



ANNUAL REPORT—Fiscal Year 2017

mecasa

**MAINE COALITION AGAINST
SEXUAL ASSAULT**

mecasa.org • 207-626-0034



The Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault is organized to end sexual violence and to support high quality sexual violence prevention and response within Maine communities.

MECASA Board of Directors

October 1, 2016 - April 25, 2017

Tamar Mathieu, Chair
Rape Response Services

Donna Strickler, Treasurer
Sexual Assault Crisis & Support Center

Lydia Christie, Secretary
AMHC Sexual Assault Services

Arian Giantris Clements
Sexual Assault Support Services of
Midcoast Maine

Fatuma Hussein
Immigrant Resource Center of Maine

Marty McIntyre
Sexual Assault Prevention
& Response Services

Melanie Sachs
Sexual Assault Response Services of
Southern Maine

MECASA Board of Directors

April 25, 2017 - Present

Tamar Mathieu,
Chair
Bangor

Erica Quinn-Easter,
Vice Chair
Woolwich

James Pineau,
Treasurer
Bangor

Lydia Christie,
Secretary
Caribou

Representative
Erin Herbig
Belfast

Erika Lichter
Brunswick

John Pelletier
Readfield

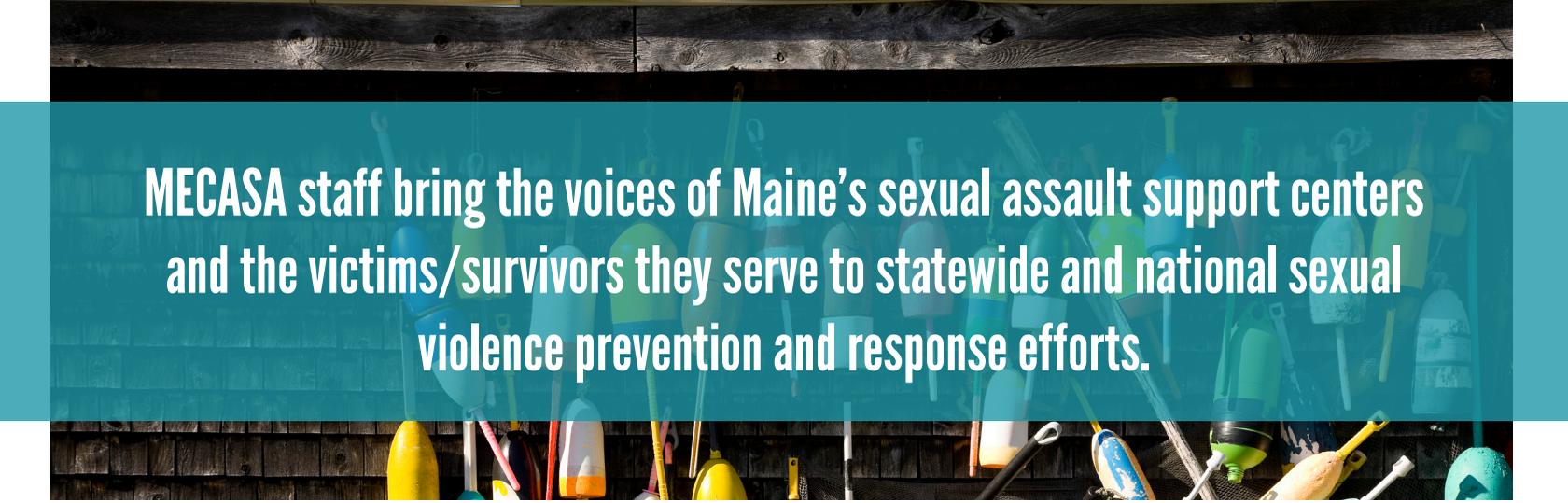
Craig Poulin
Palermo

Senator Kim Rosen
Bucksport

Betsy Stivers
Freeport

A special note of thanks...

Our transition to a community-based board of directors was labor-intensive and, in order to do it right, required a range of outside assistance. It could have gone very differently, without significant support from the Maine Health Access Foundation, which stepped in at just the right time. We were one of five advocacy organizations that received funding to support capacity building. They helped fund critical elements of our efforts as well as consultants, including more than a year of support from a team at the Non-Profit Finance Fund. The result was increased agency capacity and a smooth transition to the new board of directors who are already informing our work for the better. Thank you MeHAF!



MECASA staff bring the voices of Maine’s sexual assault support centers and the victims/survivors they serve to statewide and national sexual violence prevention and response efforts.

MECASA Staff

Elizabeth Ward Saxl
Executive Director

Destie Hohman Sprague
Associate Director

Cara Courchesne
Communications Director

Erika Allen
Program Coordinator

Lisa Bowen
Financial Coordinator

Sarah Firth
Quality & Compliance
Coordinator

Meg Hatch
CAC Network Coordinator

Katie Kondrat
Underserved Programs
Coordinator

Katie MacDonald
Prevention Coordinator

MECASA Mission & Efforts

The Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault is organized to end sexual violence in Maine and to support high quality sexual violence prevention and response within Maine communities.

For over 35 years, MECASA has represented and served Maine’s sexual assault service providers and works to end sexual violence through the following efforts:

- Initiating and advocating for victim-centered public policy;
- Providing expert training, technical assistance, and resources for providers and partners;
- Funding sexual assault service providers; and
- Informing conversations about sexual violence.

MECASA’s work spans a range of programming and partnerships to bring the voices of Maine’s sexual assault support centers and the victims/survivors they serve to statewide and national sexual violence prevention and response efforts.

Meeting the MECASA mission.

At MECASA, we value:

- Serving, connecting, and leading a broad community of providers, partners, and stakeholders;
- Both prevention and intervention as central to our work;
- Priority setting based on community-led assessments of strengths and needs;
- The expertise provided by national research and leaders, as well as local wisdom gained through experience and application;
- Victim-centered, evidence-informed, and trauma-sensitive solutions to issues of sexual violence and their underlying causes; and
- A guiding framework of social justice, anti-oppression, and intersectionality.

Friends:

Throughout the last year, the MECASA staff has been hard at work supporting and improving Maine's sexual violence prevention and response efforts. As always, we are grateful to Maine's sexual assault service providers for their hard work, dedication to victims and survivors, and perseverance in their efforts to end sexual violence. We are also thankful for our many partnerships with our funders, donors, and statewide and national partners who make our work not only possible, but our best possible work.

Our accomplishments over fiscal year 2017 include:

- **Significant organizational changes.** MECASA's board transitioned from a provider-based board to a community-based board. We are thrilled to work with members of the Maine community who care about and are dedicated to our mission. Our former board, the executive directors of Maine's sexual assault support centers, serve as our Member Advisory Council where they continue to inform our work and help ensure our critical connection to providers.
- **EqualityMaine's Partner for Equality Award.** In April, we were honored to receive EqualityMaine's Partner for Equality award for our work creating accessible and appropriate services and supports for LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual violence in Maine.
- **Changes to provision of services.** MECASA and Maine's sexual assault providers consolidated the crisis and support line into one service for all calls across the state. Two daytime advocates began providing live answer to support line callers during business hours instead of relying on center staff who may be anywhere from in schools providing prevention education or in court with a survivor. Plans are now underway to add text and chat capabilities to the support daytime advocates provide.

Thank you for your support of our mission and our work. It is our privilege to do this work alongside you. Please let us know if you have any questions or thoughts about our programming.



Elizabeth Ward Saxl
Executive Director

Maine Network of Children's Advocacy Centers

"The Maine Network of Children's Advocacy Centers has been the driving force of extraordinary growth in the past few years. The result of this strong, intentional leadership is that all child victims in the state of Maine will soon have access to the quality, evidenced based care of a Children's Advocacy Center."

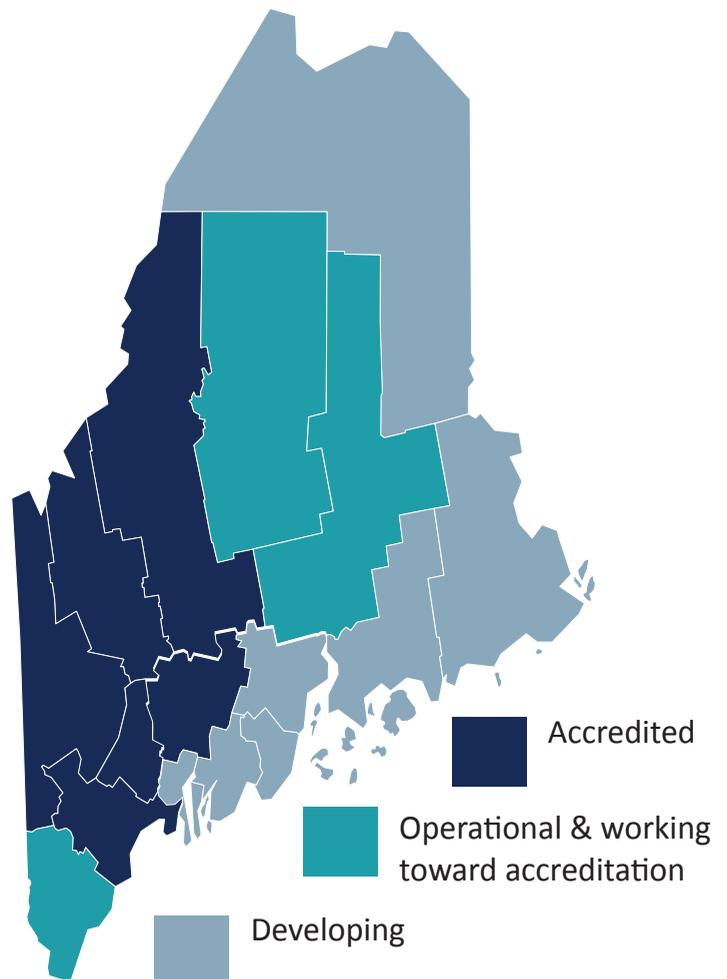
— National Children's Alliance

FY2017 was been a busy and exciting year for the Network, a program of MECASA. We supported the opening of two new Children's Advocacy Centers (CAC) programs to serve three additional counties. These efforts included traveling to all corners of the state to meet with CAC staff and their local multidisciplinary teams (MDTs); helping facilitate community conversations about the development of the CAC; providing logo, brochure, and website development in partnership with CAC staff; and working with CAC staff and MDTs to develop local policies and protocols. We are available to CAC staff

across the state to help provide immediate, targeted, and expert technical assistance in the full range of efforts required to build sustainable, effective programs that meet the needs of sexually abused children and their families.

CAC services are currently available to sexually abused children and their families in nine of Maine's 16 counties. The Network also supported three MDTs in the development of their programs. We anticipate that by the end of 2018, CAC services will be available statewide.

Now that there are MDTs in all areas of the state, we have been focusing on providing training opportunities to CAC staff and MDT members. Over the last year we collaborated with the Northeast Regional Children's Advocacy Center to provide a training on the national accreditation standards for CAC management and staff; a full day training for over 120 participants on strengthening child sexual abuse investigations using the MDT approach; and a two-day MDT Academy where eight teams came together to learn about MDT development, communication, and sustainability.



We have also increased the number of professionals who conduct child-focused, legally sound, evidence-based, trauma-informed forensic interviews. Maine currently has 18 CAC staff and MDT members trained in the National Children’s Advocacy Center’s model.

The Network continues to convene quarterly Peer Review and training sessions for this dedicated group to develop their skills, share strategies, and review relevant research. One provider noted, “The Network has been essential to CACs, assisting with growth, training needs, sustainability and opportunities to enhance and build upon existing strengths for CAC staff and MDT partners, which helps to enhance our abilities and capacities to provide quality services to children and families in the state of Maine.”

We also partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the National Children’s Alliance (NCA) to install state-of-the art recording equipment in CACs across the state. This specialized equipment will ensure that forensic interviews are accurately and consistently documented, which will aid in minimizing the number of times a child must be interviewed during an investigation and support our efforts to increase effective prosecutions of child sexual abuse. Thank you DHHS and NCA!

Maine’s Children’s Advocacy Centers by the Numbers - FY 17

Counties Covered
by Operating CACs

9

Counties Covered
by December 2018

16

Forensic
Interviews

826

Family Advocacy
Sessions

2110

Family Advocacy
Service Hours

1400+

“After a career of over twenty years in law enforcement, my work with the CAC is amongst the endeavors of which I am most proud.”

– MDT Member

Prevention

MECASA's FY 17 prevention efforts focused on two key initiatives: expanding our ability to measure prevention outcomes in a streamlined, statewide way; and expanding the statewide approach to child sexual abuse prevention within the public school setting.

For many years, our statewide prevention efforts have aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's initiatives to engage in sexual violence prevention using the public health model. We have a longstanding commitment to supporting statewide outcome evaluation and measuring the impact of our programming. This fall, we updated the prevention evaluation system which has been in the field since 2015. This program supports local prevention educators with measuring the impact of their key content – such as consent, communication, media literacy, sexual harassment, and gender norms – and includes feedback from teachers to report on changes they've observed in student language and behaviors as a result of programming. The evaluations continue to connect with the Maine Department of Education Maine Learning Results, which highlight age-appropriate healthy skills and behaviors for all Maine students.



While Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April is always a chance to highlight our important anti-sexual violence efforts, in FY 17 we were thrilled to be able to focus the spotlight on prevention. The theme of the month was “Say Yes to Consent,” and we developed a fun campaign to bring the message of consent to all ages. This included temporary tattoos (see insets), stickers, and notebooks, as well as in-person and online conversations about how to promote and negotiate consent in our everyday lives.

Finally, this last year we worked with the Maine Dept. of Education to complete a model policy for mandatory child sexual abuse prevention in all Maine public elementary schools. The new model policy will require schools from kindergarten to grade 5 to: provide child sexual abuse prevention education to all students; and provide training on prevention, response, and reporting of sexual abuse within the school setting to all school personnel interacting with these students. Schools will be required to fully implement the policy by the end of the 2017-18 school year. MECASA is currently working to develop a statewide child sexual abuse prevention and policy implementation guide, and will make it publicly available (along with free training for Maine schools) in the winter.

Maine Sex Trafficking & Exploitation Network

In FY 17, the Maine Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Network (Maine STEN) spent much of our time coordinating and delivering training from York to Caribou. MECASA staff, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General and the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, developed and delivered mandatory human trafficking training for all full-time law enforcement officers. MECASA staff presented to 182 law enforcement officers as a part of the Chief's Roadshow, and all other sworn officers will complete the training online.

"I have been to other trainings about human trafficking and sex trafficking and all have been very informative, but this was very specific and focused on how to ask questions to recognize trafficking and how to help as an advocate. This was the next piece we needed as an organization."

— Training

MECASA staff and local anti-trafficking multidisciplinary (MDT) teams delivered the *Human Trafficking in Maine: Identification and Response* training to over 350 service providers, law enforcement, and community members throughout Maine. Approximately 97% of participants said the training increased their understanding of dynamics and prevalence of human trafficking in Maine.

This last year we convened the first statewide training on how to deliver services to survivors of human trafficking in the advocacy framework. Over 60 sexual assault and domestic violence service providers, including culturally specific and tribal service providers, gathered for a day in Bangor to hear from national speakers on how trafficking intersects with advocacy work. Topics included how to increase identification with trauma-informed practices, working with survivors of exploitation, and the intersection of labor trafficking and sexual violence.

With the support and expertise of the Maine STEN Provider Council, we developed the first statewide outreach poster (see inset), designed to connect survivors of labor and sex trafficking and exploitation to support and services. Posters have been distributed throughout Maine by local anti-trafficking MDTs and are available in English, Mandarin, Spanish, French, and Arabic. We also collaborated with Leighton Images to create a PSA, which has been broadcast statewide with airtime supported by DHHS as well as through airtime donated by Maine TV stations.

Are you getting **little or no pay for your work?**

Were there promises made about your job **that weren't kept?**

Is someone keeping your documents from you?

Are you engaging in sexual acts for money **against your will or out of fear?**

If you or someone you know is being trafficked or exploited, **we will support you.**

To get support or report a tip, call 1-888-373-7888 or text BeFree (233-7333).

For more information, visit mainestn.org

Also in FY 17, in collaboration with local providers, we offered a survey to the five local anti-trafficking teams (covering nine counties and representing over 20 disciplines) to measure the impact of their local teams.

As a result of participating on their MDT, participants:

Increased their skills in identifying & serving victims 80%	Believe the MDT fosters collaboration 91%
Increased their knowledge of trafficking 92.3%	Know who to call & will make the call if serving a trafficking victim 86%

Feedback from participants included:

“MDTs bring the different pieces together because trafficking requires both law enforcement and non-law enforcement entities to be involved from the start. Police need to know who to call, and victims need someone they can trust with information that may involve illegal activity.”

“It has been wonderful to see the willingness of some agencies to participate as well as offer time and resources.”

“This group is passionate and works very hard to educate themselves on this issue. I get so much from this group.

“Our team is a collaboration of many great law enforcement and advocacy agencies.”

“I have taken a lot from the meetings and formed community relationships to benefit the youth we serve.”

Underserved Programs



MECASA was awarded the Partners for Equality Award from EqualityMaine for our work creating accessible and appropriate services and supports for LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual violence in Maine. We couldn't do this work without our engaged LGBTQ+ Advisory Board with participants from the Health Equity Alliance, EqualityMaine, Pine Tree Legal Services, Maine TransNet, University of Southern Maine, SAGE Maine, and sexual assault and domestic violence advocates.

We expanded the scope of the Advisory Board's work to include domestic violence. It is now co-chaired with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and includes domestic violence advocates. This collaboration seeks to access the expertise of our partners efficiently, while increasing collaboration between local services providers. MECASA and MCEDV will present a workshop at the National Center on Victims of Crime Conference about the Advisory Board and how this collaboration creates better support for LGBTQ+ survivors.

"We get to do this work, because MECASA's board understands that it's necessary and right, and because funders believe it's important. We know that it takes more than just opening the door to make services accessible to LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual violence."

-MECASA Partners for Equality Award Acceptance Speech

Thanks to a grant from the Office on Violence Against Women, and additional support from DHHS, FY 2017 saw the launch of Maine's rural programming: specific support, training, and technical assistance to new rural-focused advocates across the state. We created an online toolkit of rural-specific resources, including webinars, articles, and tip sheets. MECASA also offered support to rural advocates with site visits, rural-specific tools, and newly developed peer support calls, which offer rural advocates throughout the state the opportunity to connect with other advocates via teleconference. Rural advocates talked about their successes and ways to address challenges. Peer support and connection helped break the isolation that advocates sometimes feel when doing sexual assault work in rural areas. There are currently eleven advocates who are part of the Rural Advocate Cohort, and we are excited to work with them to further develop programs to support survivors in rural areas.

MECASA staff also continue to work as part of the Maine Council for Elder Abuse Prevention. During this last year, we specifically provided support around the 4th Annual Maine Elder Abuse Summit and developed the Council's statewide World Elder Abuse Awareness Day campaign. We also supported efforts to expand tools and strategies to increase mandated reporting of elder abuse.

MECASA staff, with the support of the Maine Department of Corrections, authored the curriculum for the 2017 mandatory training for law enforcement on transgender survivors and sexual violence. With support from our partners at EqualityMaine, we wrote a curriculum that is both informative for those not familiar with people who are transgender and helpful for those who may already have a base knowledge.

In addition to the significant technical assistance we provided to advocates serving survivors who are incarcerated, we also developed a set of posters for state-run correctional facilities. These posters provide information to people who are incarcerated on help and support advocates can provide, how to contact an advocate, and how to report an assault to the Department of Corrections. The posters are written at an appropriate literacy level to ensure the best reach among incarcerated survivors, and are part of MECASA's ongoing efforts to make all of our outreach materials as accessible as possible.

Additional Provider Support

The core of our work is to support sexual assault service providers across the state to increase their capacity to do the hard work they do in supporting survivors. Most of that work is part of other MECASA programming, but two particular efforts are in their own category.

MECASA staff spent the year finalizing the centralized, live-answer, statewide crisis and support line. In February 2017, providers consolidated the crisis and support line into one answering service for all calls across the state. In August, two daytime advocates began providing live-answer to support line callers during business hours. While local centers still have staff or volunteers ready to handle accompaniments to hospitals or to law enforcement, centralized coverage means that local staff have more time to focus on other work with survivors. As one Client Services Manager said, "We so appreciate the extra layers of support the daytime advocates provide to victims and survivors. They give us time to attend to our work beyond answering the hotline."

"We so appreciate the extra layers of support the daytime advocates provide to victims and survivors. They give us time to attend to our work beyond answering the hotline."

-Client Services Manager

Plans are now underway to add text and chat capabilities to the support daytime advocates provide. These changes ensure that callers to the support line get services that are supportive, speedy and appropriate—and still stay connected to local support if they need it.



Also during FY 17, MECASA proudly presented our second annual statewide sexual assault conference with the theme Possibilities into Practice.

With over 100 providers, educators, and partners in attendance, the conference was a remarkable success. Attendees came together to share new and innovative programming related to sexual violence, develop skills and knowledge to enhance programming related to their disciplines, and energize and inspire each other to continue their amazing work.

Our guest speakers were Kamilah Willingham of The Hunting Ground, and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center's Jennifer Grove. With an emphasis

on self-care, social justice, and opportunities for providers to demonstrate the great work they are doing through Ignite Talks (five-minute presentations on innovative projects), attendees left excited to advance their work across the state.

Communications

In addition to communications work noted in other program areas, MECASA staff continued to change the public perception of sexual violence through many platforms and audiences, including traditional media, social media, and supporting Maine's sexual assault service providers in their local public awareness efforts. One of our main efforts related to elevating member centers' profiles in their community by rebranding (and in some cases, branding for the first time) their agencies. Through this work, we've supported centers in making their image and digital and printed materials as part of their services.

This work included in varying degrees of support depending on the center's needs: facilitating logo development, writing content for and designing new brochures, creating displays for tabling, and building and writing content for new websites. Each time we've built a new website, we trained



center staff on how to use the website platform and provided a customized guide to their site help them with frequently asked questions. Over the last two years, we have supported over half of sexual assault support centers and Children's Advocacy Centers in further developing their presence in their communities.



Thanks to a Services, Training, Officers, Prosecution (STOP) grant through Rape Response Services, we worked with two literacy specialists and a group of center staff to make statewide outreach materials more accessible to lower-literacy populations. As part of this work, we developed new outreach tools (a poster and a palm card with crisis and support line information on it), updated several sections of our website, and provided the content to centers for use on their sites. We printed the new posters and palm cards for center staff to distribute throughout their communities.

The literacy specialists also developed a guide for our work and centers' work moving forward, which included advice on the most readable fonts, how to use images to best convey the point of the materials, and many other considerations. This project resulted in us taking another look at all our materials (outreach and otherwise), and we are excited to move this work forward in all of our efforts.

For help call 1-800-871-7741.
Free. Private. 24/7.
Or text 9am-4:30pm weekdays.
For more info, go to mecasa.org.



Public Policy



We are passionate about our public policy work and proud to advocate for the interests of victims/survivors, their families and communities, as well as for Maine's sexual assault service providers both on the state and national level. Our positions are informed by the experience and expertise of Maine's sexual assault service providers and the communities they serve, the best available evidence, and our many trusted statewide partners. Specifically, we seek to expand, improve, and protect public policy which:

- Meaningfully contributes to the prevention of sexual violence;
- Ensures high-quality response to victims across systems;
- Promotes victims' rights, protections, and victims' access to justice;
- Increases community safety; and,
- Is responsive to the needs of marginalized and vulnerable populations.

During the First Regular Session of the 128th Maine Legislature, we worked, as always, in close partnership with a wide range of partners. It was a successful, but difficult legislative session as a result of several controversial bills. We engaged in a meaningful way on twenty-two bills last session, and 90 percent of those resulted in positive or acceptable outcomes.

The highlight of the session was Senator Mike Carpenter’s bill, now Public Law 300, which created a new category of gross sexual assault which requires that individuals consent to the sex act. While previously threats of violence or force were required for gross sexual assault, the new crime ensures that the perpetrator is guilty if the victim has not “expressly or impliedly consented to the sexual act.” Additionally, the law no longer allows a defense when a victim voluntarily consumed drugs or intoxicants provided by the perpetrator. These changes were long overdue and we are hopeful that they are going to encourage prosecutors to take on a wider range of cases.

We are now focused on the session ahead which will convene in January of 2018. We are working with legislative allies to introduce bills including a forced labor statute to support human trafficking victims, and to address a loophole allowing adults to harass teens by sending sexually explicit photos of themselves. We will also be working on several bills carried over from the first session including two related to sex trafficking and Marsy’s Law, also known as the Victims’ Bill of Rights.

However, our policy work is not confined to the State House. As always, we engaged in public policy advocacy through a variety of venues. We have worked for several years with the Department of Education to implement a statewide policy requiring sexual abuse prevention education in public kindergarten through grade five; the final model policy was launched this fall, and MECASA will publish a guide for schools in the winter. And, thanks to the Chief Justice, we also served on the Transparency and Privacy in Court Records Taskforce, where we worked to find a balance between the public’s interest in transparency and the privacy rights of crime victims, as Maine’s Courts expand the use of technology to do their work.

Bringing MECASA’s values to the table

There are many statewide public policy commissions, work groups, and councils where we bring voices of survivors and sexual assault service providers to the table. Below are some examples from the last year.

- Alliance for Maine Women
- Attorney General’s Trafficking Work Group
- Committee on Media & the Courts
- Dept. of Corrections Victim Advisory Group
- Justice Assistance Council
- Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel
- Maine Commission on Domestic & Sexual Abuse
- Maine Council for Elder Abuse Prevention
- Maine County & Municipal Detention Advisory Committee
- Maine Criminal Justice Academy Board of Trustees
- Maine Permanent Commission on the Status of Women
- National Children’s Alliance Collaborative Work Group on Public Policy
- SAFE Advisory Board

FY 2017 Financial Overview

REVENUES & OTHER SUPPORT	9/30/2017 (Audit in progress)	9/30/2016 (Audited)
Dues/Donations	24,383	30,902
Foundations	13,911	15,000
State and Federal Grants	2,755,326	1,953,564
Sub-Contracts	3,635	3,506
Interest and Dividend	1,816	1,369
Unrealized Gain/Loss	5,828	5,489
Other Revenue	-	-
	2,804,899	2,009,830
EXPENSES:		
Prevention & Victims Services	590,916	526,317
Technical Assistance & Coalition Building	128,996	111,856
Pass-Through to Service Providers	1,998,234	1,281,704
Other Sub-Contracted Program	66,563	46,784
Management & General	26,289	22,595
	2,810,998	1,989,256
Change in Net Assets	(6,099)	20,574
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	139,986	113,116
Net Assets at End of Year	214,977	139,986

FY 2017 Expenses

