

# AGE-FRIENDLY BOWDOINHAM

## Focus Group Report on SOCIAL ISOLATION & CONNECTEDNESS



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## 1 Introduction

Age-Friendly Bowdoinham, established as an Advisory Committee of the Town in 2014, partners with local organizations and volunteers to increase services and programs that allow residents of all ages to thrive in Bowdoinham. The Committee is currently developing its next five-year action plan and, as a part of this process, wishes to explore opportunities for increased social connectedness among its community members.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have experienced heightened isolation, but lack of social contact was a problem long before its advent, especially for older adults. Life circumstances – living far from friends and family, retirement, losing a partner, or being unable to drive – contribute to isolation, which in turn can put both physical and mental health in jeopardy. Research has found that a lack of social connection increases the risk for dementia (DiMarco et al., 2014); heart attack and stroke (Bu et al., 2020); chronic inflammation (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2010); and depression and anxiety (Santini et al., 2020). While social isolation increases all-cause mortality (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015), Poey et al. (2017) found that promoting a rich social context for people across the lifespan improves overall health outcomes.

To better understand how the Town's age-friendly initiative can help to promote a richer social context with enhanced connectedness for its older adult population, the Age-Friendly Advisory Committee sought input from key stakeholders within the community. A series of three hour-long virtual focus groups and one personal interview were conducted by Kathryn Harnish, a member of the Lifelong Maine AmeriCorps Program (LMAP), between July 11-22, 2022.

The following report includes the following four sections: (a) the methodology used to conduct the focus groups and analyze the data, (b) the detailed results of the analysis organized by theme, (c) a discussion of the key findings, and (d) recommendations for next steps, including more investigation regarding the experiences of social connectedness and isolation in the community.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Focus Group Instrument

A focus group discussion guide (Appendix A) was developed by the LMAP member based on an initial discussion with the Advisory Committee members. The guide was then reviewed by Patricia Oh, PhD, LMSW, Program Manager at the University of Maine Center on Aging, and the Advisory Committee. The instrument explored perceptions of strengths, opportunities, and needs related to social connectedness and, more broadly, aging well in Bowdoinham.

### 2.2 Participants

Participants were identified in a brainstorming session between the Advisory Committee members and the LMAP member, with a goal of identifying service providers and other professionals within the community that engage regularly with older adults. Representatives from 17 different organizations serving the Town of Bowdoinham were invited to participate, including:

- Municipal leaders, both elected and appointed
- Faith organizations
- Emergency services providers
- The food pantry
- The public library
- The town's elementary school administrator
- Health care organizations
- The Area Agency on Aging
- The County Action Program

Not all participants live in the Town of Bowdoinham, but all provide services to the community and engage regularly with residents across the lifespan.

Participants were invited by email and asked to specify their availability via a Doodle poll. The LMAP member subsequently used that information to schedule

three separate sessions, to which Maureen sent email invitations with links to the appropriate Zoom meetings, as well as an informed consent form.

A total of 7 individuals participated in the three focus groups, and an eighth participant was included via a one-on-one interview.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

With each participant's permission, all sessions were recorded using Zoom's functionality. The recordings were subsequently transcribed using Weld, a free online service.

### **2.4 Data Analysis**

The LMAP member reviewed the transcripts and categorized feedback into the broad areas of "Strengths", "Needs", and "Opportunities". Within each area, specific themes were identified and highlighted.

## **3 Findings**

The discussion across all three groups and individual interview was lively, with each participant bringing different perspectives on aging influenced by their work in the community. Despite efforts to recruit participants whose work brings them into close contact with at-risk populations, participants generally expressed limited knowledge of the experience and needs of the most isolated residents, which is unsurprising since their isolation often makes them "invisible". Most of the discussion focused on perceived barriers to increased social engagement.

### **3.1 Strengths**

Participants in the focus groups identified several strengths that Bowdoinham brings to bear on the issue of social connectedness.

#### 3.1.1 Community & Volunteerism

The theme of community arose multiple times during these sessions, with an emphasis on the level of engagement of residents of all ages. Multiple people

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commented on the willingness of people to “turn out” when needed and a dedication to “helping and supporting each other.” One participant remarked, “When you need something, there’s a community behind you that can help.”

Similarly, there were numerous comments on the enthusiasm of the town’s residents for supporting projects and other activities in the community, noting the high level of volunteerism in Bowdoinham. When asked about the contribution of older adults to the community, all three groups emphasized that the older residents of the town are the people that typically volunteer. Specifically, municipal leaders, library personnel, and the school administrator all highlighted the importance of Bowdoinham’s older residents to town committees, school activities, and community revitalization efforts. One remarked, “When I think about the more significant projects or volunteer efforts in the town, it’s almost always a member of the older community who is heading it up.” As a cautionary note, however, one participant noted their concern about “older folks helping older folks” and a need for more intergenerational engagement. A second participant mentioned that there has been greater involvement from younger people and families in some activities, but that is a relatively recent (3-5 year) trend and tends to focus on children’s sports programs.

Finally, members of the focus groups found the artistic bent of the community, as well as the expertise and many talents of its residents and the physical assets (e.g., Merrymeeting Arts Center) to support a variety of interests, to be a relatively unique feature of the town. There were multiple comments about how age-friendly programming might leverage this rich “human resource”.

### 3.1.2 Supportive Municipal Leadership

Across groups, participants commented on the responsiveness of municipal leaders – the willingness to listen and to make changes. The town has a part-time staff person whose portfolio is the recreation program and liaison and programming responsibilities for Bowdoinham’s older population.

One town leader noted that there has been good partnership between the town and volunteers working with various community organizations. As a result, the town has collectively been able to achieve more than it ever could by relying solely on municipal employees.

### 3.1.3 Existing Communications Channels

In each group, there was discussion of the importance of effective communication to social connectedness. The town has significant strengths in its well-established “go-to” resources for news and information about town happenings, including:

- A bimonthly town newsletter that is distributed in print format via postal mail to all homes in Bowdoinham. One participant noted that “people read it cover to cover” and “rely on the little calendar in the back” to know what’s going on. A disadvantage of the newsletter is its limited frequency, which means that it can be difficult to include events that come up between publication deadlines.
- The Bowdoinham Friends and Family Facebook page, an informally monitored online group that serves as a marketplace and “hub” for seeking recommendations or assistance. Every focus group mentioned that this is an important resource in the community – if it’s happening in Bowdoinham, it’s likely to be mentioned on this page. At present, the page includes more than 3700 members - nearly a quarter more than the population of the town.

## **3.2 Needs**

Participants in the focus groups also identified a number of needs related to enhancing social engagement and reducing isolation among older adults.

### 3.2.1 Point-to-Point Transportation

Participants noted that, for older individuals who no longer drive and are not able to walk to or through the village area, getting connected to the services and resources that are concentrated in the central part of Bowdoinham can be quite difficult. One of the three focus groups spent significant time in discussion of this topic, but it was mentioned in all three sessions.

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One of the focus groups mentioned that the Town of Bowdoinham had purchased a vehicle from the school district with the intention of creating a community shuttle service, and there was agreement that this could be quite helpful to addressing transportation needs among older adults. The group did note that this type of scheduled service may not be flexible enough for many residents – for example, a 10a shuttle stop doesn't do you much good if your appointment is at 1p. At this point, the conversation shifted to the idea of a volunteer-based, point-to-point transportation program through which people in need of a ride to the grocery store, doctor's appointment, library, etc. could request one from a group of volunteer drivers.

*Note: The Town of Bowdoinham **does** have a volunteer driver program, Rides in Neighbors' Cars, but it was mentioned only in passing and with some uncertainty about its current status, suggesting a need for building greater awareness of the service. I've also learned since these focus groups that there was a brief community shuttle initiative, but ridership was very limited.*

## 3.2.2 Greater Accessibility in Public Places

When individuals are able to visit the village area, focus group participants noted that accessibility in public spaces often presents a challenge – “accessibility isn't fabulous in town” and “How can I get connected with other people when I can't get there safely and easily?” Examples raised in the discussions include:

- Sidewalks in the village: While there has been investment in sidewalk improvements in the past ten years, there are still challenges in this area for people with mobility challenges. One municipal leader commented on the need to balance the needs of the village area with those of folks who live outside of the center of town. In addition, several people noted how the topography of the area – for example, several hills – can make walking difficult for older adults or individuals with limited mobility.
- Lack of accessible features (e.g., ramps or elevators): Members of two focus groups highlighted the difficult experience of gaining access to public facilities, including the library and town meeting rooms, which are on the



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second floor of the town office building. While there is a wheelchair ramp, the parking associated with the ramp is difficult to access and deters many people who would otherwise use it. Another participant questioned the accessibility of the town's pub, which does have an accessible entrance in its rear. *(Note: A survey of residents aged 70+ provided resounding feedback on challenges accessing the second floor of the town office building. In addition, the town librarian shared that, anecdotally, library patronage among people over the age of 65 drops off significantly.)*

- "True accessibility" before, during, and after events: Even when accessible transport, parking, and facilities are available, there is no guarantee that older residents will find the entire activity accessible. Participants remarked on the challenges of using assistive devices in many public spaces – for example, Maily Waterfront Park, where the parking lot and the grassy area are difficult to navigate with a rollator and prevent some people from attending events in that space due to safety concerns. Two participants mentioned a lack of seating in the park, noting that for someone with a walker or other mobility challenge, bringing a chair along for a concert or other activity is very difficult. In addition, online registration may present a barrier for some older adults, limiting their ability to access an event.

Aligned with the issue of accessibility is inclusivity, which one participant spoke to with passion. Having to enter a facility through a backdoor or having to use curbside services due to an inability to enter a building erodes an individual's sense of being valued and included. As the Advisory Committee considers issues of accessibility in future planning, this individual advocated for a universal design perspective that benefits everyone.

### 3.2.3 Improved Coordination of Activities

All three focus groups stressed how challenging it can be to get a coherent picture of all of the different things going on in town. Larger events, like the Wednesday concert series and the Saturday farmers' market, and town-sponsored activities are marketed well, but other activities don't get as much visibility. Further, there was a

perception that there is no one place to go to see a comprehensive calendar of events in the community, although the town newsletter does fulfill some of that need.

### 3.2.4 Improved Coordination of Services

Similarly there was significant concern that services are also fragmented and difficult to access without assistance. Each organization “does its own thing”, which results in siloing of information about the resources available to older adults. One participant used the example of General Assistance, noting that it can be difficult for many older adults to identify and utilize this program without a helping hand. While participants used different terminology to express this need, there was overall consensus that a “navigator” function – a knowledgeable human resource or a structured directory – is essential to presenting community resources in a user-friendly way that drives engagement. One participant, an emergency services provider, mentioned the OPTIONS co-responder program as a model for effective navigation. OPTIONS pairs behavioral health clinicians with first responders to provide crisis response and wrap-around services for individuals with substance use disorder.

### 3.2.5 Normalization of Help-Seeking

Across the sessions, comments highlighted how reluctant people can be to ask for help, as well as the perception that help-seeking is even harder for older adults. Too often, older residents wait until there’s a crisis to ask for assistance due to pride, fear, a desire not to be a “bother”, or being overwhelmed by the complexity of systems noted above. One participant noted some sadness when thinking about resistance to asking for help, commenting, “I think if there are people that want to be connected, there’s enough support in Bowdoinham to make that happen. And so I guess, how do we find those folks that want to be connected to plug them in or encourage them to ask for help? How do we make them see that asking for help isn’t necessarily a bad thing?”

There was also a sense that many of the social services programs supporting community members are “wired to respond to the emergent situation, less so to being proactive.” This is likely understood by members of the community, who may be reluctant to “raise their hands” in situations unless there’s a critical need.

### 3.2.6 A Better Understanding of the Needs of the “Other Bowdoinham”

During each session, there were references to the “village” versus “the rest of Bowdoinham” and how the experience of older adults varies based on where they live or how easily they can access the village area. Inherent in these differences is the notion that people who are closer to the village are more socially connected than those who live in more rural areas of the town.

The groups also indicated a lack of visibility into the experiences of the people who live more remotely or, as one group described it, at the “end of dirt driveways”. Several participants emphasized the importance of digging more deeply into the needs of these residents through additional research, including one-on-one interviews.

Finally, one group discussed the intersectionality of poverty and isolation, and wondered how services that help to address social connectedness among older adults might benefit other lower-income residents of the town. Bowdoinham’s overall poverty rate is 1.1%, with the poverty rate for individuals aged 65+ at 5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). While this is significantly lower than Sagadahoc County’s poverty rates of 10.5% and 13%, respectively, older adults in Bowdoinham are disproportionately represented in poverty statistics (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

### **3.3 Opportunities**

One of the outcomes of the focus group discussions was a clearly identified set of opportunities for enhancing the social connectedness of Bowdoinham’s older residents.

### 3.3.1 Collaboration and Resource Sharing

In one group, participants emphasized the role the Age-Friendly program can play in fostering ideas that respond to community needs and subsequently building connections between different stakeholders to bring them to fruition. One individual commented, “Sometimes someone has a good idea or sees a pressing need, but isn’t connected to the resources that are needed to run the program. I might have the people to run the program, but I have no idea what the need or interest is. I think we can do better at pooling our resources. Keep the good ideas flowing, share them, and let’s make things happen.”

### 3.3.2 Make Things More Concrete

A theme shared by two groups was the idea that adding structure and specificity could help to increase participation for both older residents and volunteers across the lifespan. From a volunteer perspective, several people remarked on how having a specific, discrete “ask” - a resident at Bowdoinham Estates needs assistance with getting groceries, for example - makes it easier for someone to step up to fill that need. One group recommended having a volunteer to serve as a “connector” to link the person with a need to the person with the time and interest in volunteering. In addition, for an older resident trying to connect to an activity, service, or benefit program, having clear documentation (or structure around programs) was understood to be an important need that could easily be developed.

### 3.3.3 Enhance Visibility of Programs

There are already a lot of terrific activities and services available in Bowdoinham, yet the perception is that it can be difficult to get a holistic picture of happenings. There is a significant opportunity to increase visibility of existing programs and more effectively launch new programs with a few simple tools and communications mechanisms.

## **4 Recommendations**

By analyzing the focus groups’ input, clear recommendations emerged for both “quick wins”, mid-range initiatives, and longer-term projects.

First, however, it is important to be intentional about the individuals that the Committee wishes to reach with each of its efforts, as outreach isn't a "one-size-fits-all" approach. For each activity below, consider:

- Are we trying to target individuals who are essentially homebound or who have other structural barriers to increased connectedness?
- Are we trying to reach individuals who are isolated due to uncertainty about resource availability and how to become more connected?
- Are we trying to expand or leverage our existing community of engaged older adults?

#### 4.1 Quick Wins

- Begin to address some of the "navigation" needs articulated by the focus groups by creating a brief (one-page) resource guide. A one-page guide is easy to distribute at the town office, library, post office, and other key spots in town; residents can post them on their refrigerators or bulletin boards so that information is handy when different supports are needed. (See Appendix B for an example of the resource sheet created by Age-Friendly Houlton.)
- Develop a community-wide social events calendar that incorporates both town events and other activities, giving residents a "go-to" place for learning about what's happening in the community.
- Create a multi-channel marketing program to effectively promote new and existing programs.
- Launch a marketing campaign for Rides in Neighbors' Cars, given the lack of awareness of this service among focus group participants.
- Build greater presence online with regular Facebook posts and, potentially, a website. Begin developing an intergenerational audience to encourage volunteerism across the lifespan.

## 4.2 Mid-Range Initiatives

- Gain a better understanding of the experiences of people who don't drive; have mobility limitations; live outside of town, alone or without nearby family; or otherwise face challenges in achieving their desired degree of social connectedness through one-on-one conversations with older adults and caregivers.
- Increase cooperation with other municipal and community organizations by building stronger relationships with the town's new Rec Director, the public library, Bowdoinham Community Development Initiative, Merrymeeting Hall, etc. Partnering with these organizations brings additional capacity and skills to bear in support of lifelong services and activities and amplifies mutual efforts.
- Organize regular "walk-in cafes" with an allied event – e.g., caregiver support group, expert talks, a nature walk, or other activity. Other communities have had great success with combining a coffee hour with a specific activity that gives folks a reason to turn out. Healthy Peninsula in the Blue Hill area began a weekly outdoor cafe and community stroll in April 2022 that has been very well received by residents.
- Coordinate a meal-sharing program that would bring people together and promote improved nutrition among participants. Since cooking for one can be a challenge, the Age-Friendly program could group people together based on location, food preferences, etc., and each member could prepare a meal for everyone in the group. The group could then meet for dinners in-person or gather once a week to "swap" meals. Research by Home Instead indicates that older adults who eat most of their meals alone are more than twice as likely to be lonely as those who eat alone.
- Evaluate a platform such as [MealTrain Plus](#) for connecting people with needs to people with time to help fulfill those needs. In a community with a high rate of volunteerism, this may be an effective way to bring people together.
- Facilitate a community learning opportunity around Universal Design and recognize businesses and other organizations that implement some of the recommended principles (e.g., lever doorknobs, inclusive signage, etc.).

## 4.3 Longer-Term Project

- Partner with community organizations (library, food pantry, etc.) to offer a mobile resource center that functions as a bookmobile, food bank on wheels, and community information center. A service of this nature would complement the walk-in cafes suggested above; could meet people where they are – at Bowdoinham Estates, the post office, in Maily Park, after church, or even at their homes; and be “stationed” at public events like the farmers’ market, concerts, etc. This would help to address a number of issues noted above, including lack of transportation, accessibility, and community navigator support, and normalization of help-seeking.

## 5 Conclusion

The Age-Friendly Advisory Committee is to be commended on their interest in learning about community needs through this focus group process. Undertaking this evaluative work speaks to the Committee’s commitment to creating programs that are responsive to the social participation interests of older adults in Bowdoinham. This same commitment will likely fuel next step efforts to build on community strengths to provide opportunities for greater connectedness and inclusion. In addition, new outreach activities will provide ongoing feedback loops that can help to reduce isolation and increase social participation, contributing to improvements in access, engagement, and outcomes for older adults that call Bowdoinham home.

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## **Appendix A: Age-Friendly Bowdoinham Social Isolation Focus Group Guide**

*Summer 2022*

### **Welcome and Intro (5 minutes)**

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our focus group session. Thanks for taking the time to join us to talk about social isolation and the needs of older adults living here in Bowdoinham. My name is Kathryn Harnish. I'm a graduate-level social work student at the University of New England who has been asked by the Town's Age Friendly committee to facilitate conversations with individuals and organizations that regularly engage with older adults here in town and in the surrounding area. You are uniquely qualified to help us identify and understand challenges faced by older residents, especially among those who are at-risk due to geography, economics, social isolation, health and other factors that may impact their lives. Your experiences also are very helpful in recommending ways the Town can better support its older residents. As we talk, please remember that there are no wrong answers, but folks may have differing points of view. I welcome different perspectives in this conversation, and I'm just as interested in negative comments as positive comments.

You've all received a document that outlines the purpose of today's session and ensures that you are willingly participating today. If you have any questions about this document that you haven't raised with me yet, please let me know. You may also have noticed that I am using the recording function here in Zoom to allow me to go back and replay when I write up my report. The report will summarize the combined findings from my focus groups and will be shared with the Age-Friendly committee to help in setting their priorities.. While we'll use one another's names during the session, no names will be included in the summary report. I also ask that everyone respect each other's confidentiality during our focus group so that we can have frank conversations.

Many of you probably know one another, but let's take a moment to go around the table and introduce yourselves. Share your name and a little bit about how your work engages with older adults, and as a formality, please indicate your consent to participate.

<<INTROS>>

Thank you.

**Background on Isolation, Loneliness and Social Connectedness and Bowdoinham's Interest (2 minutes)**

Before we begin, I want to take a moment to set the stage for our conversation. Studies show that about 25% of community-dwelling Americans aged 65 and older report being socially isolated. Social isolation or loneliness may result from living alone, losing family or friends, chronic illness, and sensory impairments. It may also be the result of not being actively involved, valued or supported by family, friends or a community. Not only does lack of social connectedness lead to illness and premature death, it often inhibits someone from living a meaningful and enjoyable life. The pandemic put a spotlight on the issue of social isolation. The Age-Friendly Committee is conducting these focus groups to identify what role the Town can play to improve the connectedness of older residents to the life of the community and to make Bowdoinham a supportive and fulfilling place in which to grow old.

So, with that as background, let's get started:

**Quick Take: Perceptions of Growing Older in Bowdoinham (8 minutes)**

The first thing that I'd like you to do is take a moment to jot down two or three words that come to mind when you think about growing older in Bowdoinham.

Let's go around the Zoom and share these words, with just a few words of explanation if you'd like.

<<WORDS>>

**Social Participation: Perceptions, Strengths and Barriers (40 minutes)**

Thank you for sharing. Now let's take the conversation a little deeper...

Question 1: What are your perceptions of social isolation among older adults in Bowdoinham? How pervasive do you think the issue is? What leads you to that assessment?

Question 2: How well does Bowdoinham support its older residents through its programs, attitudes, physical accommodations, accessibility, social and civic engagement? What do you see as Bowdoinham's strengths in supporting older residents?

Question 3: In your work and interactions with older individuals in Bowdoinham, what barriers do adults encounter as they grow older in Town? What supports do you see or hear about as being especially weak or missing?

Question 4: What are your perceptions of older residents' *contributions* to the Town of Bowdoinham?

Question 5: Based on your experience engaging with older adults in Bowdoinham, what one recommendation would you give the Town to better support older residents and increase opportunities for social connectedness?

### **Closing (5 minutes)**

OK, that was a great discussion...thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this group and being so open in sharing your perceptions. Before we close, are there any questions that you have for me or anything else that you think it is important to share?

<<FINAL THOUGHTS>>

As I indicated earlier, your feedback will be summarized, without mentioning names or position, and included in a report to the Age-Friendly committee. I will share this report with you prior to doing so to ensure that you are comfortable with how your input is. On behalf of the committee, thank you for your time and willingness to engage on this topic!

# HOULTON RESOURCES

AGE-FRIENDLY HOULTON DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULTS

CALL 911 IN THE EVENT OF A  
CRITICAL MEDICAL OR SAFETY EMERGENCY

## Appendix B

### LEGAL

**Legal Services  
for the Elderly**

800 750 5353

**Pine Tree  
Legal Assistance**  
207 764 4349

### EDUCATION

**Houlton/Hodgdon  
Adult & Community  
Education Center**

207 521 3100 ext 5

**UMaine Senior Citizen  
Tuition Waiver**  
207 581 3143

### EXERCISE

**Houlton Rec Center  
Walking Program**

207 532 1310

**Aroostook Agency on  
Aging Programs  
(Tai Chi, Bingocize)**  
207 764 3396

## SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS

**Aroostook  
Agency on Aging**  
207 764 3396

**Houlton Band of Maliseet  
Indians Elder Center**  
207 532 7780

**Putnam House  
Senior Center**  
207 521 5049

### FINANCIAL

**Money Minders at  
Aroostook  
Agency on Aging**  
207 764 3396

**Aroostook County  
CASH Tax Service**  
207 764 5197



### VETERANS

**Maine Bureau of  
Veterans' Services**  
207 430 6035  
**VA Maine Healthcare**  
207 623 8411  
**Maine Military &  
Community Network**  
888 365 9287

**Maine Crisis Line**  
(mental health)  
888 568 1112

**Suicide Prevention Hotline**  
800 273 8255

## EMERGENCY

# 911

**Poison Control Center**  
800 222 1222  
**Adult Protective Services**  
(abuse, neglect & financial exploitation)  
800 624 8404

**CALL 911 IN THE EVENT OF  
A CRITICAL MEDICAL OR SAFETY EMERGENCY**

**MEDICARE, MAINECARE & SOCIAL SECURITY**

**Medicare**  
800 633 4227

**MaineCare (Houlton)**  
207 532 5000

**Social Security (PI)**  
207 764 2925

**DENTAL**

**KVHC Houlton  
Dental Clinic**  
207 538 3700

**PINES Caribou  
Dental Clinic**  
207 498-1314

**COMMUNITY**

**Houlton Town Office  
(General Assistance)**  
207 532 7111

**Cary Library**  
207 532 1302

**Age-Friendly Houlton**  
[www.agefriendlyhoulton.org](http://www.agefriendlyhoulton.org)

**HOUSING/ENERGY**

**ACAP**

(homeowner & heating programs,  
including LIHEAP)

207 532 5300

**MaineHousing Home  
Repair Program**

207 624 5744

**Adopt-a-Block**

207 532 2783 ext. 102

**St. Mary's Food Pantry**

207 532 9122

**FOOD & NUTRITION**

**Supplemental Nutrition  
Assistance Program**

**800 442 6003**

**Pet Food Pantry**

Houlton Humane Society  
207 532 2862

**Meals on Wheels**

207 764 3396

**TRANSPORTATION**

**ARTS Bus**

207 764 5246

**Shiretown Taxi**

207 538 8825

**ModivCare  
(MaineCare)**

855 608 5174

**MEDICAL CENTERS**

**Houlton Regional  
Hospital**

207 532 2900

**HBMI Medical Clinic**

207 532 4229

**KHVC Houlton**

207 538 3700

**ALLIED HEALTH**

**Aroostook Mental  
Health Center**

800 244 6431

**Consumers for  
Affordable Health  
Care Helpline**

(prescription assistance and more)

800 965 7476

**MAINE 211 INFO & REFERRAL SERVICE**

A free, confidential helpline that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to connect Mainers to non-emergency services. A great place to start!