

# Data Innovation Project

The art and science of data-informed decision making

## About Us

The Data Innovation Project (DIP) was started in early 2016 in response to the growing need for local organizations and government entities to use data in meaningful ways. The demand for data-informed decision making has outpaced knowledge and capacity of how to collect and utilize data and many Maine organizations struggle to keep up. Data-informed decision making helps organizations define needs, set goals, plan interventions, and evaluate progress, which ultimately improves their efficacy and overall impact.

The DIP improves organizational capacity for data-informed decision making by providing access to affordable information and instruction, skilled technical assistance, and open access to our growing data and resource repository. We strive to educate and advise using only industry best practices and evidence-based models.

**Our mission** is to increase the capacity of organizations to utilize data to clearly define their work, achieve results, and demonstrate impact in Maine's private and public sectors.

**Our vision** is that Maine organizations are empowered to use data to affect change and tell compelling stories.

## What We Offer

We strive to make our opportunities for capacity building accessible to a range of organizations.

### Data Clinics

2 hours of free technical assistance. 3 available spaces offered to non-profits each month.

### Workshops

Series of 4, three-hour workshops offered throughout the state on compelling storytelling with data, finding and collecting better data, developing a theory of change and much more.

### Technical Assistance

Contract-based TA available related to evaluation, data, outcomes, etc. Design and implementation of evaluations.

John. T Gorman Foundation - Summer Learning Initiative; Portland ConnectED; Let's Go! of Maine Health; Boys to Men, Reducing Sexism and Violence Prevention program; Lerner Foundation - Aspirations Incubator; Southern Maine Partnership; Fairfax Country, VA Department of Family Services; Southern Maine Youth Transition Network; Maine Seacoast Mission; The Opportunity Alliance; Island Institute.

## Our Staff

We all have expertise in evaluation, implementation science, data and outcomes. Our skills cross boundaries and combine various disciplines. Listed below are some of our specialty areas and strengths.

<b>Erin Oldham, PhD</b> <i>Director</i>	Child and family well-being, PreK-12 education, post-secondary education, survey methodology, data-based decision making, effective presentation of data and research, expert facilitation of group processes.
<b>Sarah Goan, MPP</b> <i>Research Associate II</i>	Children's mental health, substance abuse prevention, youth in transition, child welfare, child health, juvenile justice, continuous quality improvement.
<b>Erica King, MSW</b> <i>Policy Associate II</i>	Juvenile justice, education, gender and racial equity, curricula development, workforce development strategies
<b>Susy Hawes, BA</b> <i>Research Associate I</i>	Child assessment, PreK-12 education, substance abuse prevention, mental health, youth development, community engagement.
<b>Emilie Swenson, MSW</b> <i>Research Associate I</i>	Effective presentation of data, data sources, youth in foster care, child welfare, mental health, community health.
<b>Rachel Gallo, MPH</b> <i>Research Analyst II</i>	Epidemiology, public health surveillance, data visualization, GIS, community health, substance abuse prevention, disaster preparedness and response
<b>Elora Way, MA</b> <i>Research Analyst I</i>	Community development, community organizing, non-profit management, youth in foster care, community-based research, environmental justice
<b>Becky Wurwarg, BA</b> <i>Administrative Specialist</i>	Event coordination, community engagement, program development, communication, chocolate-sharing

### Staff Strengths

Training & Facilitation  
Data & Statistical Knowledge  
Data Visualization

Evaluation Methodology  
Writing & Research

## Contact Us

For more information about the Data Innovation Project contact:  
Becky Wurwarg at [rebecca.wurwarg@maine.edu](mailto:rebecca.wurwarg@maine.edu) or 207-780-5831

The **Data Innovation Project** is located at the *University of Southern Maine*  
Muskie School of Public Service • Wishcamper Center  
34 Bedford Street • Portland, Maine 04104