

*Maine Campus Compact*

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**Contact:**

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**Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship Launches Conserve Maine Energy Campaign to Address Increased Home Energy Use During Covid-19 Crisis**

**Awareness Campaign Culminated with Education Week: August 16-21st**

**including a Mini Walk-A-Thon and Mascot Appearances**

With home energy use on the rise due to COVID-19, local AmeriCorps members serving with the Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship (MPES) AmeriCorps promoted energy efficiency to save money, mitigate climate change, and encourage Maine families to safely enjoy the outdoors through the [Conserve Maine Energy](http://www.conservemaineenergy.org) public awareness campaign.

Throughout the duration of the summer state-wide campaign, AmeriCorps members:

* Helped to raise awareness about the environmental benefits and cost savings of home energy efficiency by providing educational materials, including activity coloring sheets for children on topics such as the importance of turning off lights and unplugging “phantom” loads.
* Encouraged outdoor activities, such as an environmental sidewalk-chalk art contest, a neighborhood green-up, a scavenger hunt and a chance to spot Eddie the Energy-Eating Elephant, and Fifi the Energy-Efficient Firefly, the Conserve Maine Energy Mascots.
	+ The activities have been focused in the following communities where members serve: Augusta, Bangor, Biddeford, Orono, Portland, Lewiston, Rumford and York.

The Conserve Maine Energy Campaign culminated with an Energy Efficiency Education Week, August 16-21st.  Key awareness raising activities during Education Week included:

**Mini Walk-A-Thon featuring our mascots:** Fifi the Energy-Efficient Firefly and Eddie the Energy-Eating Elephant, our mascots, faced off to see who could conserve the most energy during a mini Walk-A-Thon, to make it across the finish line first.  The Walk-A-Thon was held at the outdoor track at Saint Joseph’s College in Standish, Maine from noon-8pm on Sunday, August 16th.Through social distancing, small teams walked to raise awareness about energy conservation and cost savings.

**Fifi and Eddie Appearances and Energy Education/Efficiency Material Dissemination:**

During the week of August 16th, our MPES AmeriCorps members were joined by Fifi and Eddie to provide free energy efficiency coloring sheets, crayons, bookmarks and energy-saving LED light bulbs to Maine children and their families to help households save money.

**Education Week Mascot Appearances:**

Monday, August 17:

East Promenade Park in Portland

Wednesday, August 19:

Biddeford Middle School (Summer Food Program Site)

Friday, August 21:

Augusta Boys and Girls Club

MPES launches the Conserve Maine Energy Campaign in a timely and critical moment. Pandemic mitigation efforts have dramatically changed Mainer’s daily lives and their budgets. Among these changes, Mainers are spending more time at home than in other years resulting in higher home energy use, upwards of 5% according to Consumers Energy.  According to the U.S. Building Green Council, low-income families in Maine currently spend about 15% or more of their income on energy bills, effectively adding increased stress on communities who are also more likely to have been significantly impacted by COVID-19,

The Conserve Maine Energy Project joins the effort to lead Maine toward their goal of carbon-neutrality by 2045. MPES provides families with the resources to reduce their energy use and utility bills, and encourage Mainers to enjoy the out-of-doors. Especially during these unprecedented times, even small experiences of being in nature are physically and mentally healing. MPES believes that community members can use the Conserve Maine Energy campaign to save energy and money, reconnect with nature, and inspire each other to stay connected and engaged with their communities through their natural environments.

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**Accessing Home Energy Efficiency Materials and Resources**

The energy efficiency educational materials and LED light bulbs are provided by Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship for low-income households. For more information on how to receive free educational materials or LED light bulbs, please contact info@conservemaineenergy.org or (207) 753-6626.

**How You Can Help**

Conserve Maine Energy offers free resources and activities for families and community members. If you would like to receive additional information, please reach out to info@conservemaineenergy.org

**About Conserve Maine Energy**

Conserve Maine Energy connects households and families with activities, educational materials, and resources to lower household energy usage and costs by educating and improving household energy efficiency.

**About Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship and Maine Campus Compact**

The Maine Partnership for Environmental Stewardship (MPES) is an AmeriCorps program focused on environmental stewardship and economic opportunity. The MPES program aims to educate individuals throughout the state of Maine about resources to improve energy efficiency, describe low-cost upgrades to reduce energy consumption, and provide services such as home energy checks and free window insert installations for economically disadvantaged Mainers. MPES is a project of Maine Campus Compact, a consortium of 18 campuses whose purpose is to reinvigorate the public purposes of higher education. Maine Campus Compact is under the fiscal umbrella of the University of Southern Maine and is hosted on the USM Lewiston-Auburn campus.