

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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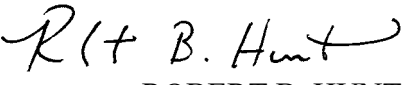
H.P. 1094

House of Representatives, April 15, 2025

### An Act to Develop Maine's Credentialed Workforce

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Reference to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

  
ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative SARGENT of York.  
Cosponsored by Senator RAFFERTY of York and  
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, HEPLER of Woolwich,  
MITCHELL of Cumberland, MURPHY of Scarborough, OSHER of Orono, Senator: TIPPING  
of Penobscot.

1 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

2 Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 447 is enacted to read:

3 **CHAPTER 447**

4 **MAINE CREDENTIALLED WORKFORCE PROGRAM**

5 **§12995. Definitions**

6 As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms  
7 have the following meanings.

8 **1. Authority.** "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.

9 **2. Eligible student loan.** "Eligible student loan" means an undergraduate or graduate  
10 school student loan obtained for study at an accredited institution of higher education by a  
11 student eligible to receive assistance under a federal student assistance program authorized  
12 under the federal Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IV.

13 **3. Fund.** "Fund" means the Maine Credentialed Workforce Program Fund established  
14 in section 12997.

15 **4. Priority occupation.** "Priority occupation" means a profession needing skilled  
16 workers as identified by the authority in consultation with workforce experts and in the  
17 Department of Economic and Community Development publication "Maine Economic  
18 Development Strategy 2020-2029," or successor economic development strategy for the  
19 State.

20 **5. Program.** "Program" means the Maine Credentialed Workforce Program  
21 established in section 12996.

22 **§12996. Maine Credentialed Workforce Program**

23 **1. Establishment; administration.** The Maine Credentialed Workforce Program is  
24 established to support the credentialing needs of current and future participants in the  
25 State's workforce. The authority shall administer the program. The authority's chief  
26 executive officer may consult with experts on an ad hoc basis regarding business,  
27 education, labor and workforce needs in prioritizing targeted professions.

28 **2. Eligibility requirements.** The authority shall establish by rule eligibility  
29 requirements for the program, which must include, at a minimum:

30 A. That the applicant has received a bachelor's degree or graduate degree within 2  
31 years of the date of application;

32 B. That the applicant has outstanding eligible student loans; and

33 C. That the applicant is willing to accept and maintain employment in a priority  
34 occupation position in the State for a minimum of 4 years in return for repayment by  
35 the authority of a portion of that applicant's student loan debt.

36 **3. Application.** An application to the program must be made directly to the authority  
37 at a time and in a format to be determined by the authority.

1       **4. Maximum loan repayment.** The maximum loan repayment amount available to a  
2 participant in the program is \$25,000 per year for a maximum of 4 years.

3       **5. Loan repayment agreement; provisions.** The authority shall enter into loan  
4 repayment agreements with participants in the program on terms and conditions acceptable  
5 to the authority, which at a minimum must require the participant and the participant's  
6 employer to certify annually, before any payment by the authority under the loan repayment  
7 agreement may be made, that the participant has been employed in a priority occupation  
8 position for the preceding 12-month period.

9       **§12997. Maine Credentialed Workforce Program Fund**

10       **1. Fund created.** The Maine Credentialed Workforce Program Fund is established  
11 within the authority as a nonlapsing, interest-earning, revolving fund to carry out the  
12 purposes of this chapter. The fund consists of any funds appropriated, allocated or  
13 contributed from private or public sources, including from state and federal sources, and  
14 any existing funding for other authority programs that, at the discretion of the authority,  
15 may be combined with the program. The funds, to be accounted within the authority, must  
16 be held separate and apart from all other money, funds and accounts. Eligible investment  
17 earnings credited to the assets of the fund become part of the assets of the fund. Any  
18 unexpended balances remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year do not lapse and  
19 must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

20       **2. Fund administration.** The authority may receive, invest and expend on behalf of  
21 the fund money from gifts, grants, bequests and donations in addition to money  
22 appropriated or allocated by the State and any federal funds received by the State for the  
23 benefit of workers in the State who have outstanding eligible student loans. Money received  
24 by the authority on behalf of the fund must be used for the purposes of this chapter. The  
25 fund must be maintained and administered by the authority. Any unexpended balance in  
26 the fund carries forward for continued use under this chapter, except for federal funds that  
27 must be expended according to guidelines issued by the Federal Government governing the  
28 use of those funds.

29       **3. Fund expenses.** Costs and expenses of maintaining, servicing and administering  
30 the fund and of administering the program may be paid out of amounts in the fund.

31       **§12998. Awards**

32       **1. Publication of priority occupations.** The authority shall publicize, using a method  
33 determined by the authority and taking into consideration the recommendations of  
34 workforce experts, the priority occupations for the upcoming application cycle.

35       **2. Application cycle.** The authority shall publicize the dates and deadlines of the  
36 application cycle using a method determined by the authority.

37       **3. Award amounts.** The authority shall maintain financial projections and establish  
38 the targeted number of annual awards to be made to applicants each year who meet the  
39 criteria described in section 12996, subsection 2. In accordance with the priority  
40 occupations and point system established by the authority, an annual award may not:

41       A. Exceed \$25,000 annually;

42       B. Exceed \$100,000 in aggregate or 50% of a recipient's outstanding eligible student  
43 loan debt at the time of application to the program, whichever is less; or

C. Be awarded to a recipient for more than 4 years total.

**§12999. Rules**

The authority may adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this chapter. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes within the Finance Authority of Maine the Maine Credentialed Workforce Program to support the credentialing needs of current and future participants in the State's workforce through student loan repayments to eligible persons who are employed in occupations identified by the authority as needing skilled workers.