Advancing and supporting the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities through innovative and collaborative public service

Muskie School of Public Service

CUTLER INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
CUTLER INSTITUTE

LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL IMPACT

WORKING WITH HUNDREDS OF STATE & NON-PROFIT AGENCIES

COLLABORATING WITH OVER 200 NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

SERVING ALL 5 POPULATED TERRITORIES: AMERICAN SAMOA, GUAM, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, PUERTO RICO, AND VIRGIN ISLANDS

CONSULTING IN 3 FOREIGN COUNTRIES: CHINA, ICELAND, AND RUSSIA

PARTNERING WITH OVER 75 PUBLIC & PRIVATE FUNDERS

HOME TO 8 SPECIALIZED CENTERS & INSTITUTES AND MORE THAN 150 EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS
Through innovative and collaborative public service, the Cutler Institute advances and supports the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities. Our more than 150 experienced staff help organizations and communities thrive in a changing world by translating knowledge and best practices into sustainable solutions that are responsive to societal needs and focused on both short-term and long-term outcomes.

As the research arm of the Muskie School of Public Service, Maine’s distinguished public policy school, our staff bring decades of experience and advanced degrees in policy, social work, law, education, business administration, and public health. Our multidisciplinary approach allows us to provide innovative outcomes to complex local, national, and international issues.

At the Cutler Institute, our primary focus areas are children, youth, and families; disability and aging; economic and workforce development; environmental and social resilience; justice policy; and population health and health policy.

The Research Service Center within the Institute develops and administers policies and processes that support research, scholarship, creative activity, and student success across the university.

Finally, as part of our role in advancing the University of Southern Maine’s economic development strategies, the Institute maximizes the value of investments from the Maine Economic Improvement Fund.

Muskie School of Public Service
The Muskie School of Public Service, home to the Cutler Institute, combines an extensive applied research and technical assistance portfolio with rigorous undergraduate and graduate degree programs in geography-anthropology; tourism and hospitality; policy, planning, and management; and public health. The school is nationally recognized for applying innovative knowledge to critical issues in the fields of sustainable development and health and human service policy and management.
At the Cutler Institute, we work with a wide range of communities, from public schools to health institutions to tribal organizations. We believe in helping people and communities build on their own strengths and capacities, so we take the time to truly understand the community’s culture, assets, and challenges. We encourage engagement across barriers as we bring our broad experience in a variety of practice areas to help organizations and systems address intractable issues.

Our areas of Community Engagement expertise include collective impact, community asset mapping, group facilitation, tribal-state relations, and racial and ethnic equity. We ground our work in trust and respect for our partners, helping them arrive at their own solutions. We frame questions in ways that move people toward thinking more deeply about their issues, answering them creatively, and telling their own stories in their own language.

**How We Work With Our Partners**

- Serve as convener across organizations, systems, and communities to help partners frame issues, build a common vision, and find solutions
- Identify and engage critical partners for any initiative
- Engage leaders, staff, and stakeholders in evaluating community change efforts
Design & Implementation
Implementing and evaluating initiatives that lead to lasting change

Throughout the country, leaders in public and private sector organizations struggle to implement change initiatives that have real impact on outcomes for their clients and communities. The Cutler Institute works closely with leaders in agencies, tribal communities, and other community-based organizations to implement lasting change. We bring these areas of expertise to our work: project design, implementation, and evaluation; systems thinking; adaptive leadership; change management; strategic planning and management; and the ability to align initiatives to the culture.

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS

- Help leaders and staff focus on outcomes, sustainability, and measuring progress
- Understand an organization’s cultural contexts, assets, barriers, and readiness for change
- Develop project structure, roles and responsibilities, helpful frameworks, and broader perspectives needed for implementation
- Evaluate progress and integrate continuous quality improvement into all initiatives
We work with public agencies, tribal communities, healthcare providers, businesses, and community-based organizations to increase their capacity to utilize data that clearly define their work, achieve results, and demonstrate impact. We provide independent, objective evaluation findings that help leaders demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of their programs through assessing outcomes, improving services, and communicating results. Approaches used include: survey instrument design, data collection, and analysis; economic modeling and forecasting; program assessment and performance measurement; and project management and evidence-based/evidence-informed programs and practices.

Evaluation
Assessing outcomes, improving practice, and communicating results

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS

• Build an organization’s ability to collect, manage, and analyze data
• Employ rigorous evaluation and data collection strategies that focus on outcomes, goals, and priorities
• Incorporate robust information into continuous quality improvement efforts
Policy & Practice
Helping leaders identify their goals and prepare to meet them

The Cutler Institute assists policymakers in defining and clarifying the issues they face, tailoring evidence-based policy solutions to their real world circumstances, and helping them understand how policy and practice changes will impact clients, partners, and communities. We bring a broad range of expertise and knowledge from a variety of fields to our policy work, including: policy and legal analysis; evidence-informed decision making; practice model development; and the ability to engage stakeholders and vulnerable populations in our work.

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS

- Engage stakeholders and end-users in policy initiatives
- Identify statutory implications, solutions, and requirements
- Develop implementation systems, assessment tools, and policy/practice manuals
- Identify best and promising practices
Cutler Institute staff are skilled in a wide range of research methodologies, from exploratory surveys and focus groups to large-scale data analyses and complex statistical methods. Our emphasis on applied research means that, while grounded in the theory of our respective disciplines, we specialize in seeking practical answers to real-world problems and identifying policy and program solutions. Some of our areas of specialization are: quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis; secondary data analysis; analytic tools and statistical models; and interpretation of findings that considers policy, organizational, community, and tribal contexts.
Today’s organizations face serious challenges in attracting, preparing, and retaining the highly qualified staff necessary to keep pace with accelerated changes in the workplace. At the Cutler Institute we assist organizations in anticipating and responding to changing workforce needs and ongoing capacity building. We provide research-based workforce and professional development solutions for a broad and diverse spectrum of professionals, organizations, and sectors. Our workforce solutions are based on a collaborative process of assessment, design, and development, resulting in products that are tailored to our partners’ desired outcomes and the day-to-day context of their work. Areas of expertise include workforce assessment and planning; organizational readiness tools; application of adult learning principles; customized curriculum design and development; strategies and practices to enhance learning transfer; and design and delivery of classroom, online, and blended learning options.

HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS

• Involve managers, staff, participants, and clients in all stages of planning and implementation
• Provide logistical support, such as registration, professional development registries, evaluation/data collection, and scholarships
• Work with managers and staff to reinforce learning in the workplace
• Develop and deliver online learning solutions that enhance workplace learning
The Cutler Institute is part of the Muskie School of Public Service, founded in 1990 and named after Edmund S. Muskie, former U.S. Secretary of State, U.S. Senator, Governor of Maine, and presidential candidate. His contributions to Maine, the nation, and the world, coupled with his effectiveness in both the legislative and executive branches of government, have set standards for excellence and integrity in public service. As the Secretary’s living legacy, the Muskie School seeks to sustain these qualities in the work of its faculty, scholars, and researchers through educating leaders, applying knowledge and expertise to critical public policy issues, and building the capacity of individuals and organizations to serve the public good.

Catherine E. Cutler, for whom the Cutler Institute is named, devoted herself for more than fifty years to voluntary public service across Maine in roles including President of Family Service Society, Founder of Community Health and Counseling Center, and Founder of Women’s Information and Advisory Service. Some of Mrs. Cutler’s efforts include leading the advocacy effort to expand Maine’s mental health services, founding institutions to extend the reach of social services for all people in need, organizing new agencies that broaden the role of women in the workplace, and protecting women and children from domestic violence. In her lifetime, she helped to ensure that Maine is a place that supports the health and well-being of all its citizens. The Cutler Institute’s faculty and staff have incorporated Mrs. Cutler’s values as their work has expanded from Maine, to the region, the nation, and the world.
DEDICATED. INNOVATIVE. EXPERIENCED. STRATEGIC. RESPONSIVE. RESPECTFUL.

TRANSLATING BEST PRACTICE INTO EVERYDAY PRACTICE

CUTLER INSTITUTE