



Maine
Centers for **Women,**
Work & Community



Helping women succeed in their workplace, business, and community.

2011 Annual Report



Helping to turn “dreams into reality” is what Women, Work, and Community has been doing for over thirty years.

Whether putting a business plan together, charting a new career path, or gaining control over one’s financial future, we offer tools, facilitate learning, and provide connections to resources and opportunities. Many of our participants are coping with the loss of a job, a home, a family member or other significant life transition. In their own words, participants let us know the value of what we do, the effect it has on their ability to “create a better future”.

In 2008, we began a two year research and evaluation project, funded by the US Department of Labor, to test the notion that setting clear goals and having a plan would result in better outcomes for the individuals we serve. For the past three years, we have focused on: delivering core services in the areas of career development, microenterprise, and money management; providing consistent, quality training with clear expectations; and monitoring short-term and long term outcomes for program graduates.

Preliminary evaluation findings are encouraging: three months after taking a class, participants report the training helped them set goals, they have made progress towards them, and remain confident that they are attainable. Early results on longer term outcomes, using DOL wage records, indicate that participants with a completed plan are beginning to see increases in earnings. A survey of our business class graduates shows more than half (60%) are starting businesses and nearly all (97%) are sustaining their business a year after the class ended.

Optimism about the future remains elusive as the economy crawls out from under the effects of the great recession that began three years ago. The challenges to all of us are real: unemployment remains high, budgets at all levels are tight, homes are still being foreclosed, Maine has an aging population, and we face a worrying mismatch between the skills of the existing workforce and the skills employers need to compete. Globalization continues to demand that we adapt, learn new skills, and re-think how we plan and prepare for the world of work.

For WWC, the road map to a successful future is embodied in our strategic plan, developed last year with the support of Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership. Using the Balanced Scorecard as a framework, we developed specific goals in four areas including: diversifying our funding; strengthening relationships with partners and customers; sustainability and excellence; innovating and creating efficiencies in program services.

For the individuals we serve, the road map to success means finding a career pathway that best matches their skills, interests, needs and abilities and that is grounded in real opportunities in the marketplace. We believe that with the right tools, access to relevant information, a willingness to learn, and the support and encouragement of others, it is possible to create a better future.

Gilda Nardone

“I am thankful there is a program available to women in Maine to help make their dreams a reality. Thank you for working with me to get my business up and running.”

“I know I am not alone.” (the group) has given me positive support to keep going towards my goals.”

“The career class helped me pinpoint my interests, strengths, and resources. I am now confident that pursuing a career is a realistic goal.”

“Before starting the training, I was completely intimidated by the process. Now I feel that it’s broken down into steps and I am capable of the challenge.”

“The pursuit of one’s dreams is hard work. Each step must be taken with purpose.”

Our Programs

Building Your Career

Workforce Development remains at the core of our work in preparing women and men to succeed in today's dynamic economy. Basic training programs include Creating Your Future (CYF), which integrates career decision-making with financial education, and Career Exploration, in which participants create an individual career development plan. Working closely with community partners, WWC connects individuals to quality education, training, and jobs that pay a living wage. In partnership with the Maine Department of Education, WWC met with staff from Career and Technical Education Centers statewide to develop best practices in recruiting and retaining female students into trade and technical career pathways.



Caribou Middle School student Emma Jandreau learning new skills at Aroostook 2011 Totally Trades Conference at NMCC.

Highlights include:

- 342 individuals participated in workforce development classes
- 347 women and men received individual assistance with job search, educational access, and career planning.
- Career Exploration was adapted for online delivery and piloted in 3 locations.
- Creating the Rest of Your Life training was created to address the employment needs of older workers
- Totally Trades Conferences for girls were held in Calais, Presque Isle, Rockland, and Bangor; the first Future Pathways Conference was held in Skowhegan. Over 500 middle and high school girls and 100 tradeswomen and employers participated in hands-on workshops exploring non-traditional occupations.

Girls attending these Conferences had this to say:

"It was awesome! Thanks for a great day."

"I never would have thought working in construction was so involved! Thank-you so much for a new insight on different jobs."

"This was really fun and made me realize that there are a lot more jobs out there that females can do."

"I think this is a great thing... We can do everything males can do."

Our Programs

Starting a Business

Microenterprise got a boost with a PRIME grant from the US Small Business Administration last year. In partnership with the Maine Small Business Development Centers, WWC is using the federal grant to develop new on-line training, experimenting with a lap-top lending program, and adding live workshops, all aimed at increasing the technology and financial management skills of micro businesses. Continued support from the Maine Women's Fund has allowed us to expand our work with creative entrepreneurs in Bangor and Aroostook. Mini-grants awarded to strengthen marketing among these enterprises engages Ambassadors in the award selection process. Members of the Microenterprise staff began writing a column for the Bangor Daily News that features our entrepreneurs and partners in small business assistance. The column, Women@Work, appears in the business section every other Friday.



Aroostook New Venture's graduate Lindy Howe of Heywood Kennel Sled Dog Adventures giving a World Cup Biathlon spectator from Russia a ride in Fort Kent 2011.

Other Highlights include:

- 954 microenterprise participants
- 78 New Ventures graduates
- 22 Introductory workshops and 12 Basics classes serving 372 individuals
- 15 marketing mini-grants ranging from \$50 - \$400 to Aroostook and Penobscot County artists, agri-tourism and other enterprises.

On the cover

Participants in the Augusta New Ventures class at UMA dressed as their businesses, fall 2010.

Our Programs

Managing Your Money

WWC is a leader in providing personal money management training. In our 15-hour Financing Your Future class and in shorter workshops, participants increase their understanding of personal finance and learn to manage money, reduce debt, and save for the future.



Credit Yourself graduates receiving grant awards.
Left to right: Charlie Kennedy, KeyBank; Crystle Martin; Tina Duffany; Julie Buffington, KeyBank.

Highlights include:

- 189 individuals participated in Financing Your Future and other workshops on topics including Build a Budget, Clean Up Your Credit, and Make a Savings Plan.
- 108 individuals received individual assistance in working toward financial goals.
- Credit Yourself: The Way to Financial Fitness was offered in 14 locations from Houlton to Saco. This 8-hour workshop was sponsored by the KeyBank Foundation and KeyBank of Maine. Ten graduates of Credit Yourself received a \$250 grant to be used to reach their financial goals.
- 53 income-eligible Maine families saved toward a major asset purchase through the Family Development Account (FDA) matched savings program. Account holders saved toward the goal of buying a home (15), starting a small business (29), or paying for college classes (9). Personal savings were matched 4:1 at the time of purchase. FDA participants gained skills by completing financial education and asset specific training. Successful savers were able to purchase homes in Augusta and Portland; six business owners were able to expand their businesses; five college students paid for education at UMPI, UMA, USM, and UMF.
- WWC staff members and volunteers provided asset training and promoted the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) at Free Tax Preparation sites statewide, in partnership with the CA\$H Coalitions.

Our Programs

Becoming a Leader

WWC graduate Ambassadors and participants developed and demonstrated a wide range of leadership and advocacy skills this year, including promoting WWC programs and services to their families and friends, helping organize fundraising events, and talking with their Legislators and other funders. The Ambassador leadership program was expanded statewide and now includes six regional groups and nearly 80 graduates.

Highlights include:

- Held a statewide Ambassador networking meeting and provided training in communications, fundraising, and advocacy.
- Ambassadors and graduates participated in WWC's biennial Reception for Legislators and Funders and spoke at WWC's Leadership Circle luncheon featuring WWC's creative enterprise work.
- Ambassadors helped plan two regional Conferences—ALL (Aroostook Leadership & Learning) for Women in Presque Isle and Financial Fitness for Women in Bangor.
- Ambassadors helped coordinate several fundraising events, including promoting WWC's community partnership with Coffee By Design through May sales of "My Mom's Coffee" and assisting at two *designing women* craft shows.
- Fifty women from around the state participated in the Coalition for Maine Women's Day at the State House, learned about current legislative and budget issues, met with their Legislators, and developed and practiced their citizen advocacy skills.
- WWC hosted seven women leaders from Saudi Arabia visiting Maine as part of a US State Department tour.



Leadership Circle Luncheon, left to right: Dan Pykett, SCORE, Charlie Kennedy, KeyBank, Carolyn May, WWC Regional Manager, Larinda Meade WWC Advisory Council

Awards and Recognitions:



Bangor Region Leadership Institute Eames Leadership Award to Regional Manager Jane Searles. Left to right: Deb Neuman, DECD; Searles; Merlene Sanborn, EMCC; Dennis Marble, Bangor Homeless Shelter



SBA Women Business Advocate Award presented to Erica Quin-Easter, Aroostook County. Left to right: John Butera, Quin-Easter, Jean Hulit, SBA Regional Administrator, Maurice Dube, SBA Maine Director.



Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce Business Advocate Award. Left to right: Laurie McDonnell, Chip Morrison, Shirley Hamilton, and Ambassador Holly Ihloff.



Senator Olympia Snowe is presented the Association for Enterprise Opportunity Small Business Champion Award. Jenn Dobransky (left of Snowe) and Eloise Vitelli (right of Snowe) were on hand to make the presentation.



Mary Cathcart receives the Merle Nelson Women Making a Difference Award. Left to right: Judy Crosby, graduate, Betsy Sweet, Cathcart, Gilda Nardone, Representative Peggy Rotundo, Danielle Bell, graduate.



Angie Buxton

Angie Buxton first came to Women, Work and Community to develop her massage therapy business; she completed the New Ventures class in South Portland and launched her business in 2009. From Heart to Hands focused on massage with underserved populations such as elders, people with chronic illnesses, and people in treatment and recovery for cancer, as well as stress relief massage for the rest of us. She provided seated massage to people who are homeless as a volunteer.

Even with a solid business plan, Angie found it difficult to make enough from her business during the tough economic times. Angie decided to pursue employment to provide a more reliable income for her household. In 2010 Angie again turned to Women, Work and Community to help determine an appropriate career direction and job search strategy. Angie worked with WWC staff to identify and explore possible careers that matched her interests and skills. Once Angie clarified her direction, she worked on creating a resume and cover letter highlighting her transferable skills.

Angie applied for, and was offered a position at United Way of Mid Coast Maine as a Loaned Executive for their fall fundraising campaign. Though a temporary position, it allowed Angie to use her strengths and further develop her skills while making key contacts in the community. Several months later, another job opened up at United Way; Angie applied and was offered the position.

As Volunteer Initiative Coordinator, Angie is able to combine her belief in service, experience in the nonprofit sector and skills in management to promote volunteerism in the Midcoast area through public education, capacity building and professional development for managers of volunteers. While she continues to offer massage on a part-time basis, the regular income gives her the ability to better plan her family's financial future.

In addition, Angie volunteers her time to WWC as a member of the Ambassador Club, offering her voice, time and energy to local and statewide initiatives.

“WWC has been a lifesaver. They understand the importance of a steady income, whether it be from a career or small business, to create household stability and a greater capacity to plan for the future”.



Rowena Forbes, Designed by Row

When she first came to Women, Work, and Community, Rowena Forbes was an in-house graphic designer working for a government agency. She always wanted to start her own business, and with layoffs looming over her workplace, the time was ripe to explore her dream. She launched her graphic agency Designed by Row (designedbyrow.com) in May 2009 and enrolled in Women, Work, and Community's "Basics of Starting a Business" training in January 2010. Rowena was downsized from her workplace in March 2011, but she had built a base of clients and was well underway in growing her business to sustain herself and her family.

More than a designer and a businesswoman, Rowena is a mentor and leader among Aroostook small businesses. Her clients get more than graphic design – they get savvy marketing and branding to help them stand out as well as confidence and support to carry out their marketing campaign. Her clients also benefit from networking and connections in the community thanks to Row's knowledge and involvement in the Aroostook County region. Rowena also gives generously of her time and talent to Women, Work, and Community as a member of the Ambassador Club, helping organize the annual ALL for Women conference in Aroostook County, speaking on Women, Work, and Community's behalf to Rotary Club and other local organizations, and contributing her design skills to local and statewide initiatives.

On the quest to further her dream, Rowena has returned to school, continuing her studies in art and design. Her focus and fortitude she credits partially to a blog, Herresolution.com, that she and her sister began in 2010. Here, she and her sister encourage each other to look to the future and dream big.

"I have a passion for motivating and encouraging others to move forward and create the life they have always wanted. I love working with a new business and seeing the spark in the owner's eyes as a marketing plan or design comes together."



"The course was awesome. It helped me put all my ducks in a row and plan my business. It was a lot of effort, but it helped me to figure out if the business was going to work."

Wilson Rutherford

Wilson Rutherford is living his dream of being successfully self-employed. After years of being employed as a skilled mechanic at car dealerships and large car repair businesses, he was laid off. He saw it as an opportunity to finally start his own business and put into practice the quality workmanship and customer relations he had come to feel was needed in the industry. The Unemployment Insurance program signed him up for the Maine Enterprise Options program and directed him to WWC's New Ventures program (in the fall of 2008) so he could get some guidance with his business idea.

Wilson liked the way the course was laid out in steps. He was able to get on top of the financial aspects which came in very handy once he started having customers. Finishing the class with a complete business plan, he was able to find financing to renovate his garage.

Wilson opened his auto repair business in the spring of 2009. He is able to do all aspects of vehicle repair including brakes, suspension, electrical systems, and engine work. He has computer diagnostic equipment that helps pinpoint problems with newer models of cars. While the business started slowly, it has grown every year to the point where Wilson is no longer advertising—he has more than enough customers. Wilson says, "I feel so lucky that in this economy, I am doing so well. It has taken a lot of hard work, but now I am so busy, I can hardly keep up."

One of the side benefits of being self-employed is that Wilson can schedule his work around his other favorite activity—bass fishing. Because he is in the middle of the Belgrade Lakes region, he is able to participate in competitive bass fishing tournaments and spend time outdoors in a beautiful region of the state.

Program Results

A snapshot of our participants

- 1112 new individuals served in FY 11
- 80% were female
- 61% at or below 150% of HHS low income
- 66.6% had less than a four year college education
- 4% were Veterans, active duty or reservists
- 1016 individuals participated in training classes
- 893 individuals received individual assistance

Core Training performance measures

Core training programs: *Creating Your Future, Career Exploration and Planning, Financing Your Future, New Ventures*

- 74.6% Training Completion rate over all classes
- 93% Plan Completion (of those who completed the training)

Three month follow-up surveys

- 85% remained confident the training had helped them to reach their goals
- 87% had taken steps towards their goals

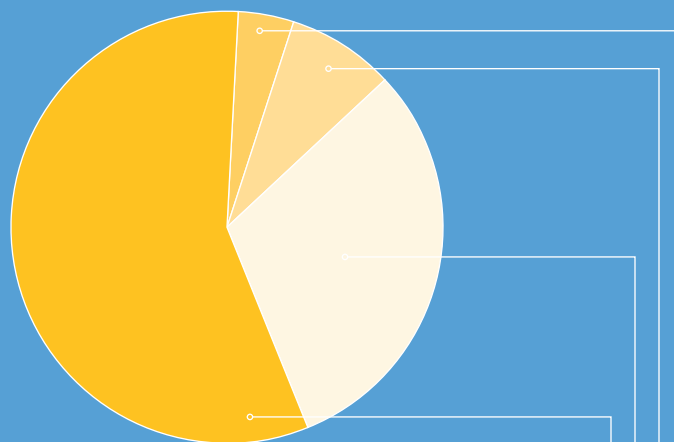
Micro-business survey data

- 60% business start-up rate
- 97% business survival rate after one year

Fiscal Year 2011 Financials

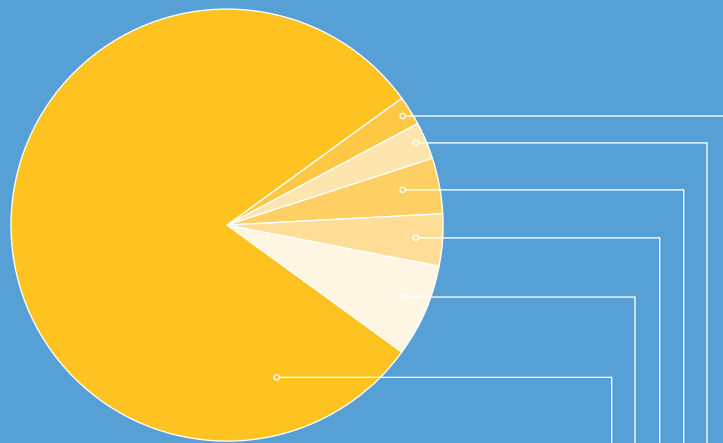
(July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011)

Our organization's fiscal year 2011 budget of \$1,705,457 was allocated in the following ways:



Revenue

State.....	57%
Federal	31%
Grants	8%
Contributions/ Contracted Services	4%
Total \$1,705,457.....	100%



Expenses

Staffing.....	80%
Indirect Costs	7%
Supplies, Communications, and Supportive Services	4%
Facilities/Equipment	4%
Grants/Cash Forward.....	3%
Travel/Staff Development.....	2%
Total \$1,705,457.....	100%

We are deeply grateful to our major contributors, sponsors, and donors from all sectors whose generous financial and in-kind resources have supported and sustained our training and advocacy services!

Public Agencies

Maine State Legislature
Maine Department of Labor
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Department of Transportation
U. S. Department of Labor
U. S. Small Business Administration
University of Maine at Augusta, University College of Bangor, University College Centers at Bath/Brunswick, Ellsworth, Houlton, Norway/South Paris, Rockland, Rumford/Mexico, and Saco/Biddeford
University of Southern Maine, Lewiston/Auburn College
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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. Contributions made after June 30, 2011 will be included in our FY 2012 Annual Report. Please contact Gilda Nardone at 207 621-3437 or nardone@maine.edu with any questions or corrections or to discuss giving options. Visit www.womenworkandcommunity.org for Ways to Give.

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Helping women succeed in their workplace, business, and community.