



## COUNTY OF MERRIMACK

333 DANIEL WEBSTER HIGHWAY, SUITE 2  
BOSCAWEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03303-2415  
(603) 796-6800 FAX: (603) 796-6840  
[www.merrimackcounty.net](http://www.merrimackcounty.net)

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### PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Jessica L. Riendeau, Community Relations Coordinator, [jriendeau@merrimackcounty.net](mailto:jriendeau@merrimackcounty.net)

### **Merrimack County 2023: A Year in Review**

**Boscawen, NH** – Many people wonder what the role of county government is. For some, the answer is apparent; for others the answer may not be so clear. A look back at the major achievements and celebrations of Merrimack County during 2023 will shed some light on our role – to support a healthy, vibrant, safe, and resilient life for all Merrimack County residents.

**Health** – County nursing homes and assisted living facilities offer restorative care and rehabilitation, and promote quality of life and wellness to the elderly. Both the Merrimack County Nursing Home and Assisted Living Facility provide quality care to those who call us “home.” In addition to traditional health and medical care, Merrimack County strives to provide recreational and leisure activities, while keeping convenience and comfort at the forefront of all services. This year marked the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Merrimack County, and it was evident that nobody enjoyed the various festivities more than our beloved residents. Looking ahead, an upcoming renovation to Gerrish Manor will improve the residential space of the Assisted Living Facility.

**Vibrancy** – Merrimack County has taken extraordinary efforts to enhance the vibrancy of all our communities throughout the county. This year, approximately \$1.7 Million in American Rescue Plan Act funds were passed along to community partners throughout Merrimack County to support community-driven goals that build an opportunity-rich region and strengthen families, schools, and neighborhoods. Awards such as those issued to Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. will serve to expand transportation routes from Concord to Franklin. If you’re an outdoor adventurer, the funds awarded to Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail, or even the Franklin Outing Club (Veterans Memorial Recreation Area) will enhance your recreational opportunities. And in the near future, you’ll have the opportunity

to visit a new greenhouse being established with grant funds issued to the Concord Community Management Association, for all your local farmers' market needs. While this highlights only a few of the awards, Merrimack County provided funding for 30 different projects throughout the county in 2023.

**Safety** – Some people may not take into account the county's obligation to keep communities safe by providing law enforcement and promoting crime prevention, holding offenders accountable through prosecutorial procedures, and operating a detention facility. The criminal justice system is complex, and the services provided by the county are vital. The Merrimack County Sheriff's Office, Merrimack County Human Services Pretrial and Diversion Division, the Merrimack County Attorney's Office, the Merrimack County Advocacy Center, and the Merrimack County Department of Corrections all play an integral role in the safety of our county and its individual communities. Additionally, the Communications Division of the Sheriff's Office provides emergency and non-emergency dispatch services for the Sheriff's Office and seventeen other agencies within the county. Of the numerous achievements in 2023, one of the most noteworthy is the continuation of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program offered through the Sheriff's Office. Students from multiple schools throughout Merrimack County graduated the D.A.R.E. program this year, a crucial component to keeping our county safe and drug free.

**Resiliency** – Community resilience is the ability of a community to use available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations. Merrimack County is dedicated to its role in improving resilience county-wide. Program such as the Merrimack County Human Services Navigator Program and the Merrimack County Advocacy Center's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Response Team help provide valuable services that directly impact individuals, families, and communities alike. Living in supportive environments, with trauma informed practices, help to enhance community members' coping skills that lead to improvements in quality of life for those living in Merrimack County. In 2023, the Navigator Program has worked with over 400 clients, assisting in areas such of housing, Medicaid and health care, fuel and electric assistance, transportation, and food insecurity to name a few. It came as no surprise when the Navigator team received an Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo), honoring their efforts to provide innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents. Also in 2023, the Merrimack County Advocacy Center implemented a new program, Helping Ensure Appropriate Response to Trauma (H.E.A.R.T.), which allows for collaboration

between the county and local school districts to ensure that children who experience child abuse, neglect, or other adversity can heal, survive, and thrive in their community and at their school.

Looking ahead, 2024 is shaping up to be a productive year as well. Merrimack County looks forward to several initiatives that we hope will continue to contribute to the livelihood of the county. From exploring renewable energy projects to engaging with the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire, we are hopeful we can continue to positively impact the residents of our county. While balancing the numerous administrative responsibilities the county holds, we are dedicated to delivering these, and more, essential services to ensure the health, vibrancy, safety, and resiliency of Merrimack County in 2024. Wishing you a year of health and the kind of happiness that truly matters. Happy New Year from all of us at Merrimack County!

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