



COMMUNITY SHARPS DISPOSAL TOOLKIT

December 2024



COMMUNITY SHARPS DISPOSAL TOOLKIT

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Tobacco and Substance Use Prevention and Control Program

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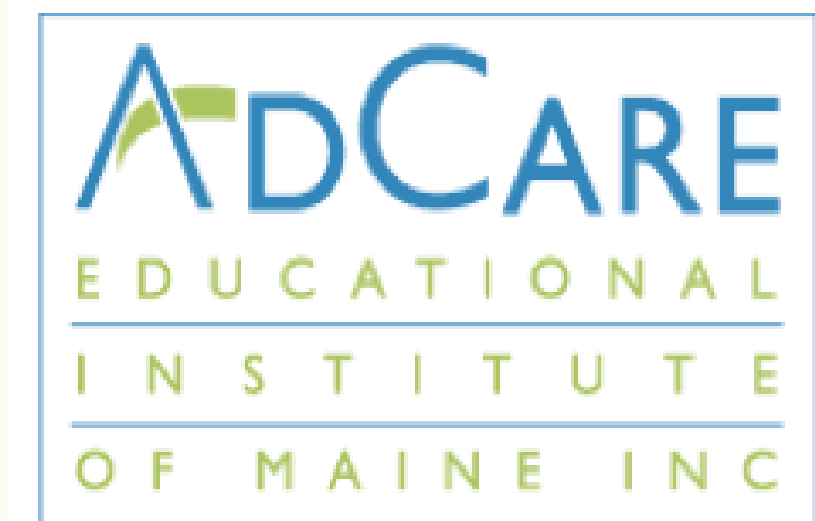


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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Biohazard Waste Disposal: Also known as sharps containers or sharps boxes, they are receptacles designed to store and safely discard of waste that has the risk of carrying infectious disease. These receptacles or containers must be:

- Made of heavy-duty, puncture-resistant plastic which is leakproof on the sides and bottom
- Have an opening large enough for a sharp but not large enough for a hand to enter
- Have a tight-fitting and puncture-resistant lid
- Remain upright and stable during use/handling

Harm Reduction: A set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug or alcohol use. Harm Reduction is also a movement for social justice built on a belief in, and respect for, the rights of people who use drugs. The defining features include a focus on the prevention of harm, rather than on the prevention of substance use itself, with attention and focus on the individual's active substance use (e.g., a syringe exchange program can reduce rates of transmission of Hepatitis C, HIV, or other infectious disease).

Municipality: A city or town that has corporate status and local government.

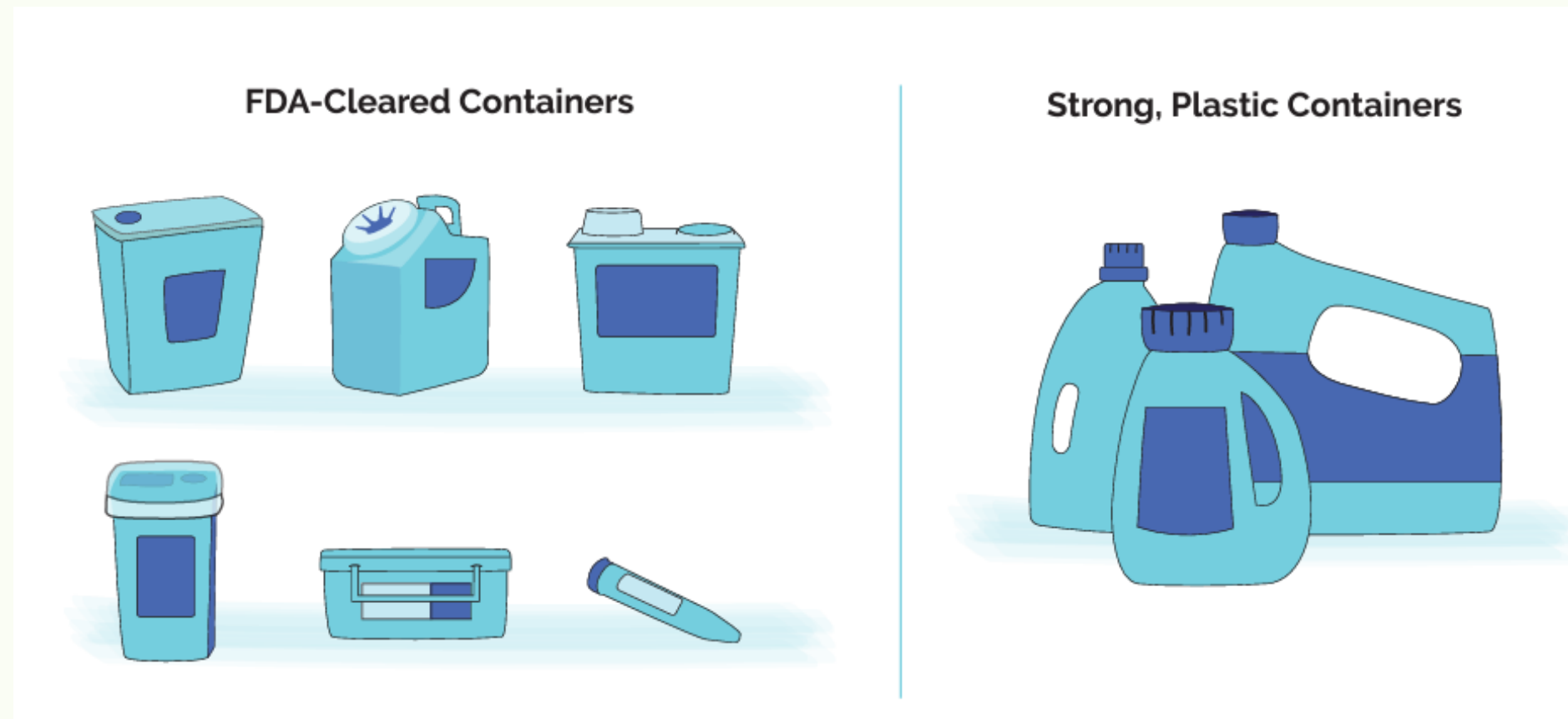
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Sharps: Defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as potentially contaminated syringes, needles, lancets, scalpels, infusion needle sets, connection needles, or auto- injectors.

Syringe Service Programs: Also referred to as Syringe Access Programs (SAPs). Maine Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ME CDC) certifies Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) to facilitate the prevention of HIV and other bloodborne pathogens. SSPs are community-based prevention programs that provide a range of services, including linkage to substance use disorder treatment and housing support; access to and disposal of sterile syringes and injection equipment; overdose prevention education; naloxone distribution; education, testing, and linkage to care for treatment of infectious diseases.

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC): National public health agency for the United States. One of the major operating components of the Department of Health and Human Services.

UNITED STATES CDC RECOMMENDATIONS



- FDA approved syringe disposal containers distributed at local SSPs for free.
- Always place used syringes in disposal containers, not in dumpsters, trash, or recycling bins.
- If you cannot find a sharps disposal container right away, you may use an alternative container, like a heavy-duty plastic laundry detergent bottle with a cover or use a needle clipper device until you have an opportunity to dispose of syringes in an appropriate disposal container.
- Ensure containers are filled to the recommended capacity prior to removal, but do not overfill. Filling above the fill line, or more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full of an alternative container, such as a heavy-duty plastic laundry detergent bottle, can increase the risk of a needlestick injury and a bloodborne pathogen exposure.

SHARPS DISPOSAL IN MAINE

- Under Maine law you are allowed to dispose of personally used sharps in your household trash if you take the proper precautions to secure and label the container before doing so.
- **“Do Not Recycle,”** and place it in your household or a public trash container.
- If a sharps disposal container is not readily available, you may need to recap the syringe or use a syringe clipper until you have an opportunity to dispose of sharps in an appropriate disposal container.
- Fill out this online form to request a free syringe clipping device from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection: [Request Form, Maine DEP](#)
- More information can be found at [Sharps Disposal, Waste Management, Maine Department of Environmental Protection](#) and [Home - Safe Needle Disposal](#)

MAP OF COMMUNITY SYRINGE DISPOSAL BOXES



HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU TAKE IF YOU FIND A DISCARDED SYRINGE

- Don't touch it!
- Mark the location so others are aware and stay away
- Contact your local harm reduction agency or syringe service program
- If your local syringe service program or harm reduction agency are unable to dispose of the syringe safely, call your local law enforcement agency

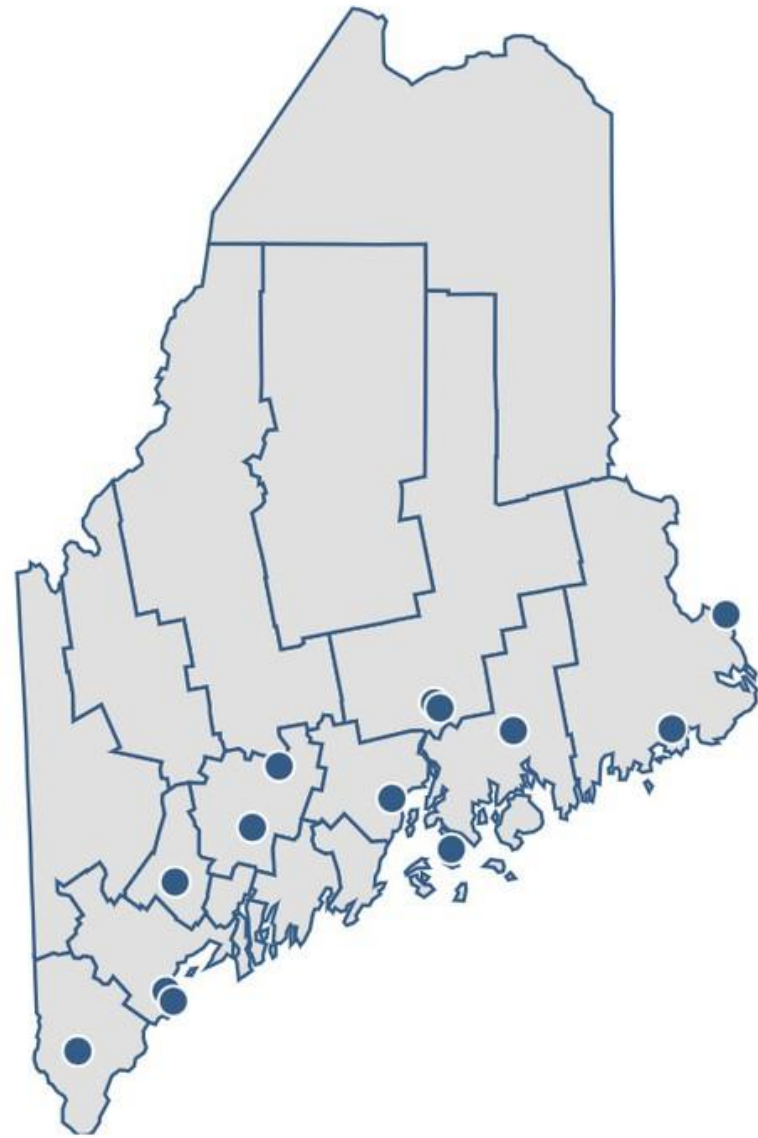
Syringe Service Programs in Maine

SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS IN MAINE

- Research shows that Syringe Service Programs can reduce new Hepatitis C and HIV cases by an estimated 50%.
- SSPs reduce fatal and nonfatal overdoses by providing overdose education, naloxone, and fentanyl testing supplies to their participants.

[Maine CDC Syringe Service Program Annual Report, 2023](#)

[Maine CDC Syringe Service Program Annual Report, 2022](#)



[Syringe Service Program Locations in Maine](#)

IMPORTANCE OF SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH

Preventing the spread of hepatitis B (HBV), HIV, and hepatitis C

Promote public safety by preventing accidental exposure to infection/disease

Provide harm reduction and education to protect individuals and communities

SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAMS IN MAINE

In 2022, the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (ME CDC) updated the 2019 *Vulnerability Assessment for Opioid Overdoses and Bloodborne Infections Associated with Non-Sterile Injection Drug Use in Maine*. This report shows the geographic areas where residents are at highest risk of opioid overdoses and bloodborne infections.

The report makes recommendations for interventions to support the opening of Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) in the most vulnerable areas and expand the operating hours and staff at the already existing SSP locations.

Sharps Disposal Programs are another community-level intervention that address risks associated with substance use.

2022 Maine CDC Vulnerability Assessment

Table C-1. Most Vulnerable Counties Based on Bloodborne Pathogen-related Rates

County*	Hepatitis B Acute Infections	Hepatitis C Acute Infections	HIV Infections
Androscoggin	✓		
Cumberland			✓
Franklin		✓	
Hancock			✓
Knox			✓
Lincoln		✓	
Oxford	✓		
Penobscot	✓	✓	
Piscataquis	✓		
Somerset		✓	✓

*Checkmark indicates that the county's rate was ranked in the top five for that particular outcome.

Syringe Service Programs protect the public, municipal workers, and first responders by providing safe disposal options and reducing the presence of syringes in the community.

Over 3.1 million syringes were collected and disposed of by Syringe Service Programs in Maine in 2023.

SYRINGE SERVICE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

3X

More likely to stop using illicit substances than someone not connected to an SSP.

5X

More likely to enter into substance use treatment than someone not connected to an SSP.

Developing Community Programs

Ten Steps for Municipal
Engagement, Planning, and
Implementation

Steps for Engagement & Implementation

1. *Convene*

Invite municipal staff, public health officials, substance use prevention programs, and harm reduction organizations to join a task force to work on program development.

2. *Assess*

Gather data to determine the number of sharps containers needed and the locations for each.

Ask community partners if they have concerns about improperly discarded syringes.

3. *Involve*

Solicit feedback. Reach out to community coalitions and social service organizations such as shelters, neighborhood associations, and land trusts. This creates an opportunity to build broad support.

4. *Organize*

Outline an implementation strategy: Define the problem, draft a plan and list each step of the process.

Include each partner who is involved and the amount of time to spend on each step.

Steps for Engagement & Implementation

5. Develop

Once the strategy is drafted, finalize the plan by defining roles and responsibilities.

Write a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed by all parties involved.

6. Initiate

Set a date to start the program and launch the awareness campaigns.

Schedule a public event for the first day of the program.

7. Create

Design informational materials with details about the program.

Include contact information, safety education, and task force member logos.

8. Inform

Attend community forums, neighborhood events, and city council meetings.

Promote the program on websites and social media accounts.

Steps for Engagement & Implementation

9. Analyze

Develop a system to track program activity.

Record calls to Public Safety specific to syringe disposal or reports of discarded syringes in public places.

Collect data on sharps collected, containers distributed, and any data specific to utilization.

10. Sustain

Funding to support new or pilot projects can assist with the first year of programming. Look for long-term funding sources that will continue to support the program.

Recommend that the program is included in public safety policies, public health initiatives, and is written into the municipal budget.

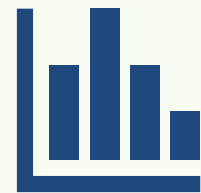
WAYS TO COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL SSPs FOR SAFE DISPOSAL

- Partner with local SSPs for education on safe disposal methods
- Collaborate with local SSPs to properly dispose of syringes
- Develop lines of communication for community members to report syringe waste
- Establish the role of the local SSPs and local municipalities
 - Education
 - Provide onsite disposal
 - Provide feedback on municipal efforts to reduce syringe waste

Convene, Assess, Involve, Organize



- Task force committees operate best with 5-10 participants and one facilitator. The facilitator is the content expert and primary organizer to schedule meetings, communicate with the group, identify community partners, and manage the timeline.



- Review supporting data to pick locations for each container.
 - Police and Fire Department Calls
 - Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention Data
 - Local Public Health Department Data
 - Syringe Service Program Data



- Select locations that are accessible to the community. For example, parks, beaches, trails, and community centers are open to the public. Ensure that locations are discrete and allows privacy for individuals disposing of used syringes



- Develop an implementation plan that outlines:
 - Goals
 - Tasks
 - Role of each task force member
 - Time frame



- Request feedback from local organizations and community groups. This allows an opportunity to inform them of the goals of the program and address any concerns.

Develop, Initiate, Create, Inform



- Assign task force members roles and responsibilities.
 - Specific activities to complete
 - Capacity



- Draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for task force partners that include specific responsibilities:
 - Purchasing containers
 - Biohazard waste disposal
 - Data collection
- Circulate and review the MOU with municipal leaders and receive approval **before** implementation.

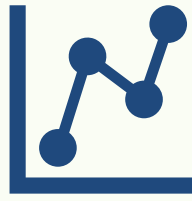


- Develop printed materials for the public (offer materials in a variety of languages):
 - Map of disposal locations
 - Stickers/decals for containers
 - Brochures and palm cards



- Time to get creative and share the program far and wide!
 - Websites
 - Social media accounts
 - TV
 - Radio
 - Newspapers
 - Farmers markets and other community events

Analyze and Sustain



- Make a simple spreadsheet to collect data on syringes collected and locations utilized.
- Develop a schedule for sharing the spreadsheet with city council, municipal leaders, and syringe service programs.



- Review all data submitted in the beginning stages of the program weekly. Less frequent monitoring and reporting may occur after the first few months.
- If containers are not being utilized, consider relocating them or increase information dissemination and community outreach.



- Monitor call logs for services that report improperly disposed syringes.
 - Locations
 - Times
 - Proximity to existing public disposal container



- Make any recommendations to the city council to have the program written into existing policy and procedure documents. This will ensure the program continues with funding and staff support.
 - If the municipal budget can't support the program, look for state, federal, or private grants to sustain the program.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT SYRINGE BUY BACK PROGRAMS

Boston Grass-roots Company Starts Syringe Buy-Back Program in South End

- **Collaborate with SSPs**
 - *Partner with local SSP to utilize their current infrastructure.
- **Incentive structure**
 - *Offer financial incentives such as 20 cents per syringe, to motivate safe disposal.
- **Safe Disposal Methods**
 - *Implement onsite or secure disposal methods at SSP locations to ensure syringes are handled safely and effectively.
- **Pilot Program**
 - *Launch pilot buy-back program in urban areas of the state. This allows for focused monitoring of program effectiveness.
- **Community Outreach**
 - *Engage community members through targeted outreach campaigns to raise awareness about the buy-back program.
- **Evaluate and Adjust**
 - *Continuously monitor the program's impact on syringe disposal and participant engagement.
- **Public and Private Support**
 - *Seek funding from both public and private sources to sustain the program. This could include grants, donations, or local business partners.

Appendix

For public sharps disposal, select containers with metal enclosures that are at least 1.5 liters and include locks and mounting hardware. These containers can be attached to walls, bus stops, lamp posts, or other outdoor structures.

Smaller containers- 1 quart or less- work best for individual disposal options.

These can be purchased in bulk.



Many medical supply companies sell sharps containers.

Search "Public Safety" or "Sharps Retrieval Programs" to find larger outdoor containers.

Many companies offer mail-in programs for disposal, which is a good option for municipalities that do not have a biohazard waste disposal protocol through Public Safety or Public Works Departments.

RESOURCES FOR CONTAINERS

SAMPLE Implementation Plan

Resources for Implementation

Task Force Partners

Substance Use Prevention Program Manager (facilitator), Mayor, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, Substance Use Liaison for the Police Department, Syringe Service Program Manager, Harm Reduction Consultant, Police Chief, Fire Chief

Weekly Meetings

Wednesdays at 12pm

State the problem

There are no syringe service programs in the community or access to syringe disposal containers. Pharmacies don't consistently stock them and people report feeling uncomfortable to ask for them. There have been reports to the police department regarding syringes found in the park and near the river. The Substance Use Liaison sees discarded syringes regularly when they are doing outreach in the community. They are finding them in areas frequented by children and families. People who use drugs are asking for disposal containers.

Solution

Create a Community Syringe Disposal Program with community collaboration and public education campaigns.

Goals

Community Collaboration: The task force meeting will provide a space to discuss issues of public concern related to improperly disposed syringes. Local organizations will be invited to share recommendations. Municipal leadership will be updated throughout the development stage.

Locations: Based on recommendations from task force partners, five public containers will be installed. Location recommendations are: Bus stop at the corner of Main Street & Elm Street, pedestrian park entrances on Congress Street and Winter Street, walking path along Main Street, and Town Hall bus stop.

Data Collection: Containers will be monitored weekly and the number of syringes collected will be recorded. Calls for service to Police and Fire and the number of referrals for syringe disposal to the Substance Use Liaison will be tracked. ODMAP will be checked regularly to review overdose reports and their locations. This data will support installment of additional containers.

Public Awareness: Posts will be created about the program launch and shared on social media. Disposal location maps will be printed and circulated in the community and shared broadly with other community partners: Land trust members, social service providers, neighborhood associations, and local recovery meetings. Press event for the opening day. Post PDF of the disposal location map on the city website, Maine CDC website, and share with community coalitions via email.

Task Assignments

Task Force Facilitator: Responsible for program implementation and all direct communication with task force partners. Facilitate weekly meetings, record notes, develop and share educational and promotional materials, and solicit feedback from community organizations. Funding allocated to cover all expenses including sharps containers.

Police Department Substance Use Liaison: Attend task force meetings, recommend locations for containers based on outreach and community involvement. Share number of referrals made to syringe service programs and access to sharps disposal. Provide suggestions and feedback regarding promotional materials.

Police Chief: Attend task force meetings, approve container locations, assign officers to assist parks and recreation staff with after-hours calls to maintain and empty containers. Submit data that records calls for service related to sharps disposal to the task force facilitator on a weekly or monthly basis.

Mayor: Attend task force meetings, review and approve final implementation plan, approve container locations and promote the program by sharing social media posts, participating in press releases and making public appearances.

Parks and Recreation Director: Attend task force meetings, approve container locations, assign staff to install containers, monitor and empty containers weekly, or as needed. Staff will bring full containers to the Fire Department for disposal. Share reports of discarded needles found in parks, playgrounds and other public spaces on a weekly or monthly basis.

Task Assignments

Fire Chief: Attend task force meetings and approve container locations. Department is responsible for biohazard waste disposal associated with this program. Sharps containers that are full will be brought to the Central Fire Station for appropriate storage and disposal.

Syringe Service Program Manager: Attend task force meetings, approve container locations. Provide technical assistance and recommendations regarding the implementation plan and promotional materials.

Harm Reduction Consultant: Attend task force meetings, approve container locations. Provide technical assistance and recommendations regarding the implementation plan and promotional materials.

Timeline

Start date: January 15

Program will be ready to launch as warm weather arrives and parks/playgrounds become busy

Week 1-4: Task force meetings begin. Review existing data, identify the problem and outline solutions. Meet with community partners and record ideas and suggestions. Draft plan and outline steps.

Timeline

Week 5-9: Finalize locations for containers. Confirm with the Parks and Recreation Department that they will install containers. Confirm with the Fire Department that they will be responsible for disposal, since they have an existing biohazard waste disposal plan and are a certified vendor through the state.

Week 10-14: Draft MOU for each involved department. Review with each party. Answer questions and address concerns. Meet with community partners to announce the program and involve them in promotional material development. Schedule an event to celebrate the launch of the program.

Week 15-19: Decide what data should be collected and develop a tracking system. Parks and Recreation is responsible for monitoring and emptying boxes, so they will also be responsible for tracking the number of syringes collected each week and at what location and sharing the spreadsheet updates with the task force. Since the Police Department is back-up for after hours calls, officers will also be trained to monitor and empty containers and record numbers. All data will be submitted to the task force facilitator and be used to determine additional locations or relocations.

Week 20-24: Finalize and circulate the MOU with municipal leadership, share the promotional materials developed and announce the public event celebrating the opening day. Send out a press release and encourage the media to attend the public event. Once the program launches, track the utilization of each location, start looking for sustainable funding options, and request a presentation to city council to share the programmatic updates and data collected.

SAMPLE
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Resources for Implementation

<<<LETTERHEAD>>>

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and conditions between <<ENTITY* NAME #1 and ENTITY NAME #2**>> regarding community sharps container locations for public use, installation, maintenance and biohazard waste disposal.

I. PURPOSE & SCOPE

The purpose of this MOU is to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities of each party as they relate to items mentioned above.

II. ENTITY NAME #1 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS MOU:

- ENTITY NAME #1 will facilitate a short-term MUNICIPALITY Task Force to work specifically on the issue of improperly discarded syringes in the community.
- ENTITY NAME #1 agrees to offer training, technical assistance and printed materials to support a Community Sharps Container project for MUNICIPALITY, Maine.
- ENTITY NAME #1 agrees to purchase # community sharps containers and mounting materials for specific locations determined by the MUNICIPALITY Task Force responsible for launching this initiative.
- ENTITY NAME #1 agrees to support and assist with appropriate biohazard waste disposal options suitable for the municipality.

III. ENTITY NAME #2 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS MOU:

- ENTITY NAME #2 agrees to participate in the short term task force.
- ENTITY NAME #2 agrees to select the locations of the containers.
- ENTITY NAME #2 agrees to install and maintain each container at the confirmed locations on a (weekly/monthly) basis for the first # months and as needed thereafter.
- ENTITY NAME #2 agrees to work with ENTITY NAME #1 regarding reporting, reordering of supplies, training and technical support, and referrals to prevention and harm reduction resources and services.

IV. TERM AND SIGNATURE

This MOU shall be in effect upon the signature of ENTITY NAME #1 and ENTITY NAME #2 authorized officials, and be extended annually as agreed by both parties.

Authorized Signatures:

By: ENTITY NAME #1

_____ Date: _____

By: ENTITY NAME #2

_____ Date: _____

**Entities are considered municipal departments, such as Parks and Recreation, Fire, Police, Public Works, as well as Public Health Programs, Harm Reduction Organizations, or other businesses/nonprofits/departments involved in the development of the Community Sharps Disposal Program*

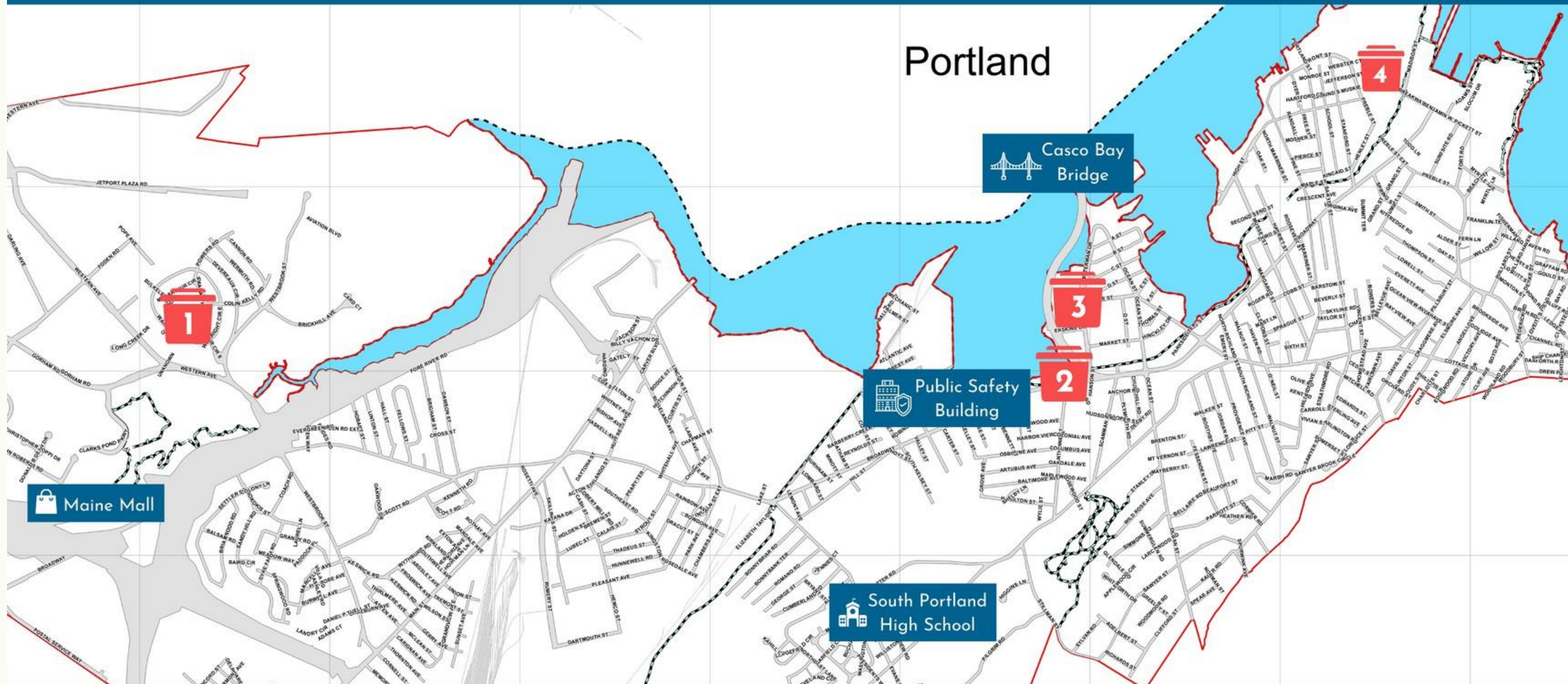
***Entities can be added to appropriately represent the agreement. List each entity name separately, define responsibilities separately and have signatures from each authorized official.*

SAMPLE
Community Sharps Disposal Map

Resources for Implementation



SOUTH PORTLAND COMMUNITY SHARPS BOXES



MacArthur Circle 
near Westbrook Street



Broadway 
at Broadway and Anthoine



Waterman Drive 
at Waterman and E Street/Legere Park



Bug Light Park 
Near portable restrooms

Containers provided with support from:



Community sharps boxes offer a safe and convenient way to properly dispose of medical sharps such as syringes, lancets, and pen needles.

For more information on disposal options, visit the Maine Department of Environmental Protection at maine.gov/dep.

SAMPLE

Community Sharps Disposal Sticker/Decal Image

Resources for Implementation



WESTBROOK

Community Sharps Container

This container is provided with support from:



Sample sharps disposal information card for community distribution

Other materials for community and individual distribution may be found at [SharpsBrochure.pdf \(maine.gov\)](#) and [Online Print Materials - Safe Needle Disposal - Safe Sharps Disposal Medication Insert](#)



Syringe Disposal in Bangor, ME

Please Do Not:

- ⊘ Leave sharps anywhere they could injure someone
- ⊘ Throw loose sharps into the trash or toilet
- ⊘ Put containers of used sharps in recycling

Please Do :

- 👍 Use a new syringe every time you inject
- 👍 Safely dispose of used syringes in disposal containers

Visit or call the Syringe Service Programs below to:

- Receive free sterile syringes and syringe disposal containers.
- Dispose of used syringes and disposal containers.

Health Equity Alliance (HEAL)
Hours of operation:
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
10am- 5pm (closed 1-2pm)
Location: 304 Hancock St Suite 3B
Bangor, ME 04401
Call (207) 888-2703



Needlepoint Sanctuary
Hours: Saturdays from 3 PM - 5 PM
Location: Camp Hope near PCHC's Hope House in Bangor
Call (207) 505-1510



If you cannot reach these programs, you may throw away syringe disposal containers in the trash. Used syringes must be placed in a secure disposal container.

REFERENCES & LINKS

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention,
Vulnerability Assessment Report, 2019:

[https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/navtabs/documents/
Maine-CDC-Vulnerability-Assessment-Report.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/navtabs/documents/Maine-CDC-Vulnerability-Assessment-Report.pdf)

Reach out to Jessica Schermer at Jessica.schermer@maine.gov
for full *2022 Vulnerability Assessment Report*



Maine Drug Data Hub, *Syringe Service Programs in Maine
Annual Report, 2023:*

<https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/10968>



United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
*Strategies for Sharps Disposal Container Use During Supply
Shortages:*

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/pandemic/disposal.html>



REFERENCES & LINKS

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *FAQs for Syringe Service Programs*: <https://www.cdc.gov/syringe-services-programs/php/faq/index.html>



Occupational Safety and Health Administration, *Quick Reference Guide to Bloodborne Pathogens Standard*: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2009-06-02>



[Sample Implementation Plan](#)

[Sample Memorandum of Understanding](#)

SPECIAL THANKS

City of Westbrook, City of South Portland, Westbrook Partners for Prevention, The Opportunity Alliance Public Health Program, and Maine Access Points for providing technical support and assistance with this document.

For more information, click the links below:

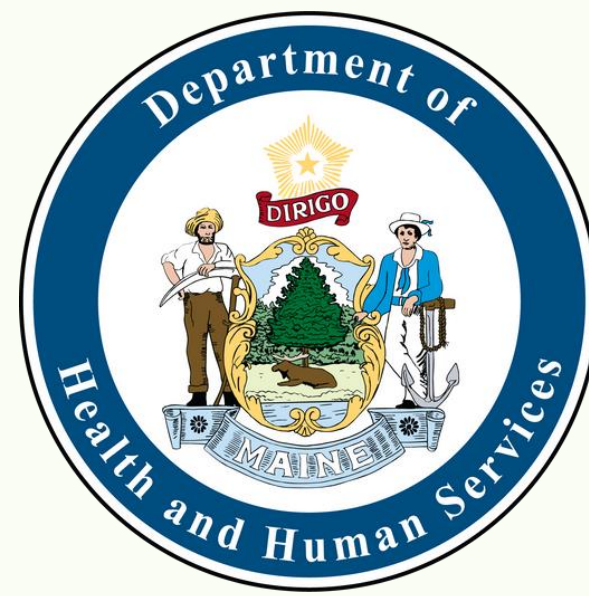
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