



Maine Equal Justice

People Policy Solutions

For over 20 years Maine Equal Justice has advanced solutions to poverty two ways: providing legal assistance directly to Maine residents—and advocating statewide for systemic reform.

In 1996 Congress prohibited federal funding for legal aid providers like Pine Tree Legal Assistance that were representing **groups of people with low income** in class action litigation, administrative advocacy, or legislative advocacy. Recognizing that systemic legal advocacy is often the most **cost-effective** and **far-reaching** way to protect and advance peoples' interests, **Maine Equal Justice** was formed as a nonprofit legal aid provider working to increase economic security, opportunity, and equity for people in Maine.

1. Maine Equal Justice advocates for fair public policies in the legislature and with governmental agencies:

We advance laws and policies to ensure that all Mainers have enough food in the fridge, a place to call home, and accessible, affordable health care. We also strive to increase economic opportunity so people can get ahead. *The solutions we advance are informed by data and deep policy expertise.*

Recognizing that poverty and human rights are inextricably linked, we aim to identify and reduce disparities in economic opportunity related to race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ability, physical or mental health, immigration status, or background. If we are going to solve poverty, we must target inequities in our systems.

2. Maine Equal Justice provides direct legal services and representation through impact litigation on systemic issues:

We provide legal assistance for people who are struggling to meet their basic needs. Our helpline **(866) 626-7059 x205** is available to people who

are unable to access or maintain help they qualify for – such as MaineCare, Food Assistance (SNAP), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Representing the rights and interests of groups of people with low income, we also pursue impact litigation to strategically improve public policy.

3. Maine Equal Justice partners with diverse low-income communities and agencies through outreach, organizing, and education:

We develop and advance our policy priorities by partnering with people living in poverty who know best what the barriers to economic security and opportunity are and what solutions should look like.

We also produce educational materials and offer training on Maine's anti-poverty programs and how to build and hone advocacy skills.

Our community outreach and direct legal services help us identify and work to resolve larger systemic problems that are impacting many people in Maine.

Join us to make progress toward a more secure future and a healthier Maine.

Contact us to learn more, seek legal assistance, request a training, or join our effort to advance economic security and opportunity in Maine!