



The Making Headway in Your Community Process

Gathering: We begin with a small group of local people willing to help guide this process. Each community has a core of those in elected, appointed, and grassroots positions who identify a larger group of those in town who get things done, those who might want to take part in this program. We rely on this group of “navigators” to guide the process comprised of three public events, funding for projects, and an invitation to participate in educational or training opportunities elsewhere in Maine.

Movie Night: Showing the film “Reviving the Freedom Mill” and then guiding a conversation using the Making Headway in Your Community worksheet as a place from which to consider what matters most in a community within four areas of community growth; Smart Design, Community Connections, Local Economy, and Healthy Communities with a pathway to get others involved to identify goals and on the ground projects. This connects to the online resource www.makingheadway.me.

Community Conversation: In the second event, the community is empowered to vote and determine how a small amount of money will be spent to raise awareness and support for a larger initiative or project in town. Participants have the fun of using keypad polling to choose from a short list of projects developed in small group settings. Through this process they identify lead and support organizations, individuals, and matching support in either in-kind or cash.

Skills, Abilities and Instincts: Along with inspiration and information, all communities can use some nuts and bolts training, be it for volunteers, appointed and elected officials or staff. There are wonderful opportunities throughout Maine and sometimes a little encouragement and help with the registration cost are all that's needed. We encourage several people from each community to go together, improving chances that the experience translates into constructive changes when they get home.

Community Projects: With budget determined and a plan developed by the participants, work begins. Our role is a balance of guiding the process while allowing it to go at their pace, with partnerships that make sense for the community.

Community Celebration! Once projects are completed, we'll bring community stakeholders together one last time to celebrate, determine what they see as their next steps, and ask their advice on how to improve our process for future communities. As part of the closing celebration the projects must be posted on www.makingheadway.me with resources noted, so other communities can learn from your experience.

For More Information: <https://growsmartmaine.org/resources/making-headway-in-your-community/makingheadway.me>