collaboration with CASH and United Way; hosting vaccine clinics and providing vaccine education and cultural brokering with collaborations including Office of Population Health Equity, Walgreens, and AgeWise Maine; hosting multiple community meals including a large meal for asylum seekers at the Portland Expo in collaboration with Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition (MIRC) and Good Shepard Food Bank; a workshop on Sharia banking in collaboration with Androscoggin Bank; weekly cultural brokering and Lingala language interpretation with the Oasis Free Clinic; and peer support groups with licensed counselors and Wellness Team Staff (including collaboration with Casco Bay Inn and City of Portland for providing venue).

Overall Number of Clients/Program

Participants: 920

Overall Number of Volunteer Involvement: 1



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

WELLNESS PROGRAM CONT.

Achievements:

Some of our major achievements this year including finding multiple ways to support immigrants and refugees affected by the housing crisis in Maine. This includes assisting multiple families from experiencing homelessness by finding temporary shelter on short notice, working with landlords and social service organizations including QHC to find long-term housing, and indirectly helping many families gain or retain housing through other factors that influence housing security—enrolling people in English classes and job readiness, assisting with employment applications, navigating and effectively utilizing government services, assisting people in obtaining their driver's permits and licenses, helping families understand tenant responsibilities, helping establish food security, and furnishing homes with essentials.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

This year the nonprofit Behavioral Health Program (BHP) has been led by one full-time employee with previous CHW experience and MHRT-C certification. One signature of the BHP this year has been a Lingala women's peer support group held among asylum seekers temporarily residing at a Freeport hotel. This group program was co-facilitated by our BHP and another CHW.

The BHP has also successfully coordinated clinical care. As a pilot project, we quickly reached full capacity by contracting with three separate clinicians, each of whom conduct therapy sessions with a separate client either weekly or biweekly. All these clients are uninsured asylum seekers who would otherwise be unable to receive one-on-one counseling from a licensed professional. Our BHC provides case management, completing needs assessments, treatment plans, and mentorship.

Our BHP also garnered volunteer support following the Lewiston shooting. We sent out a call for volunteer counselors and offered free counseling services. We will retain this volunteer list for possible future collaboration with the professionals. In the wake of the shooting, we also coordinated two group counseling sessions for roughly eight members of GCSM's Community Youth Coalition.

In addition to these separate mental health-focused programs, the Behavioral Health Coordinator maintains a normal caseload of roughly 25 clients who draw on the personal support offered but who do not use clinical services specifically.

Achievements: One major program achievement was providing case managerial and behavioral health support to an asylum-seeking woman recently discharged from the hospital with a newborn baby, finding temporary housing to prevent her from being unsheltered, and then working with Quality Housing Coalition to find the family long-term housing where they still reside.

Overall Number of Clients/Program Participants: 40 (included within the Wellness Team total of 920 listed above).

Overall Number of Volunteer Involvement: 1 clinical intern

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



A WORD FROM CYC MEMBER



GCSM has impacted me greatly. It shaped my perspective on what kind of work I see myself participating and thriving in. Going through this program twice also amplified skills such as public speaking, project management, critical thinking and teamwork that I did not realize I had until I was forced to use them and turns out its pretty fun when all these components work in tandem.

It provided support in so many ways! One aspect that stood out to me was how supportive the group is, causing some members go from completely introverted and nonsocial, to main leaders of the group. This is because of how the program was designed, improving our comfort and building a sense of community, and where comfort and comradery are present, trust grows. And when those things are actively being put into groups and teams, success in inevitable.

I have graduated from my undergrad university with a clearer vision of my future. I understood what skills I have, why I have them and how to use them. This ignited the desire to learn in me. My confidence in myself and abilities has led me to a world of opportunity, resulting in internships and corporate experience that I find very valuable. I am also currently a master's student at the Roux institute in Portland Maine, pursuing a degree in Project Management and using the skills and guidance I received from such an important program and time in my life and applying them to my everyday projects. I am truly beyond thankful and blessed to have been part of such an amazing program.

Mazin Ahmed
Longterm CYC Program Member

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

COLOR OF CLIMATE PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

The Color of Climate held monthly Connected Learning Ecosystem (CLE) meetings, monthly outdoor excursions, and partner meetings. The CLE connects teachers from all over Maine to provide a space to discuss how to bring the BIPOC youth voice into climate change conversations to promote climate justice. There are 17 program members and 13 partner programs with at least two participants each.

Maine Local Living School Event:

We had an overnight trip where students and adults were brought to a cell service free farm in Temple, Maine to learn about closed circle living and environmentally compatible agricultural practices.

Achievements:

The CoC developed 13 project partners who are willing to work with us on outdoor programming, starting our own CLE dedicated to getting culturally sensitive and committed STEM programs to new Mainers, and having two major overnight outdoor science excursions for our students, along with securing speakers for our future events.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS PEER WORKFORCE PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

The Peer Workforce Navigator program has a partnership with GCSM and other partner organizations in working together to connect people with good jobs, training opportunities, unemployment benefits and support services while also working to identify and solve systematic barriers that prevent workers from gaining dignity. In addition, we also conduct biweekly Wednesday clinics and weekly Friday clinics to address these services.

Achievements:

On October 2023, Hatim, our Peer Workforce Navigator, met with a group of three siblings who came to our Lewiston clinic. They had been laid off at Abbott Laboratories earlier in the year but did not apply for/receive unemployment benefits and instead were focused on searching for their next employment opportunity; they wanted an opportunity as soon as possible. After reviewing several options, Hatim helped them apply to openings with Proctor & Gamble, a company that he had a prior relationship with. After submitting a job application for these individuals, our PWN communicated with the HR department to follow up on the applications. Four days after, all three individuals had been offered a position with Proctor & Gamble and successfully began their new jobs.

Overall Number of Clients/Program Participants
138:

Overall Number of Volunteer Involvement:
1 Volunteer.



A WORD FROM OUR PARTNER



In November 2023 the Color of Climate group came to Maine Local Living School for a 2-day program focused on food sovereignty and place-based living in rural Maine. We had such a rich exchange of knowledges and experiences! It was an honor to share parts of the worldview and daily living practices of MLLS, and hear about how they connect with COC students' worldviews and backgrounds. One person who grew up in a village in Chad said that the MLLS homestead reminded her of how they did things back home. She said it's beautiful to see that this lifestyle is possible in America. We are glad that MLLS is able to serve as one small connection to land- and community-based livelihoods that some people grew up with and have missed since moving to Maine. We look forward to our next program with Color of Climate!

We really appreciated the pre-visit communication between the COC leaders (Jiwana and Brooke) and MLLS staff. Getting familiar with the needs of the group ahead of time was key. We all had a lot of questions related to making the weekend comfortable, fun and full of learning for all of the participants, and by patiently answering these questions beforehand we were able to set ourselves up for an amazing program--thank you!

Michelle Fournier
Teacher & Operations Manager
[Maine Local Living School](#)

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

The Youth Homelessness Program provides community-based services to Youth/Students who are experiencing homelessness such as: Connecting with Safe, stable living accommodations, helping families to secure safe and sustainable housing, Provide advocacy for students within educational systems, and Connection to basic needs resources.

Achievements:

- Provided summer clothes to Howard Johnson students and collaborated with McKinney Vento leaders to locate free laundry facilities for Expo students.
- Collaborated with McKinney Vento Liaisons to strengthen connections before school year start. She assisted families in Lewiston, helping them find housing and enrolling in adult education classes.
- Collaborated with school districts to organize back-to-school events, attend open houses, and create a Q&A webinar for newcomer students to access necessary help.
- Attended events and meetings, including the Positive Youth Development Institute Conference in South Portland, where she discussed challenges faced by young people and schools, and a community-focused event in Waterville, Maine.
- Collaborated with organizations like Preble Street and Youth Led Justice to better serve homeless youth. She's preparing a presentation for upcoming statewide regional meetings with McKinney Vento, eager to educate and speak with families and community members.
- Collaborated with Quality Housing to secure housing for families and ensured their needs were met. She plans to conduct a presentation for Lewiston High School staff and support unaccompanied youth. Deqa also purchased school supplies for liaisons, assisted clients in school enrollment, and helped some find housing.
- Completed regional meeting, purchased school supplies for liaisons, and worked with clients to assist with enrollment and housing. She distributed 40 backpacks, and worked with clients to ensure a prompt start.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

EDUCATION PROGRAM

LONG-TERM TUTORING

Overall Summary of Activities:

The Long-term Tutoring program has continued to provide diligent one on one tutoring with students in the community struggling with learning loss, English proficiency, and systematic variables. Our approach is to utilize the skills best suited by the tutor to assist with the subjects the students need the most assistance with, set milestones to best achieve these needs, and focus on retention and study skills to best assist with the student's achievement.

Our program collaborates with the schools and other educational programs to best determine the needs and the curriculum of the students and implement it through our tutors. We also provide educational and skill opportunities.

Achievements:

Our program has continued to minimize learning loss for the students in our cohort and have been able to highlight the education needs for each student and pinpoint long-term plans for integrating appropriate learning to help students achieve these milestones. We have also provided multiple CPR training courses for our tutors through the American Red Cross.

Overall Number of Volunteer Involvement: 4 volunteer tutors.

Overall number of clients and programs: 5 students.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

EDUCATION PROGRAM

DROP-IN AFTERSCHOOL TUTORING

Overall Summary of Activities:

From April 2022 to May 2023, Education Sessions were held at Howard Johnson Hotel, a temporary shelter for homeless families. Using a Portuguese interpreter, Language Access Providers, GCSM staff, and local volunteers, students developed language, math, and reading skills through various activities. This led to improved confidence and comfort with homework and learning activities.

GCSM, with funding from Brick and Beam and the Crestmont Fund, enhanced program management and service delivery, expanded volunteer engagement, and provided effective sessions with a Portuguese interpreter for effective communication.

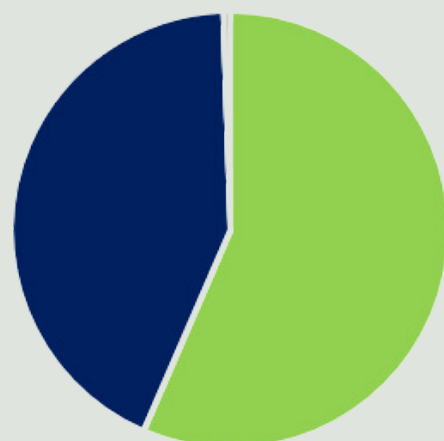
We provided students with healthy snacks and various learning materials to keep them engaged and provided access to them both during and after sessions.

Overall Number of Volunteer Involvement: 18
Overall number of clients and programs: 377

Achievements:

A student who attended the education sessions chose to read out loud at each session in partnership with a volunteer. They also took books with them to read in between sessions. Over time they noticeably gained more confidence and skills and were reading above their grade level. Another student who frequently attended the education sessions consistently got support with their homework, which made them more confident and comfortable at school. Since they consistently attended the sessions, they created strong relationships with the community members volunteering. This student having the ability to grow their social connections was important for their mental health.

Numbers Served by Age Group



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH MENTOR PROGRAM

Overall Summary of Activities:

Youth mentor program is for individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 who have moved to the United States within the last five years. The ratio of mentor to mentees is usually 1:5. Goals for everyone enrolled in the mentor's program are completely set by the mentees themselves. Those goals are achieved by the mentees who have the support of our amazing mentors who show critical community connections, education, employment, or social skills, and shared experiences integrating and connecting to a new home.

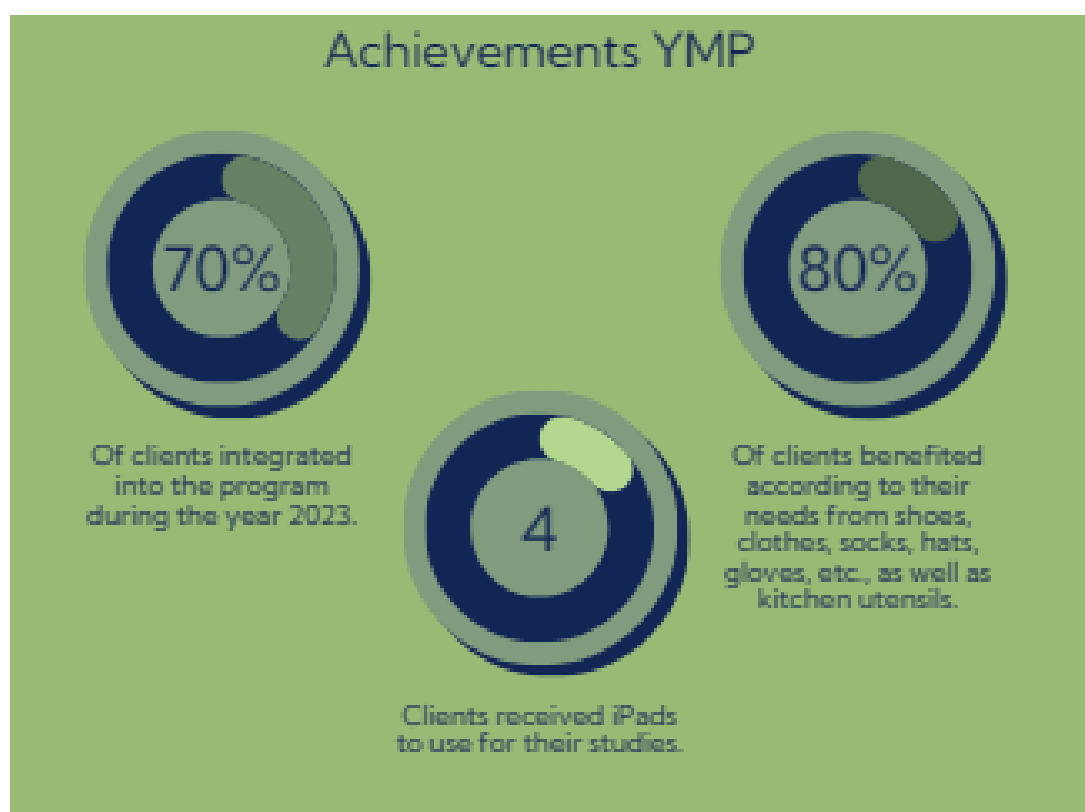
Overall Number of Clients/Program Participants 70

Some highlights:

- Presence of work materials (computers, telephone, bag, binder, etc.)
- Access to the client track to select those eligible for the youth mentor program.
- Good collaboration with the team throughout the level.
- Presence of a volunteer in the youth mentor program.

Achievements:

During the year 2023, we integrated 70 young people into the youth mentor program, and we worked as follows.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY YOUTH COALITION PROGRAM

Overall Summary:

The Community Youth Coalition is a program that gathers students into cohorts. CYC is a youth empowerment program involving 10–14 young people from Portland and Lewiston Maine, focusing on civic engagement, volunteering, mental health, and suicide awareness, and youth leadership development.

Achievements:

Developed field trips, unique learning and career opportunities and hands on community-based activism that did not previously exist for the CYC. Students have reported higher interest, engagement and commitment due to this shift in programming. The retention rate and re-application rate of students was 90% and students have reported positive holistic outcomes from the programming I've developed.

Bigelow Institute Visit:

The students went to the Bigelow institute to learn about ocean technologies, marine biology, and climate science. This was a fantastic chance to introduce students to scholarships, marine sciences, and options for higher education that would not otherwise be easily accessible. Our CYC youth members and a few staff members were graciously allowed to see and stay at the Bigelow Institute's facilities. We are grateful to our Bigelow partners for this wonderful opportunity, and continued partnership! Number of participant's: 14

Overall Number of Clients/Program Participants:

10 students, 15 partners for combined programming



A WORD FROM OUR PARTNER

One of Bigelow's goals is to educate the next generation of ocean leaders. The ocean is global, and so it's important for that next generation of leaders to reflect the many perspectives and experiences that people have in different parts of the world. The students from Gateway who joined the program brought excitement and enthusiasm, and a steady stream of insightful questions. The students got to spend an afternoon on the boat learning about ocean sampling, and time in the lab looking at the samples we collected I think the students got a lot from this hands-on experience. The weekend stood out as one of the highlights of my year, and I see so much potential in these students. As one of our instructors commented, "Events like this remind us of why we teach." In terms of Gateway's goals, we hope that we've established Bigelow and the ocean science community as part of the network of communities where Gateway students feel welcome and may see potential future opportunities. We've been following up about other opportunities for educational programs here at the lab.

The communication with the team at Gateway was very supportive. We started with a few brainstorming calls in the spring with Brooke and Jiwa, and they helped us understand the needs of the students, when the best time to run the program, etc. From our end, we felt that the communication from Gateway was great, and I hope we provided the same. I would love to continue this collaboration.



Part of our mission is educating the next generation of ocean leaders. I'm hoping that through follow up with Brooke and the students that some of them will apply to our longer education programs as a next step. And for all of the students, whichever path they take, they've still come away with a deeper understanding of the ocean's importance, and what the experience of being on the ocean and studying the ocean is like. On our end, the scientists who participated had the benefit of working with enthusiastic students who were asking all kinds of questions. From my point of view, I saw our scientists feel a renewed value in the educating work that they do.

Nicholas Record, Senior Research Scientist
Bigelow

2023 EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Our community spaces in Portland and Lewiston hold great value to not only our staff but to the whole community. We have had the honor of providing this space for community members, organizations, and our community initiatives. We have always prided ourselves to provide an open space for all to gather.

Our team organized a culturally relevant food event at Portland Expo Center, feeding 192+ people and sharing Gateway services. They connected with clients and shared nearby food pantries, ensuring many community members were rehoused or transitioned to local hotels.

The Behavioral Health Coordinator and a Lingala-speaking CHW co-facilitated a weekly women's peer support group at a Freeport hotel in Fall and Winter 2023.

The weekly Peer Workforce Navigator Clinic assists communities with job search, unemployment benefits, resume creation, and other public benefits, with 25-40 participants.

During 2023, we also held events like the Clean Energy Job Fair, Free Tax Preparation, Muslim Youth Leadership Conference, Social Justice workshops, job prep, and held space for the Pre-Apprenticeship Program with ME-FL CIO

GCSM hosted Br Shoeb Sharieff, head of the Ijara Community Development Corporation in Michigan, in collaboration with Androscoggin Bank to speak on Sharia house finance.

We celebrated our Annual Iftar event with our communities of all faiths and cultural backgrounds. 300+ people attended the event.

Gateway staff and volunteers from the Rwandan Muslim community distributed food to 120 household members during Ramadan



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

OPERATIONS TEAM

Overall Summary of Accomplishments:

2023 was a year of internal infrastructure building and maintenance. Our goal throughout the year was to build systems and implement new ways of tracking data so we could plan for future growth.

From 2020 to 2023, we had experienced expansive growth in our organization. We went from a staff of 2 to that of 21 by the end of 2023. In that time the systems and policies we were using soon became difficult to maintain as we searched for ways to optimize staff time so we could focus more of our efforts on the community. Our commitment to supporting and being flexible with community needs gave us the drive to use the year of 2023 to work on the organizational infrastructure. We continue to build our infrastructure and operations department in the new year of 2024.

During 2023, we created new HR policies, revised our Financial Controls policy, purchased work phones for frontline staff, restarted our Newsletter, created a Brand Guide and updated our logo font, created an internal Fundraising team, purchased some much-needed new ergonomic office chairs, and expanded the Operations team to include the Communications & Engagement Coordinator and HR & Technology Manager to name a few.

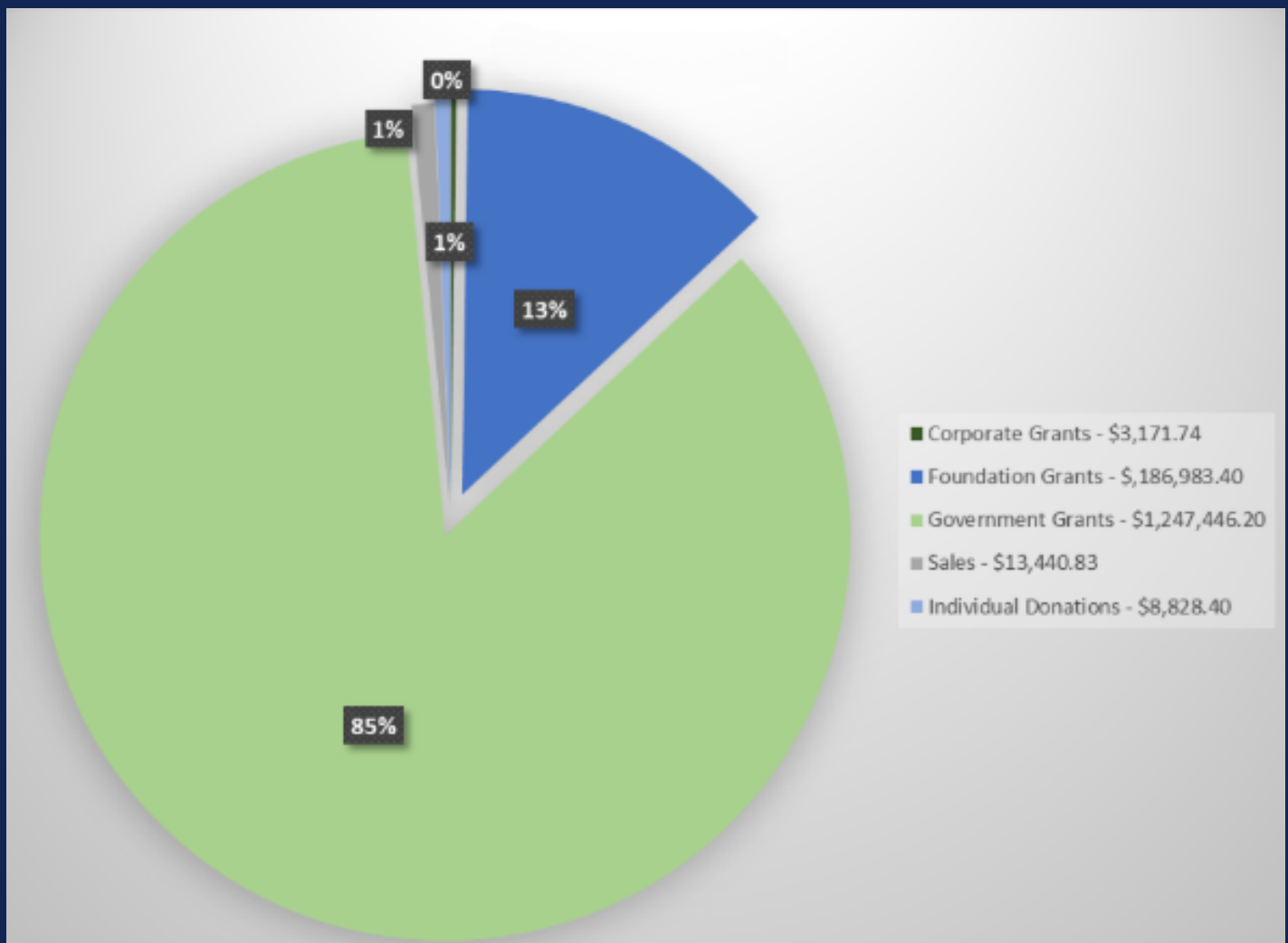
Salesforce Implementation:

The past few years during our rapid growth of 2020 to 2022, we had been using various different documentation methods to track all our programs progress from Google Sheets to Microsoft Forms to Microsoft Excel. As we entered the end of 2022, we realized the need to have a system that would centralize all of our program's progress and record keeping. We researched and found Salesforce that was able to not only match our needs for program record keeping but also to use it for communications and engagement with our community, funders, and program participants, grant tracking, and donor management in connection with our new online donation platform GiveLively.

TriNet Implementation:

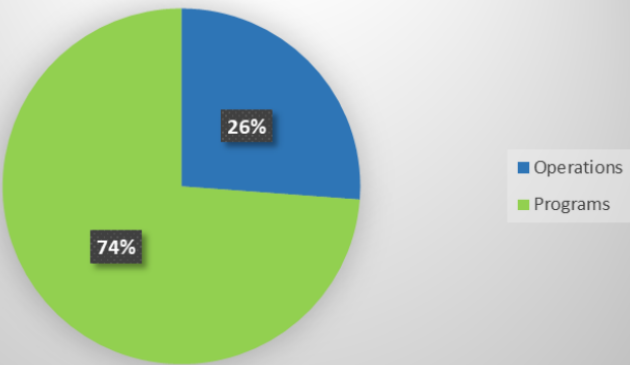
We were slowly outgrowing our payroll system and needed to find a solution that would satisfy our needs of annual HR trainings, payroll, performance evaluations, benefits administration, and recruitment. Through TriNet we were able to get all of these systems in one to make the operations of our organization run smoothly. As with any new system, we had growing pains with learning the new system, utilizing all aspects of it, and learning new ways to use it. Through TriNet, we have implemented annual reviews for all staff, annual online HR training, and have used the HR library feature that holds a wealth of HR information that will continue to help as we plan for our future HR needs.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS: 2023 INCOME FUNDING OVERVIEW

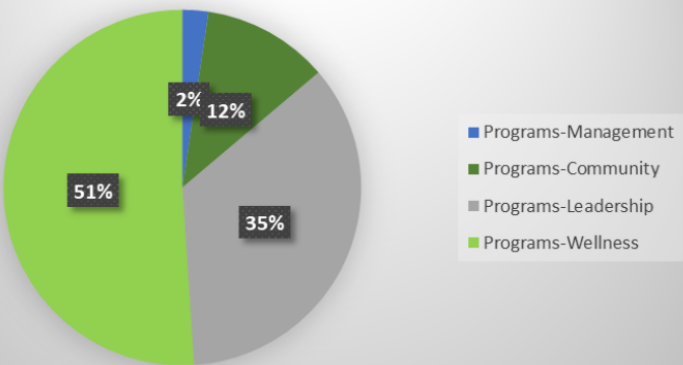


FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

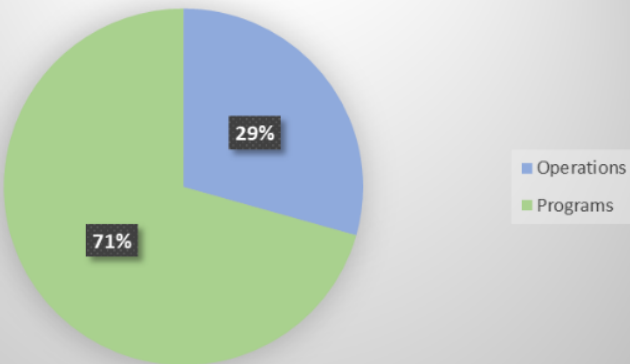
2023 Income Per Department



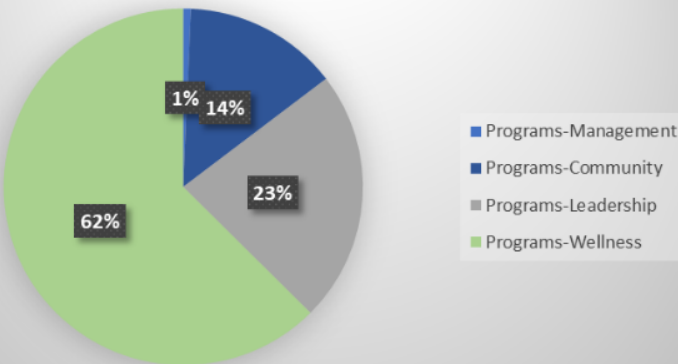
2023 Income Per Program



2023 Expenses Per Department



2023 Expenses Per Program



Our Partners

MIRC

City of South Portland

Quality Housing Coalition

Portland Public Schools

ME FL-CIO: Peer Workforce

The Permanent Commission on the Status
of Racial, Indigenous & Tribal Populations

Good Shepherd Food Bank

Office of New Americans

MANA

Walgreens

GMRI

South Portland Schools

OASIS Free Clinics

Family Planning of Maine

University of New England: Social Work Dept

Maine Equal Justice

Greater Portland Council of Government

Maine Local Living

Generational Noor

Bigelow Institute

Community Organizing Alliance

Madhorse Theatre

The Schoodic Institute

Portland Ovations

Tender Table

Maine Peoples Alliance

The Ecology School

Creative Portland

Mayo Street Arts

Portland Public Library

MBEC

PPL Teen

City Of Portland

Boyd street community gardens

Our Partners

Department Of Education

Creative Portland

Maine Audobon

Unity College–Pineland Farm

Maine Youth Justice

Inema Karate

Hope Acts

Intercultural Community Center

Immigrant Welcome Center

Maine Initiatives

Maine Equal Justice

The Point Church

ProsperityMe

United Way

Welcoming The Strangers

Unity College–Pineland Farms

Rwanda Muslim Community

Maine Health (MMCRI)

Wayside Food Program

USM

Bates

UNE

Cross Cultural Community Services

Office of Population Health

Office of Behavioral Health

Office of Refugee Resettlement

Portland Community Squash

Governors Office of Policy innovation

GCSM Team

Senior Leadership:

Abdullahi Ali

Executive Director

Samantha Hanson-Rolt

Director of Operations

Nathan Davis

Director of Programs

Operations Team:

Joelle Rutembesa

Finance Manager

Elisabeth Redwood

Human Resource and Technology

Istahil Mohamed

Communications & Engagement

Community Program Team:

Cadeau Assoumani

Community Programs Manager

Abdihakim Atoor

Community Events Coordinator

Zane Jay

Education Coordinator

Deqa Mohamed

Youth Homelessness Specialist

Wellness Program Team

Nick Farley

Wellness Programs Manager

Grace Kalume

Community Health Worker

Ahmed Daher

Community Health Worker

Violette Zola

Community Health Worker

Ismail Faizy

Community Health Worker

Qamer Hussein

Behavioral Health Coordinator

Leadership Program Team:

Osama Mohamed

Leadership Program Manager

Brooke Bolduc

Community Youth Coalition

Jiwana Soleimani

Color of Climate Coordinator

Mijou Nkongo

Youth Mentor Program Coordinator

Hatim Ibrahim

Peer Workforce Navigator

Board of Directors

John Ochira, 2020–now
Board President

Marcelle Medford, 2020–now
Board Vice President

Caroline Sample, 2016–2023
Secretary

Yahya Hussein, 2020–now
Treasurer

Yusuf Abdi, 2016–now
Board Member

Hermeet Kohli, 2016–now
Board Member

John Bauer, 2019–now
Board Member

Dana Glass, 2019–2023
Board Member

Joe Marro, 2019–2023
Board Member

Ragini Malhotra, 2022–now
Board Member

We want to thank our generous donors, partners, and community members for making GCSM home for all.

THANK
YOU

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