

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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TWO-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 2023



MAINE

JOBS AND RECOVERY

PLAN

[MAINE.GOV/JOBSPLAN](https://www.maine.gov/jobsplan)

LETTER FROM THE GOVERNOR

Dear Friends,

Nearly four years ago, Maine and the world faced a once-in-a-generation pandemic that threatened lives and livelihoods of people across the globe. As the world economy came to a halt, it was clear that our state not only needed a strong public health response, but a deliberate plan to stabilize our economy and position our state for future prosperity.

In May 2020, I convened a group of Maine's leading economists, business leaders, and bipartisan public officials to help get our economy moving again. Drawing on the 10-Year Economic Development Strategy I unveiled just six months prior, my Economic Recovery Committee developed specific policy recommendations to stabilize, sustain, and grow Maine's economy.

That framework enabled Maine to hit the ground running following passage of President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act in March 2021. While other states struggled to allocate their federal relief funds, Maine quickly put nearly \$1 billion to work through the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, my plan to improve the lives of Maine people and families, help businesses, create good-paying jobs, and build an economy poised for future prosperity.

Unveiling the Jobs Plan in May 2021, I established three goals: achieve immediate economic recovery from the pandemic; achieve long-term economic growth for Maine; and engage in infrastructure revitalization. While we have more work to do, the Jobs Plan has strengthened our economy and made direct investments in the infrastructure that Maine people need to succeed.

By virtually every measure, Maine's economy is stronger today than it was before the pandemic. Our gross domestic product—a key measure of economic growth—has grown at one of the fastest rates in the nation. In fact, Maine has seen more economic growth over the last four years than in the entire preceding fifteen years. Our state has seen historic rates of in-migration, ranking first in New England and as high as seventh in the nation. Today, Maine has a record-high number of jobs, and nearly 14,000 new businesses registered last year with the Maine Secretary of State's office.

We achieved this historic growth by investing in small businesses and heritage industries, encouraging new businesses and job creation through innovation and entrepreneurship, and investing in the infrastructure Maine people need to live, work, and raise a family – from roads and bridges to broadband, affordable housing, transportation, childcare, education, and more.

Our investments have helped Maine people of all ages and backgrounds find new opportunities in meaningful careers, like Lucas, who is excited about starting his construction career; Jeni, who is working on her future preparing for medical school; and Jodi and Todd, who are filling critical needs in Maine classrooms through the tuition support program for educators. Our investments in forward-thinking Maine companies like Tanbark in Saco and Nyle Systems in Brewer are creating good-paying jobs, diversifying our heritage industries, and helping to tackle our climate crisis.

We have more work to do. But two years after the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan took effect, there's no doubt that Maine's economy is stronger than it was before the pandemic and continuing to grow. My administration will continue to work to ensure that Maine is a place where all people can get a good education, have a rewarding career that pays well, raise a happy and healthy family, and live comfortably in a community they love.



Governor Janet T. Mills



ABOUT THE MAINE JOBS AND RECOVERY PLAN

The Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan uses Maine’s nearly \$1 billion in State Fiscal Recovery Funds provided by the federal American Rescue Plan Act for strategic investments to relieve the significant toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on Maine’s people, communities, and economy while addressing known, systemic challenges that have constrained our state’s ability to grow and thrive for years.

Governor Mills identified three goals when she introduced the Jobs Plan in 2021:

1. Immediate economic recovery from the pandemic: Ensure Maine businesses stay open, their workers are safe and remain on-the-job, and our economy is secure in the short-term.
2. Long-term economic growth for Maine: Strengthen Maine’s workforce, spur innovation, and draw new people and their families to Maine.
3. Infrastructure revitalization: Revitalize the support systems and community infrastructure that ensure people and families can live healthy and productive lives in Maine.

The plan accomplishes these goals by investing in programs organized across three domains:

- Business Supports that sustain and grow Maine’s small businesses and heritage industries by keeping employer doors open, reducing the costs of doing business, and supporting innovation.
- Job and Career Programs that help Maine workers and students improve their career opportunities by enhancing job training, credential attainment, and experiential learning.
- Investments in Maine People & Communities that strengthen traditional infrastructure and community infrastructure to help create jobs and support Maine workers, families, and employers.

WHAT IS IN THE MAINE JOBS AND RECOVERY PLAN?

BUSINESS SUPPORTS			Small Businesses	New Businesses	Economic Development
Regulatory Reform	Worker Attraction Development + Retention	Heritage Industry + Sector-Specific Supports <i>Agriculture • Commercial Fisheries • Forestry • Innovation Economy • Clean Energy</i>			
JOBS + CAREER PROGRAMS			Apprenticeships	Education + Job Training	
Career Exploration	Career Counseling	Health Sector Careers	Clean Energy Careers		
INVESTMENTS IN MAINE PEOPLE + COMMUNITIES					
Broadband	Clean Water	Climate + Energy Efficiency	Early Childhood + Family Caregiving		
Government Services	Housing	Legal Assistance	Outdoor Rec	Public Health + Safety	

ACHIEVING RESULTS THAT ADVANCE MAINE'S RECOVERY AND GROWTH

Since the Jobs Plan took effect in October 2021, the Mills Administration has delivered \$175 million in direct economic relief to thousands of Maine small businesses, invested in workforce programs estimated to offer apprenticeship, career and education advancement, and job training opportunities to 25,000 Maine people, and catalyzed more than 400 infrastructure projects to support families and revitalize Maine communities.

Maine was also among the first four states nationally – and first in New England – to allocate 100% of its State Fiscal Recovery Funds when the Governor's Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan was approved by the legislature in July 2021. The Jobs Plan went into effect on October 18, 2021.

Maine now ranks first in New England – and 21st nationally – in swiftly putting federal recovery funds to work. Investments are reaching Mainers across 359 communities, with more than half of announced grants going to rural areas and low-income regions of the state.

The Jobs Plan has received national attention for prioritizing solutions that make sense for Maine's long-term prosperity. Most importantly, these investments are producing results.

Over \$984 million – nearly 99% of Jobs Plan funding – has been approved through the state's internal documentation process to ensure these uses align with federal eligibility rules. And over \$743 million – approximately 75% in Jobs Plan funding has been spent or committed to deliver results on behalf of Mainers.

Maine will continue to deploy the remaining funds as agencies complete procurement and grant making activities, as well as spend down on personnel costs. All funds must be spent by December 31, 2026.

JOBS PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

RECOVERY INVESTMENTS: More than 1,390 Maine small businesses received over \$131 million in recovery and growth financing

ENERGY COST RELIEF: Over 2,900 small businesses received electric utility credits to reduce burden of elevated energy costs

HEALTH INSURANCE SUPPORT: More than 5,700 small businesses were able to more affordably offer health insurance to over 45,700 employees and dependents

SKILL DEVELOPMENT: Nearly 3,400 workers enrolled in a job credential or training program

CAREER EXPLORATION: Over 3,200 young people participated in an internship, apprenticeship, or career exploration experience

WORKFORCE OUTREACH: Over 3,900 Mainers received career advancement or navigation assistance

TECHNICAL EDUCATION: 23 schools built out new career and technical education facilities or job training equipment

HOUSING: 528 units under development across 18 projects

EARLY CHILDHOOD: 2,476 new or newly full-time child care and pre-kindergarten slots at 104 programs

WATER AND CLIMATE: 158 investments to upgrade drinking and wastewater systems, or increase infrastructure resilience to climate change

ENERGY EFFICIENCY: 1,187 energy efficiency upgrades to businesses, communities, and low-income homeowners

Heather Johnson

COMMISSIONER, MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"Maine's 10-Year Economic Development Strategy created a framework that encouraged collaboration by local communities, the private sector, and the State to target long-standing challenges in Maine's economy. This foundation positioned Maine, through the Governor's Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, to lead the country in deploying Federal funds to address immediate problems and systemic challenges."



MAKING AN IMPACT FOR MAINE

\$175 MILLION

IN DIRECT ECONOMIC RELIEF TO THOUSANDS OF MAINE SMALL BUSINESSES



Health Insurance Relief



Economic Recovery Grants



Energy Cost Relief

WORKFORCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR 25,000 MAINE PEOPLE



Job Training



Apprenticeships



Credential Attainment



Experiential Learning

400+ INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT MAINE PEOPLE, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



Drinking Water



Wastewater



Climate + Energy Efficiency



Early Education + Childcare



Affordable Housing

REACHING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE

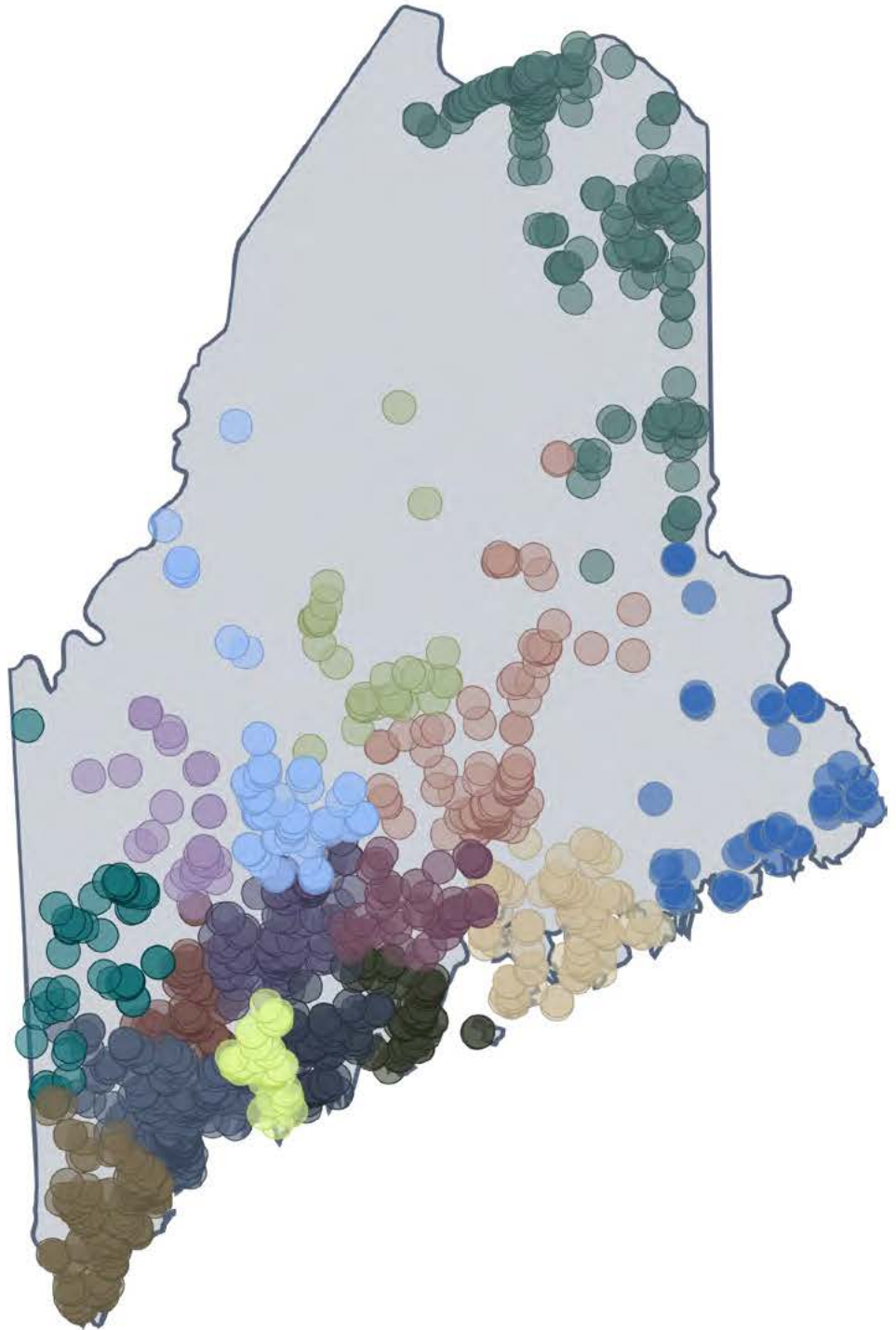
Jobs Plan funds are reaching communities statewide, with more than 2,050 grant awards made to support businesses, households, and communities across 359 towns and cities in Maine.

Over half of all announced Jobs Plan grant awards and more than 41% of total award dollar value have been made to grantees living in rural areas, low-income regions, or communities with significant socioeconomic or environmental burdens as measured using federal criteria. These results outperform new federal Justice40 targets that direct 40 percent of investments from federal programs to communities that meet this criteria.

- Androscoggin
- Aroostook
- Cumberland
- Franklin
- Hancock
- Kennebec
- Knox
- Lincoln
- Oxford
- Penobscot
- Piscataquis
- Sagadahoc
- Somerset
- Waldo
- Washington
- York

Announced grants include support for Maine small businesses and heritage industries, grants to job training organizations, and investments in communities through expanding child care, affordable housing, broadband, and other critical infrastructure. Map data as of September 18, 2023.

Grants Funded Through the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan



Visit the **Jobs Plan Dashboard**
to search grants by municipality or county

JOBS PLAN DASHBOARD

INVESTING IN THE RIGHT SOLUTIONS FOR MAINE

In July 2023, President Biden visited Auburn Manufacturing in Auburn to highlight how historic investments are supporting the innovation and ingenuity of Maine people to build a stronger, more prosperous economy. His remarks celebrated the Jobs Plan's use of federal recovery funds to help the state's small businesses lead the nation introducing the clean products of the future, and to make sure Maine's workers have the skills needed to do new jobs supported by these investments.

Since the Jobs Plan was introduced in 2021, Maine has been highlighted by the non-partisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities as a national leader in deploying of American Rescue Plan recovery funds towards talent, jobs, and innovation. The report ranked Maine in the

top three states for share of funds allocated towards workforce development, higher education, and business assistance.

The White House has also cited three of Maine's initiatives in describing American Rescue Plan workforce best practices and the US Department of Treasury, the federal agency charged with overseeing the American Rescue Plan Act, recognized Maine as the lead example of a state investing in job training with federal recovery funds. In September 2023, Maine's Jobs Plan-funded apprenticeship program was featured as an "investment that works" in a White House playbook on evidence-based workforce development strategies.



President Joe Biden

JULY 28, 2023 AT AUBURN MANUFACTURING

"Now with the help of the American Rescue Plan, they're having their biggest export year ever. The company is growing, and their products are made in America."

JOB AND CAREER PROGRAMS

The Jobs Plan makes historic investments in the development of Maine’s workforce to help Maine people achieve their full potential. Paid work experiences for young people and upgrades to Career and Technical Education programs are strengthening students’ early foundations for rewarding work. Apprenticeships, no- and low-cost job training, and tuition support for credential attainment are providing workers with job skills that unlock well-paying careers. Industry talent partnerships, community-based career counseling, and peer supports are connecting more Mainers to quality jobs and equipping them for success.

CAREER EXPLORATION

The Maine Career Exploration program is a \$25 million initiative to connect 6,000 young people in Maine to future career opportunities by funding paid work experiences with employers across the state. As of summer 2023, nearly 3,000 young people aged 16-24 have completed a paid work experience with a Maine employer.

The Maine Career Exploration program is a recommendation of Maine’s 10-year Economic Development Strategy, unveiled by Governor Mills in 2019, to support Maine’s goal of adding 75,000 workers to Maine’s workforce by 2030. The program is led by the Department of Economic and Community Development in partnership with the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Since 2019, enrollment in Maine’s Career and Technical Education (CTEs) schools has grown by nearly 11 percent, with an almost 300 percent increase in exploratory program enrollment that allows freshman and sophomores to sample multiple programs to follow their interests. CTEs across Maine are adding programming, upgrading facilities, and modernizing equipment to expand hands on, real-world programs for Maine students in plumbing, electrical, building construction, culinary and hospitality, emergency medical technician, welding, and more.

Some of these investments include:

- Oxford Hills Technical School in Norway is building a new free-standing facility to expand their plumbing, electrician, and building construction tech programs.
- Northern Penobscot Tech Region III in Lincoln is expanding their welding program by building an addition to the existing school that will add five welding booth ventilators, ten welding booths, and ten welders.
- Region 9 School of Applied Technology in Mexico is establishing a four-season outdoor education center, creating new classroom and lab space for the welding program, and expanding the culinary arts program to include an outdoor education space with a greenhouse, store, outdoor kitchen, and classroom.
- Biddeford Regional Center of Technology is building a two-story addition to create a culinary arts and hospitality program as well as an athletic training program and to expand existing plumbing and emergency medical technician programs.

These projects are part of a larger \$20 million investment from the Governor’s Jobs Plan to expand CTEs in Maine. In addition to the Jobs Plan funding, the Governor and the Legislature have increased funding for CTEs by nearly \$10 million over the past four years, including a \$1.6 million dollar appropriation to help cover the increased cost of supplies and \$100,000 to expand CTE early childhood education programs.

Paulette Bonneau

DIRECTOR, BIDDEFORD REGIONAL CENTER OF TECHNOLOGY

“In Biddeford, we will finally be able to offer three new programs: culinary arts, travel, tourism and hospitality program, and athletic training/sports medicine. Additionally, we are adding expanded space for our plumbing, heating, and EMT program. Through these grants, we’re able to offer more workforce training programs and give students more choice and opportunity.”



JOBS PLAN SPOTLIGHT

Career Exploration



Pre-apprentice Andrew Hoffman stands on a boat used for mussel harvesting at Bangs Island Mussels in Portland. “I’m really interested in the ecology/biology aspect of environmental studies, I’m very interested in the ocean,” Hoffman said. “That’s why I’m here, and I just love the outdoors, I love working outside.”

While Bangs Island Mussels has had interns in the past, this was their first experience with pre-apprenticeship. “It’s important to us to help grow the next generation of aquaculture professionals,” Matthew Moretti, CEO of Bangs Island Mussels, said. “Andrew is paid for, which is amazing, and it’s working out great. That was huge, that really made it doable for us. It helped out a lot.”

Pre-apprenticeships give employers and workers the time and flexibility to try new things and learn skills in a hands-on way.

South Portland High School senior Noah Viola became a volunteer firefighter at the Cash Corner Fire Station during his career exploration experience in 2022. He worked with mentors who taught him the importance of proper handling of equipment, keeping a clean fire house, work life balance, perseverance and confidentiality. He’s had a great start to the beginning of his career journey, learning the different classifications of incoming fire and distress calls and the types of vehicles each situation requires. He plans to continue with this career exploration experience by attending Southern Maine Community College.



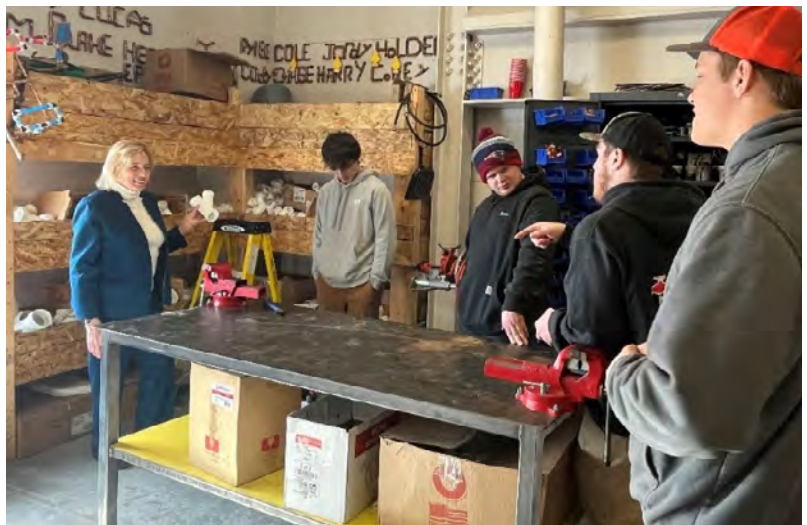
APPRENTICESHIPS AND PRE-APPRENTICESHIPS

In June 2022, Governor Mills announced \$12.3 million in grants to 14 organizations to expand apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships across Maine with support from the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan. The funding is expected to provide more than 3,000 Maine people with new apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor’s Registered Apprenticeship Program, more than doubling the number of Maine’s current apprentices.

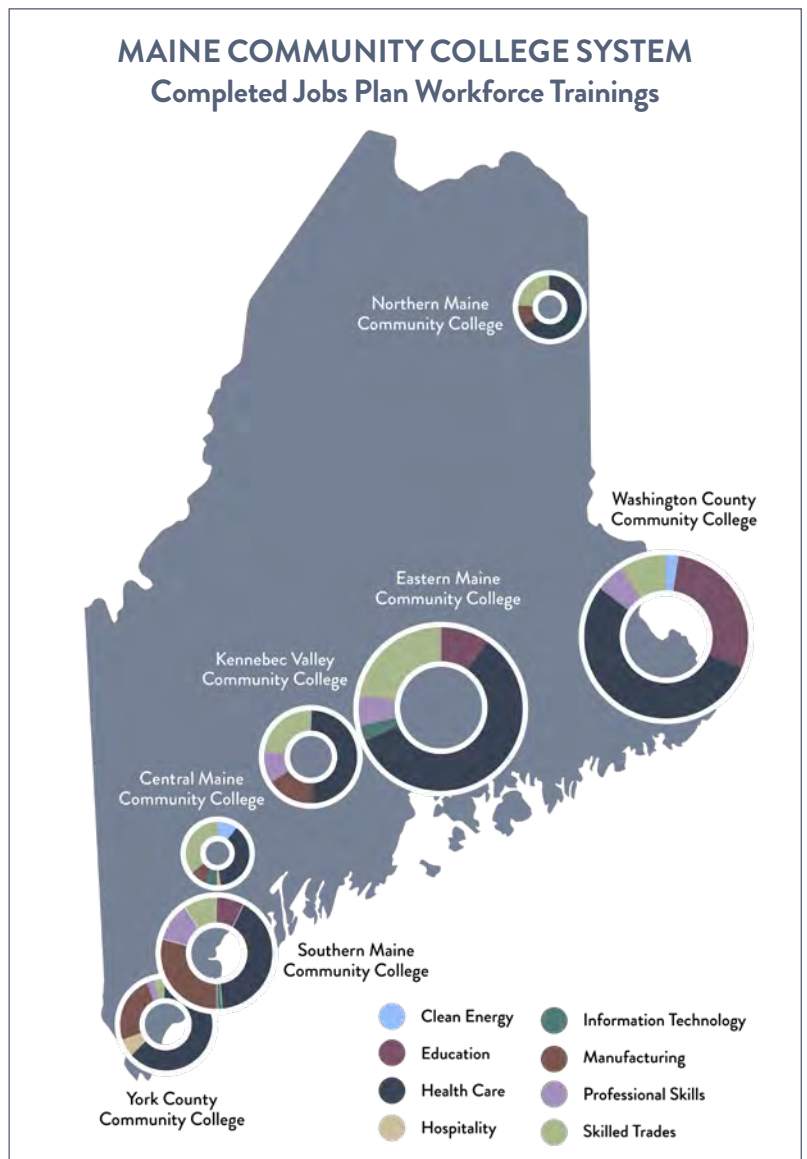
The awards are creating new apprenticeships in more than 50 new occupations – such as emergency medical technician, roofing technician, lodging manager, accounting technician, customer service and operations management – which will generate new apprenticeship pipelines for young adults, expand apprenticeships in rural areas, recruit more employers to offer apprenticeships, and increase equity in apprenticeship programs. The funding is also expected to add more than 150 new employer sponsors to Maine’s prior total of 121 registered sponsors.

JOB TRAINING THROUGH MAINE’S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Through the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan, the Maine Community College System is offering free and low-cost vocational training to 8,500 Mainers seeking to improve their skills or career opportunities in Maine industries negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including health care, clean energy, manufacturing, hospitality, education, computer technology, and trades. Funding supports student tuition costs, the purchase of new equipment needed to stand up new trainings, and added staffing for project management, instruction, and learner navigation. As of mid-2023, almost 3,000 workers have enrolled in these programs across each of the community colleges.



Governor Mills visits with Oxford Hills Technical School plumbing students during an announcement on Feb. 27, 2023. The governor announced that the school would receive more than \$2 million for a new free-standing building to expand their plumbing, electrician, and building construction tech programs.



JOBS PLAN SPOTLIGHT

Teacher Apprenticeships

Maine’s Department of Labor and Department of Education are using Jobs Plan funding, along with other federal resources, to expand teacher apprenticeship programs in collaboration with school districts and Maine’s community colleges. The program aims to bolster the teacher workforce through innovative recruitment and retention strategies. Apprentices work in the classrooms during the school day while they advance their career to become certified Education Technicians II, creating a pathway to continue their education and become certified teachers.



Todd Belanger decided to switch careers after hearing about the ed-tech apprenticeship opportunity. He’s now studying and working as an ed-tech at Gorham High School and plans to further his education after the program is complete. The apprenticeship opportunity and the need for ed-techs came at a time in Todd’s life that made it a great fit.

“The biggest benefit for me is that I wanted to go back to college already. I have two kids—ages 8 and 5. I’m still able to work and get benefits for my children. I’m getting the education I want, but in a way that I’m not missing out on time with my kids or worrying about my bills.”

—Todd Belanger

Jodi Polchies was among the first class of ed-tech apprentices in the apprenticeship program expanded through funding from the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan. In partnership with the University of Southern Maine, this program works to fill the critical need for more ed-tech staff at a handful of schools in Southern Maine. She’s currently working and training with students at Gorham Middle School.



CLEAN ENERGY PARTNERSHIP

In December 2022, the Governor’s Energy Office awarded \$2.5 million in Jobs Plan-funded grants to nine clean energy employers, educational institutions, industry associations, and nonprofit organizations to develop new curricula, provide technical training and experiential learning, deploy new job placement services, and other activities related to workforce development and training. More than 1,800 individuals have received career development or job training assistance as a result of the project.

WORKFORCE TRANSPORTATION

Maine’s Department of Transportation is providing competitive grants to local and regional partnerships piloting ways to connect workers and employers through ridesharing, vanpools, and other subsidized transit options. In addition to supporting transportation of workers from rural areas to more urban centers of employment, a portion of funds were used specifically to connect workers in rural areas to employment opportunities in rural areas.

TRANSPORTATION GRANTEES

- Bath Iron Works, Bath: \$750,000
- Gagne Foods, Bath: \$59,840
- Kennebunk-Kennebunkport-Arundel Chamber of Commerce, Kennebunk: \$476,000
- Maine West, Orono; \$283,000
- Robbins Lumber, Searsmont: \$41,600
- Sunday River, Newry: \$387,200
- TimberHP, Madison: \$750,000
- Western Maine Transportation Services, Auburn: \$225,000



Lucas Huff used his apprenticeship training experience with the Associated General Contractors (AGC)’s Maine Construction Academy Pre-apprentice Program funded by the Jobs Plan, to land a clean energy job. He now works with Wyman & Simpson, Inc, who build utility and hydro-electric projects around Maine.

“My experience with the construction academy was amazing. Construction has been a dream of mine and I always loved running equipment when I got the chance with my dad. Those six weeks were amazing and wish I could do it all over again. We got to visit some amazing company job sites. I have learned more than I thought I would learn from this program. At the end of the program there were interviews with different companies that you could go and talk to. One of the job sites we visited was Wyman & Simpson so I wanted to talk to them. Then a couple weeks before senior year, Wyman & Simpson hired me and one of my buddies. They taught me how to do things, get my hands dirty and work hard. Going on to my second week, knowing I picked a great job is amazing at such a young age. I feel very grateful to have this opportunity.”

JOBS PLAN SPOTLIGHT

Bringing Mainers into the Workforce

Jobs Plan investments have increased the reach and mobility of Maine Department of Labor’s CareerCenter staff and navigators, enabling them to meet and serve clients in libraries, schools, and other community settings. Job seekers are provided help searching for job opportunities, finding vocational training and tuition supports, and accessing resources to overcome barriers such as childcare and transportation.



Alexander Bailey, left, and Jennifer Edwards, second from left, from Angstrom Fiber Automotive, chat with Marisa Dias, Arlete Pinto, and Lucia David, right, at an outdoor hiring event in Lewiston, ME on August 22, 2023. Angstrom came to the hiring event to find candidates for their Auburn-based business. Jobs Plan funding has allowed the Department to offer more help to job seekers and broaden its reach supporting employers with recruitment, training, and retention goals.

CareerCenter counselor Shane McKenzie helps a CARA (Criminogenic Addiction and Recovery Academy) participant put together a resume during their weekly scheduled time at the Augusta Career Center. The 7-week course helps incarcerated individuals build skills related to workplace etiquette, resume building, how to interview effectively and gain employment. Employers volunteer with the CareerCenter to help provide interview simulations. “I like to relate to them as much as I can,” said McKenzie of his work with CARA participants. “I try to humanize myself with them. And when I see the looks on their faces when they’ve printed out their resume for the first time—that’s why I love my job.”



HEALTH CARE WORKFORCE

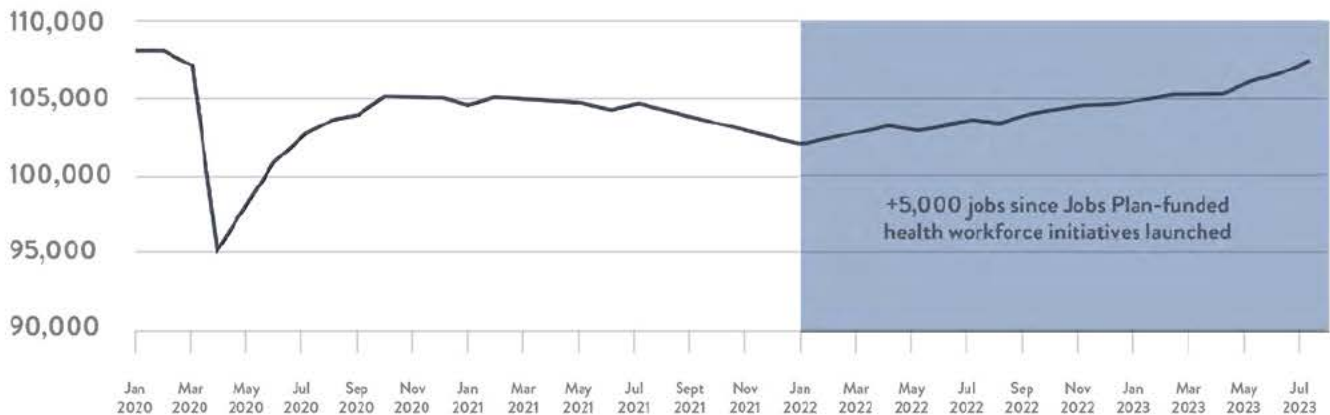
Health care employs more workers than any other job sector in Maine. Strengthening the state’s health care workforce has been a top focus of the Jobs Plan, with more jobs-related investments targeting this sector than any other.

These investments are bolstering recruitment for health sector jobs through media campaigns and new apprenticeships opportunities; providing workers with new skills through low and no-cost job training offered by Health Care Training for Me and the community college system; and helping workers overcome barriers to career success through new talent partnerships with industry and the support of health career pathway navigators, and collaboration with health system leaders to grow the talent pipeline and develop new workforce models to advance health equity and health

care access in rural and other under-served populations, among other strategies. These initiatives also built on provider rate increases and other administration initiatives outside of the Jobs Plan.

Since many of the Jobs Plan’s health workforce programs started in January 2022, Maine has added back approximately 5,000 health care jobs, bringing employment in the sector to 106,800 workers, including nurses, doctors, CNAs, paramedics, and other professions. This growth has stabilized and reversed earlier worker losses and is part of Maine’s recovery of 99% of jobs in the health care sector since the onset of the pandemic, despite many long-term structural challenges. As Maine’s population ages and grows, continuing to strengthen this workforce remains essential to ensure access to affordable, quality care throughout the state.

Health Care and Social Assistance Employment in Maine



Jeni Nganzobo

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT MACHIAS GRADUATE, BA IN BIOLOGY

Jeni Nganzobo arrived in Maine from South Africa in December of 2019. She joined the inaugural cohort of the Roux Institute’s Post-Baccalaureate, Pre-Clinical Healthcare Gap Year Program, which places recent college grads in entry-level healthcare positions in Maine and is funded by a Jobs Plan grant from the Maine Department of Labor. Currently working as a patient service representative at Eastern Maine Medical Center, Nganzobo hopes to stay in Maine. “Working in Maine helps me gain experience in rural settings,” she says. “If I left to study in another state, Maine would be the first state I would come back to do my residency in. It’s a good thing to come back to bring diversity to the hospital.”

As for her future plans, she has been thinking about it for a while. “I’ve always wanted to be a surgeon,” she said. “That’s what I’ve always wanted to do since I was young.”



JOBS PLAN SPOTLIGHT

Strengthening Maine's Emergency Responders



Aaron Nugent receives his graduation pin from his father, Rick Nugent during the graduation ceremony for 20 new certified paramedics on June 26, 2023 in Auburn. Nugent, already an Advanced EMT in Oxford County for the last 15 years, will now be able to provide a higher level of care in emergencies.

Residents of Oxford County will have better access to quality care and emergency services thanks to the Healthcare Training for ME tuition remission upskilling program.

“There’s a shortage of EMS providers in Maine,” said Bob Hand, Director of Paramedic Alliance for Community Emergencies (PACE) Paramedic Service in Norway, Maine. “It’s been difficult to find that level of personnel these days.”

PACE is a department of Stephens Memorial Hospital and staffs a paramedic on every ambulance. That’s why, as a paramedic himself, Hand was excited to hear that two of his team members with existing EMT credentials qualified for the additional paramedic

certification training funded through the Jobs Plan. The tuition remission program saves participants from having to pay between \$10,000-\$12,000 out-of-pocket to become certified on their own.

That means Aaron Nugent, already an Advanced EMT for the last 15 years, will now be able to provide a higher level of care in emergencies. That’s a big win for communities like his, where it’s not uncommon to come across people he’s helped over the years and get a heartfelt thank you.

“When you have moments like that, it’s a great experience,” Nugent said. “To know that someone is actually really thankful for our work— it can be very rewarding.”

BUSINESS SUPPORTS

Jobs Plan business support initiatives are sustaining and growing Maine’s small businesses and heritage industries by keeping employer doors open, reducing the costs of doing business, and supporting innovation. These investments have provided direct economic relief to thousands of businesses in every sector of Maine’s economy through recovery grants and loans, energy cost relief, and health insurance support. Jobs Plan funding also catalyzed business assistance resources for Maine entrepreneurs, expanded the state’s domestic trade program to help Maine’s small businesses to grow sales across the United States, and invested \$80 million into the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund to mitigate increases to business taxes.

SMALL BUSINESSES BENEFITING FROM JOBS PLAN SUPPORT



ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY

Auburn Manufacturing

Auburn | PRIME | \$360,000

“In early 2022, we were still digging out from the remains of a two-year pandemic. Market demand for our industrial fabrics was exploding, while our facilities, equipment and workforce all needed upgrades to meet the demand,” said Kathie Leonard, President/CEO at Auburn Manufacturing. “The grant was the spark needed to reignite our manufacturing capabilities. Over the past year, we’ve repaired facilities for increased safety and energy efficiency, purchased textile equipment, and increased our workforce by 10% and our payroll by 20%. We’re still working hard to catch up, but at least we’re seeing daylight again!”

AROOSTOOK COUNTY

Tiny Homes of Maine

Houlton | PRIME | \$150,000

“This award money couldn’t have come at a better time!” said Corinne Watson, the company’s founder. “This allowed us to purchase new equipment and upgrade existing equipment. This not only has sped up production but also boosted the morale of our team! It’s been crucial in scaling up our business and we are very grateful and appreciative!”

Note: In September 2023, Tiny Homes of Maine experienced a fire at their facility, but have announced they are reopening at new location by October 30, 2023.





KENNEBEC COUNTY

Knowles Mechanical

Vassalboro | Thrive | \$519,030

“This grant enabled us to invest in critical operations for the entire state. It helped us improve our fleet, operating equipment, employee training and support, and outreach to historically underserved communities,” said Knowles Mechanical President Arif Shaikh.

KNOX COUNTY

American Unagi

Thomaston | Seafood Dealer/Processor
Grant | \$136,000

“Keeping this unique Maine resource (the American eel) in Maine and creating jobs is exactly what we are looking to do at American Unagi,” said Sara Rademaker, President and Founder. “We feel so lucky to be located in Maine, and provide real full and part time jobs in our region and beyond as we grow. Thanks for your support and this opportunity.”



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

PK Holdings (Foundation House)

Portland | Thrive | \$652,689

“For the past twenty years, Foundation House has pioneered extended-care substance abuse and mental health treatment as a small business operating in Maine,” said Patrick Babcock, CEO and Founder of Foundation House. “The recent support from FAME was instrumental in our ability to navigate the ramifications of the global pandemic. As a result, we’ve recently opened additional higher levels of care for our clients seeking more intensive treatment.”

FRANKLIN COUNTY

ORIGIN

Farmington | PRIME | \$360,000

“ORIGIN is a salt-of-the-earth family business, manufacturing all-American performance textiles and durable goods, including everyday workwear and clothing, denim, boots, fitness gear, and hunting apparel. The PRIME funding we received allowed us to build a more diversified workforce, reduce product lead time, invest in new looms and manufacturing equipment, and create new textiles.”
— Pete Roberts, ORIGIN Founder

HANCOCK COUNTY

Merrill Blueberry Farms

Hancock | Ag Infrastructure Grant | \$500,000

“Funds from the AIIP grant will be used to purchase and install new refrigeration equipment for our large storage freezers in Hancock County. As one of the smaller wild blueberry processors in the state, I cannot understate the importance of using more energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly equipment, to help us stay competitive,” said company president Todd Merrill.



LINCOLN COUNTY

Monhegan Historical & Cultural Museum Association

Monhegan | Thrive | \$342,229

“With the support of this forgivable loan we spent much of the winter of 2022-2023 crafting our first institutional plan,” said Jennifer Pye, Director, Monhegan Museum of Art & History. “Thrive funds provide financial stability that will enable the Monhegan Museum to expand staffing so that we may continue to develop the museum’s role as a steward of the island’s rich historical and artistic heritage, strengthen community engagement, and ensure long-term sustainability.”





OXFORD COUNTY

Maine Teen Camp

Porter | Thrive | \$523,026

“It’s very exciting for us, we’re finally able to replace the 100+ year old building that serves as the camp health center,” said camp director Matthew Pines. “The cabin that has served as a health center is very tired, and on rainy days has an unplanned indoor water feature. We’re starting work in fall 2023 on a replacement that will also be a winterized building to provide housing for some of our year round staff (and thus help a little with the housing crisis here in Maine).”

PENOBSCOT COUNTY

Nyle Systems

Brewer | PRIME | \$386,667

“It was great to have the governor visit the factory and discuss the potential for growth in the heat pump industry,” said Ton Matthissen, founder and CEO at Nyle Systems. “The pandemic and the supply chain crisis that followed was a bad time for industry. PRIME really helped us improve our benefits package. We used it to kick-off our 401K matching, increase the company’s contribution to the health plan premiums and grow the number of employees.”



PISCATAQUIS COUNTY

Clean Maine Carbon

Greenville | Forestry Recovery Initiative | \$500,000

“Our Greenville Biochar manufacturing plant is now in operation making Biochar from Maine’s abundant forest residue,” said the company’s President Pat Jones. “These funds allowed CMC to move forward with their plant which has already resulted in CMC hiring 4 new employees and CMC anticipates that trend to continue.”



SAGADAHOC COUNTY

Kennebec River Biosciences

Richmond | PRIME | \$126,667

“The resources provided through the Pandemic Recovery for an Innovative Maine Economy (PRIME) Fund allowed Kennebec River Biosciences to create redundancy in our manufacturing systems and be better prepared for disruptions with our supply chains,” said CEO Bill Keleher. “The equipment we were able to purchase will provide us greater resiliency going forward and will position our company to weather future disruptions more effectively.”



WASHINGTON COUNTY

Marsh Cove Lobster Co.

Milbridge | Seafood Dealer/Processor Award
\$180,000

“The funds received assisted our business with the construction of a new cold storage space with refrigeration,” said owner Eric Beal. “This gives our fishermen access to bait without supply chain disruptions. In addition, we were able to build a boat ramp which provides increased waterfront access to local fishermen.”



SOMERSET COUNTY

Bigelow Brewing

Skowhegan | Ag Infrastructure Grant | \$500,000

“Our new state-of-the-art equipment and advanced technologies will increase efficiency and productivity, allowing us to expand our production capacity and meet the rising demand for locally produced beer,” said Pam Powers, co-founder of Bigelow Brewing. “Moreover, the grant has enabled us to improve our facilities, creating a more sustainable and welcoming environment to work with farmers as we grow. We are grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the growth and success of Maine’s agricultural community.”

YORK COUNTY

Caron Engineering

Wells | PRIME | \$373,333

“The generous PRIME grant that was awarded to Caron Engineering was used for many things but primarily staff and inventory needs,” said CEO Rob Caron. “It allowed us to survive and thrive by restoring our highly technical staff, products, projects, and inventory during the darkest days of the pandemic.”



WALDO COUNTY

Scone Goddess

Northport | Domestic Trade Award | \$18,875

“Thus far, we have utilized the funds to strengthen our brand presence at wholesale trade shows, on all digital platforms and to generate publicity for the brand,” said founder Veronica Stubbs. “Sales shot up over 50% in August 2023 compared to July, with the trend continuing into September. Of the 141 online orders, 90 of them were first time customers from outside of Maine.”

INVESTMENTS IN MAINE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

Jobs Plan investments in Maine people and communities are revitalizing the support systems and community infrastructure that ensure people are able to live healthy and productive lives in Maine. Many of these grant funds are helping communities address critical water and climate infrastructure needs without assuming additional debt. Others focus on building out early childhood programs, housing, and broadband to expand critical family resources. Efficiency programs help reduce the energy cost burden for residents and businesses.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN EXPANSION GRANTS

The first years of life are a critical developmental time in forming the basis for learning and social interaction. It's well established that investments in early learning have powerful long-term paybacks. The pandemic heightened the difficulty that many Maine parents already faced in struggling to locate pre-kindergarten or child care. Access gaps are especially acute in Maine's rural communities.

Maine's Department of Education is investing \$10 million in Jobs Plan funding help schools increase the number of children accessing high-quality pre-kindergarten. Grants are enabling local school administrative units to cover facility renovations, staff recruitment and training, and other start-up costs linked to establishing new public pre-kindergarten programs, expanding to



Pre-K students in Sanford enjoy their first day of classes thanks to a grant to expand the program. The Pre-K program, offered at Margaret Chase Smith, Sanford Regional Technical Center, Sanford Pride Elementary, and Carl J. Lamb School, is open for children who turn four years old by October 15th and who live in the district, emphasizes literacy, numeracy and math skills, creativity, health and nutrition, and social-emotional development. There is no cost, and there are no income-eligibility requirements.

“We have been able to expand our program from half day to a 6.5 hour full day program, said Sanford School District Assistant Superintendent Steve Bussiere. “The grant has provided an additional 48 new slots for students and provided another 16 students with a full day program that were previously half day.”

“With the opening of our Lily Pond Infant Care Center, we will be able to serve more local families who are in desperate need of affordable, quality care for their young children,” says Whitney Files, CEO of the Penobscot Bay YMCA. “We are most grateful to the Maine Child Care Infrastructure Grant Program as well as many local businesses, foundations, and individual donors who have made this new Center possible.”



additional classrooms, or transitioning from part-day/part-week to full-day/fullweek. The Department is also providing technical assistance and professional learning to school administrative units for pre-kindergarten expansion.

As of summer 2023, the Department has awarded grants to 31 schools to start or expand Pre-K in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years with more than 950 seats created or converted to fulltime.

CHILD CARE INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

The Child Care Infrastructure Grant Program is delivering funding and technical assistance to launch or grow child care programs throughout the state. Established with Jobs Plan funding by Maine’s Office of Child and Family Services in the Department of Health and Human Services and administered by Coastal Enterprises Inc, the program enables existing providers to

renovate facilities and increase enrollment. For new providers, the program offers help with startup costs and business planning, as well as with child care specific activities such as developing an early childhood education approach, securing licenses, and earning a Quality for ME rating.

As part of the supplemental budget bill passed in April 2022, more than \$5 million in early childhood funds were reallocated to provide additional resources for grants to renovate, expand or construct child care programs. This reallocation was made possible because available federal funds from the child care development block grant are sufficient to establish and provide ongoing support for the Help Maine Grow System and the First 4 ME Early Care and Education Program. This investment increased by over 50 percent the total Jobs Plan funding available for “bricks and mortar” child care projects to \$15,236,475. As of summer 2023, more than 1,500 new child care slots have been created over more than 70 programs.

“The Child Care Infrastructure Grant Program is putting funds to work to support quality child care statewide. It’s an investment that will benefit Maine children and families for years to come and we are proud to partner with the State of Maine to support more than 1,500 new child care slots so far – with more to come. We know that lack of care keeps many parents out of the workforce and reducing their economic well-being. We salute all child care providers for the work they do every day to support children and families.”

—Keith Bisson, President, Coastal Enterprises Inc.

HOUSING PRODUCTION

Maine’s surging real estate market during the pandemic put home ownership and rental opportunities out of reach for many Maine families, and displaced renters from stable housing.

Jobs Plan funds expanded housing options that are affordable to workers and their families to own or rent, through financing programs administered by MaineHousing. A redesigned and expanded Affordable Homeownership Program invested \$10 million in subsidized financing to increase the building of new homes available to households with incomes up to 120% of area median income.

The remaining \$40 million was made available to housing developers in 2022 to accelerate the construction of additional affordable rental units accessible to low-income households in Maine. The Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program provides funding to build smaller affordable rental housing units. Under the program, projects must be between 5 and 18 units in size and may either be new construction, rehabilitation of existing housing, or reuse of existing buildings into livable spaces for low- and moderate-income households. Together, these investments have so far supported the development of 528 units through 18 housing projects across Maine.



Credit: Sam Hight And 55 Weston Ave LLC

A rendering shows four apartment buildings envisioned on Weston Avenue in Madison, Maine. Two of the buildings have received approval through MaineHousing’s rural affordable rental housing program. “Our partnership with the Town of Madison, the State of Maine, MaineHousing, and ultimately, our local contractors have allowed this project to be economically feasible,” said Sam Hight, a project partner on the development. “Considering the current housing material market, interest rate landscape, and general uncertainty, we are very fortunate to have the ability to build and provide 18 units of affordable housing to a rural Maine community undergoing economic growth.”

Affordable Housing Production in Maine



Source: GOPIF analysis of Maine Housing Authority data

ACCELERATING ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND WEATHERIZATION

The Jobs Plan is investing \$50 million to expand energy efficiency programs for Maine homeowners and renters, businesses, and public buildings through Efficiency Maine. To date, Efficiency Maine has helped low-income Mainers weatherize more than 1,000 homes and enabled the installation of over 115 heat pump systems at businesses and community facilities.



Governor Mills, joined by White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi, Hannah Pingree and Maine Community College System President David Daigler watch a demonstration by Dave Whittemore in the heat pump workforce lab at Kennebec Valley Community College on July 21, 2023. The governor announced a new heat pump installation goal after the state surpassed the original 100,000 installed by 2025 goal a full two years early.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND WEATHERIZATION INITIATIVES

- **Low-and Moderate Income Weatherization:** 1,070 homes weatherized
- **Hospitality Retrofit:** 50 heat pump systems installed
- **Energy Efficiency for Local Government, Public Schools and Congregate Housing:** 67 heat pump systems installed
- **EV Charging Infrastructure:** 31 Level 2 charging stations installed (total of 73 new ports)

REBUILDING MAINE'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Local wastewater systems and drinking water infrastructure are essential infrastructure to protect public health, support water quality, and benefit the communities they serve, but the need for critical infrastructure improvements has exceeded the State's funding capacity.

Through its Drinking Water Program, the Maine CDC has made Jobs Plan-funded grants that are helping 77 communities address imminent risks to public health through investments in the safety of public water infrastructure – such as water treatment plants, storage reservoirs, and pipe distribution systems. Among other benefits, these investments enable communities to mitigate lead in drinking water at schools and childcares and address harmful effects of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances, known as “forever chemicals.”

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has used Jobs Plan funding to make critical wastewater treatment upgrades in 22 communities. These investments accelerate the timeline on local wastewater infrastructure projects in combination with additional federal funds, which will reduce the future burden on ratepayers while also supporting important construction jobs. With Jobs Plan funding, the Department's Small Community Grant Program has also helped 15 municipalities replace malfunctioning septic systems that are polluting a waterbody or causing a public nuisance.

EXPANDING HIGH SPEED BROADBAND

The Jobs Plan seeded the Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) with an initial infusion of \$21 million funds and this new agency has now secured \$400M in federal funding to address broadband infrastructure and digital equity. Within a year \$110M of funds were deployed to enable connectivity to over 53,000 homes and businesses throughout the State. MCA has deployed Job Plan funds to 28 partners to invest in community planning, technical assistance, regional capacity, and the trial of diverse technologies to address Maine's connectivity needs. These funds enable MCA to braid funding in the most strategic manner and represent the most valuable and impactful funding to address Maine's bold and ambitious connectivity goals in 2024.

PROTECTING INFRASTRUCTURE FROM CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change poses a serious risk to Maine infrastructure, with damage estimates in the billions of dollars unless action is taken. The Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund, administered through the Maine Department of Transportation, has awarded nearly \$20 million in Jobs Plan funding to 12 communities for municipal investments to address flooding along ocean and riverfronts, protect stormwater and wastewater systems, install culverts to reduce flooding, and ensure energy availability during extreme storms.

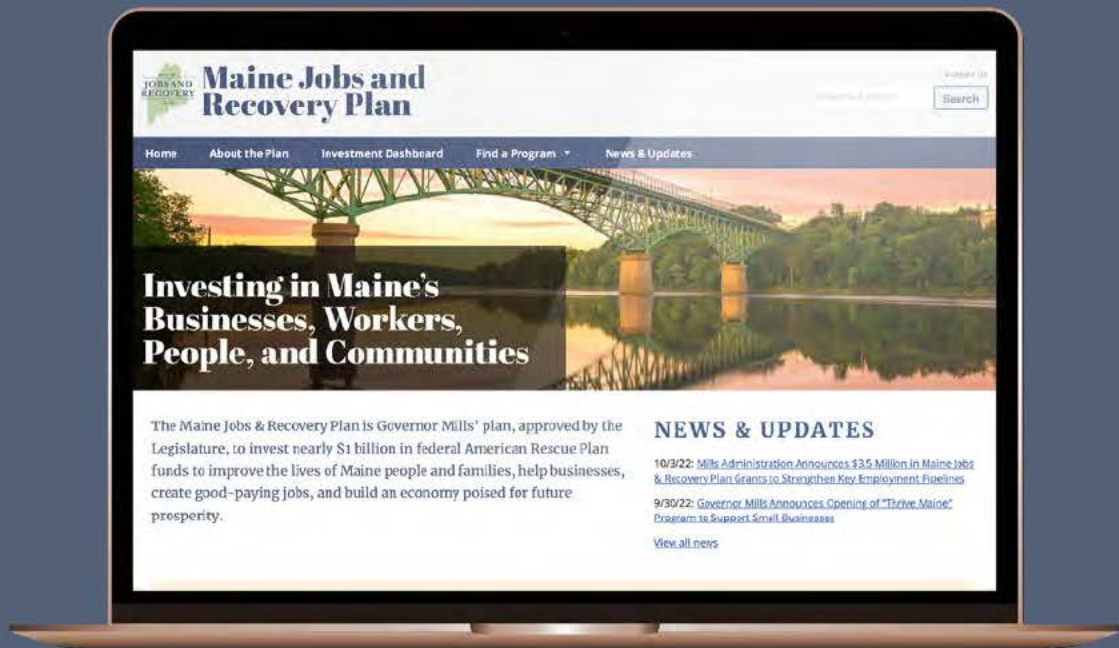
In addition, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection is using Jobs Plan funding to make 32 smaller grants that match local funding for the upgrade of culverts at stream crossings on municipal roads that are at risk of complete washout or collapse during extreme weather events.



UPGRADING OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Maine's parks and fisheries are at the heart of our state's outdoor recreation economy. With Jobs Plan funding of \$50 million, the state is making the first meaningful investment in park infrastructure upgrades in 15 years led by Maine's Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

Maine's Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is using \$20 million in Jobs Plan funding to redesign and rebuild two state fish hatcheries in Grand Lake Stream and New Gloucester. The two hatcheries produce over 70 percent of Maine's landlocked salmon and over 40 percent of the state's brown trout that are stocked each year.



Visit the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan website for more details about investments and programs.



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