

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1705

H.P. 1140

House of Representatives, April 17, 2025

An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

(EMERGENCY)

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative SARGENT of York.
Cosponsored by Senator LIBBY of Cumberland and
Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, DODGE of Belfast, FARRIN of Jefferson,
GRAHAM of North Yarmouth, HEPLER of Woolwich, MITCHELL of Cumberland,
MURPHY of Scarborough, SHAGOURY of Hallowell.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** adult education programs across the State provide essential services to
4 thousands of residents, including those in workforce development programs, adult basic
5 education programs such as English language acquisition programs, high school
6 equivalency and diploma programs, college transitions programming, digital literacy
7 programs and those in lifelong learning programs; and

8 **Whereas,** adult education has been chronically underfunded at the state level for over
9 10 years, creating a significant strain on local communities and programs; and

10 **Whereas,** the working group convened pursuant to Public Law 2023, chapter 412,
11 Part RRR, section 2 and tasked with studying adult education funding did not have time to
12 fully address funding concerns or develop an improved funding solution; and

13 **Whereas,** fully funding adult education is essential to meeting the State's economic
14 and workforce development goals, addressing the needs of growing immigrant and refugee
15 populations in the State and providing equitable access to education for all residents of the
16 State; and

17 **Whereas,** the career advancement and navigation pilot program established pursuant
18 to Public Law 2021, chapter 483, Part LL has been very successful and is slated to end
19 without additional funding; and

20 **Whereas,** career advancement and navigation pilot program staff provide students
21 with academic support, transition support for students entering community college and
22 referrals to resources on and off campus; and

23 **Whereas,** this legislation codifies the pilot program in order to prevent a lapse in
24 services from the program; and

25 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
26 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
27 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
28 therefore,

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

30 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §14** is enacted to read:

31 **§14. Career Advancement and Navigation Program**

32 The Career Advancement and Navigation Program is established within the department
33 as a continuation of the pilot program under Public Law 2021, chapter 483, Part LL in the
34 Governor's Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan dated May 4, 2021. The department, in
35 collaboration with the Maine Community College System, must employ one college and
36 career success coordinator at each community college campus. The coordinators shall
37 work alongside existing community college staff to provide students with:

38 **1. Academic support.** Academic support, including, but not limited to, assistance
39 with navigating learning platforms, setting of goals, creation of academic plans and
40 development of time management strategies;

41 **2. Transition support.** Transition support for students entering community college;

1 **3. Advising services.** Advising services, including, but not limited to, success
2 coaching, course collection, promoting self-sufficiency, career planning and graduation
3 planning; and

4 **4. Referrals.** Referrals to resources on and off campus, including, but not limited to,
5 tutoring services, financial aid, adult education programs, housing services, employment
6 opportunities and other community support.

7 **Sec. 2. 20-A MRSA §8606-A, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

8 **8. Annual assessment and reporting.** The department shall annually assess adult
9 education needs in the State relative to funding appropriated by the Legislature. By
10 December 3, 2025 and annually thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the joint
11 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education matters with the
12 findings of the assessment. The report must include:

13 A. Funding allocated to each adult education program in the State;

14 B. The impact of funding on adult education program outcomes;

15 C. Additional funding needs; and

16 D. Recommendations on improvements to adult education.

17 **Sec. 3. 20-A MRSA §8606-A, sub-§9** is enacted to read:

18 **9. Funds not disbursed; justification.** If funds appropriated for adult education are
19 not disbursed in accordance with the reimbursement procedures and rates described in this
20 section and in section 8607-A, the department shall submit to the Legislature a detailed
21 written explanation describing the reason the funds were not disbursed and describing the
22 purpose of the funds.

23 **Sec. 4. 20-A MRSA §8607-B** is enacted to read:

24 **§8607-B. Program oversight**

25 **1. Guidelines.** The department shall adopt and maintain clear, transparent and
26 consistent guidelines for the use of state funds for adult education programs to ensure fiscal
27 responsibility and alignment with state goals.

28 **2. Stakeholder input.** Prior to finalizing its budget, the department shall biennially
29 convene a stakeholder group to provide the department with input on statewide goals for
30 adult education, funding priorities and statewide program improvements. The stakeholder
31 group must include, but is not limited to:

32 A. One or more members that serve as directors of adult education programs in the
33 State;

34 B. One or more members representing a statewide adult education professional
35 association;

36 C. One or more members that serve as adult education instructors in the State; and

37 D. One or more members representing adult education students.

38 **Sec. 5. Appropriation.** The Legislature shall appropriate to the Department of
39 Education from the General Fund an amount equal to 100% of the state obligation for adult

1 education funding in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section
2 8606-A, subsection 4.

3 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
4 takes effect when approved.

5 SUMMARY

6 This bill establishes the Career Advancement and Navigation Program within the
7 Department of Education in collaboration with the Maine Community College System.
8 The program requires the department to employ one college and career success coordinator
9 at each community college campus to provide students with academic support, advisory
10 services and referrals to community services.

11 The bill also requires the Department of Education to annually assess adult education
12 needs in the State relative to funding appropriated by the Legislature and requires the
13 department to annually submit a report to the Legislature detailing its assessment and
14 recommendations. The bill also requires the department to submit to the Legislature a
15 detailed written explanation for any funding for adult education that is not disbursed in
16 accordance with the reimbursement procedures described in the laws governing adult
17 education. The department is also required to adopt guidelines for the use of state funds
18 for adult education programs and to convene a stakeholder group to provide input on
19 statewide goals for adult education, funding priorities and statewide program
20 improvements. The bill requires the Legislature to appropriate from the General Fund an
21 amount equal to 100% of the state obligation for adult education funding in accordance
22 with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 8606-A, subsection 4.