12 MONTHS OF IMPACT

Working for all of us

INCREASING ACCESS TO CAPITAL

$26 million
placed in businesses in Maine and rural communities to support diverse business ownership and good job creation

54% to women

37% to borrowers with low incomes

16% to immigrants and entrepreneurs of color

Piloted a loan program for individuals without traditional collateral

Helped 32 people improve their credit scores allowing them to secure $534,000 in CEI loans.

Investing in quality child care

Traditional financial institutions can struggle to lend to child care businesses. These enterprises have thin margins. Cribs and toys and playground equipment as collateral. Knowing affordable, high quality child care is critical to economic opportunity, CEI provides capital and long-term business advising to child care providers across the state.

After earning her degree in Elementary Education from the University of Maine, Thania Hernandez honed her skills in CEI’s Child Care Business Lab and by working at Rayitos de Sol, another bilingual child care headed by a Child Care Business Lab alumna. She recently opened Mis Primeros Pasos, a bilingual child care center at a nonprofit transitional residence in Ellsworth working to break the cycle of homelessness for families with children in Hancock County. Mis Primeros Pasos cares for residents and families nearby, a mix of full pay and subsidized children.

BUILDING ECONOMIC AGENCY

3,132 individuals in Maine received training or one-on-one business advice.

1,069 Mainers accessed housing and financial coaching to help them buy a home, prevent foreclosure, or increase their savings.
Supporting a just climate transition by calculating the carbon footprint of our loan portfolio; using our capital to grow sustainable, climate-resilient businesses and expand solar energy; and training our peers on how to do the same.

Testified on 30 separate bills before the 130th Maine state legislature to create systems-level change. Serves on the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations to make sure those changes are equitable.

Sharing our Good Jobs Framework and Child Care Business Lab best practices with cohorts across the country.

Inclusive employment in Maine’s food system

Heather Kerner combined her experience as an occupational therapist, her connections to Maine’s local grain supply chain, and support from the CEI’s Women Business Center to create The Good Crust in Somerset County—and good jobs for people with unique needs. The Good Crust’s pizza dough is made by Mainers with conditions like cerebral palsy, autism, brain injury, or who are in addiction recovery.

With the business growing quickly, Kerner needed funding to purchase a larger building in Canaan and upgrade equipment. Traditional banks saw a new business and a niche product with high equipment costs. CEI saw Heather’s expertise, the power of integrated employment, and the quality of her product—and we know her market well. We knew the risks were really opportunities.

Served on the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations to make sure those changes are equitable.

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