



## **The New England Consortium**

Connecticut Association for Human Services  
(CAHS)  
Connecticut Voices for Children  
Maine Children's Alliance (MCA)  
Massachusetts Citizens for Children (MCC)  
Children's Alliance of New Hampshire (CANH)  
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT (RIKC)  
Voices for Vermont's Children

## **Maine's Role in the New England Consortium Poverty Reduction Initiative Project**

### **Overview**

The New England Consortium, a six-state collaborative of child research and policy organizations, have come together to develop a common set of priorities to reduce poverty in our individual states and region, and act as a catalyst for national change at this time of increasing poverty and emerging opportunity.

### **Part I. Federal Legislation:**

- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Maximization
- Working closely with each state's congressional delegation, we will identify and champion a series of strategic and timely legislative initiatives that will reduce the number of children and families in poverty.
- Key New England delegation members are currently sponsors of poverty reducing legislation pending in Congress. We will work with the delegation to ensure that New England has sponsors and co-sponsors who will take the lead on future priority legislation. The goal will be for members of the New England delegation to be in support of key pieces of a unified agenda.

### **Part II. Advocacy to Reform State Policy & Practice**

- Based on the collective decades of advocacy among the organizations in the New England Consortium, and with ongoing regional communication, organizations will prioritize shared concerns regarding the implementation of laws, policies and practices on the ground in our states, with an initial focus on drawing down ARRA funds.

### **Part III. Data Collection & Analysis**

- Each state will expand upon current data collection and maintain a standardized, reliable database to provide comprehensive and accurate information about poverty in New England.
- Data will be used to illustrate the current adverse effects of poverty, as well as the potential for positive effects from good public policy and practice improvements.

## **Maine Leadership**

The Consortium designated the Maine Children's Alliance (MCA) as lead organization for the federal component of the project. This decision was based on a number of factors: the organization's sophisticated knowledge of the federal process and best strategies for improving policy that affects children; a successful track record influencing the content of legislation over the past fifteen years; long and positive relationships with Maine's delegation and congressional staff; and the strategic importance of Maine's U. S. Senators.

As leader of the federal portion of the Consortium project, MCA will:

- Identify key federal legislation that will reduce poverty (including legislation that is sunsetting, new legislation proposed by Congress, and additional strategies that the New England delegation will be encouraged to support)
- Compile and update information on the status of priority bills for Consortium members
- Provide training and technical assistance to Consortium members on all aspects of federal advocacy (logistical updates; substantive information on legislation with messaging recommendations; strategies for advocacy; background information of the issues)
- Serve as liaison with national organizations to coordinate New England work and to ensure that the national groups have adequately focused on the impact the legislation will have on children and their families
- Develop position papers on key Consortium issues
- Coordinate the message and outreach efforts on pending federal legislation for the six states in the Consortium
- Coordinate Consortium visits with each Consortium member's delegation and their staff, accompanying them on these visits as appropriate

In summary, MCA will serve as leader, coordinator, strategist and trainer for the Consortium's federal work. As a result, the New England delegation will hear a clear, focused message of what they can do, working collaboratively to most effectively and efficiently reduce poverty. We will help develop a more unified congressional voice in our region and, at the same time, increase the skills and knowledge level of New England advocates. This effort will serve as a model for other regions of the country.