

Spring 2026 Quarterly Pulse Survey Summary

The Alignment Pulse Survey results from this quarter reveal a critical focus on the intersection of housing instability and the unique challenges faced by the "New Mainer" and unhoused communities. While collaboration across Greater Portland is generally viewed as moderate, significant systemic barriers regarding information gaps, service navigation, and professional shortages persist.

Disclaimer: This survey had a total of 29 respondents, who represent a small subsection of both the Alignment network and Greater Portland community. This summary is not a holistic representation of priorities, barriers, or resources experienced in Greater Portland. Pulse survey results may differ from quarter to quarter.

At a Glance:

- The Biggest Strains on the Community were identified as **Access to Basic Needs & Health-Related Social Needs** (n=14) and **Access to Community Resources** (n=10).
 - **Collaboration Rating:** The average effectiveness of cross-sector collaboration is approximately **3.1 out of 5**.
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Cited Barriers (n=29 respondents):

Most frequently cited barriers:

- **Housing & Shelter** (n=8): Unaffordability, lack of housing, eviction
- **Mental & Behavioral Health** (n=7): Lack of practitioners, crisis/acute care services, & Spanish-speaking therapists
- **System Navigation & Awareness** (n=6): Difficulty knowing what resources exist & how to access
- **Financial Barriers & Basic Needs** (n=6): Cost of living/basic needs, rising insurance premiums

Other cited barriers include **Administrative & application delays; transportation; linguistic & cultural access, provider conduct & communication, and safety & immigration.**

Those Experiencing Heaviest Health Disparities in Greater Portland (n=23 respondents):

- Roughly 78% of all respondents (18 out of 23) explicitly identified either "New Mainers/Immigrants" or "Unhoused/Housing Insecure" as the group experiencing the heaviest disparities.
 - Other vulnerable populations identified include **insured individuals with high deductibles/copays and those ineligible for MaineCare, those experiencing Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and co-occurring mental health conditions, children, and older adults.**
 - ★ **Important to note: Cultural Safety was noted throughout 4 responses.** Respondents mentioned that even when resources exist, "fear of ICE" or safety concerns at local shelters prevent community members from seeking the help they need.
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Opportunities for Coordination / Ad Hoc (n=15 respondents):

- 8/15 participants responded that they didn't know of a duplication of effort or specific obstacle.
 - Most responses point to the **Information Gap** as an overarching theme, with mentions of **Navigation/Awareness Barriers** (n=6), **Directory/Communication Duplication** (n=2), and **Language/Interpreter Barriers** (n=3)
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Community Successes & Resources to Amplify:

Several organizations offered or suggested resources/topics to be featured in upcoming "Lunch & Learn" sessions, including Narcan/Naloxone trainings, lifestyle medicine group visits for New Mainers, parent education for child abuse prevention, training for working with survivors of sexual violence, systems-level work related to the State Health Improvement Plan, and MaineHealth/2-1-1 collaboration