

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

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Legislative Document

No. 1288

S.P. 463

In Senate, April 9, 2015

### **An Act To Attract Skilled Professionals and Young Families to Maine**

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Reference to the Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator ALFOND of Cumberland.  
Cosponsored by Representative ESPLING of New Gloucester and  
Senators: HASKELL of Cumberland, KATZ of Kennebec, LIBBY of Androscoggin,  
MILLETT of Cumberland, VOLK of Cumberland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §13062-B** is enacted to read:

3 **§13062-B. New American Start-up Fund**

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the  
5 following terms have the following meanings.

6 A. "Immigrant" means a person who is not a native to the United States who has  
7 moved to the State and is or intends to become a permanent resident or citizen of the  
8 United States; and

9 B. "Refugee" means a person who lives outside of the person's country because the  
10 person has suffered or feared persecution in the person's country on account of race,  
11 religion, nationality or political opinion, because the person is a member of a  
12 persecuted social category of persons or because the person is fleeing a war.

13 **2. New American Start-up Fund.** The New American Start-up Fund, referred to in  
14 this section as "the fund," administered by the department, is established to carry out the  
15 purposes under subsection 3. The fund consists of appropriations or allocations for  
16 inclusion in the fund, any money received as contributions or grants from private and  
17 public sources, any money received in repayment of loans from the fund and all interest,  
18 dividends or other pecuniary gains from investment of funds from the fund. The fund, to  
19 be accounted for within the department, must be held separate and apart from all other  
20 money, funds and accounts. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal year  
21 does not lapse but must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.

22 **3. Fund purposes.** The purposes of the fund include providing:

23 A. Capital financing for a start-up and expanding business owned by a low-income  
24 immigrant or refugee in the State. Capital financing provided under this section may  
25 be in the form of an interest-bearing loan or, if required by the person's religious  
26 faith, in the form of a noninterest-bearing fee-for-service loan; and

27 B. Operational support for a nonprofit corporation incorporated in the State under  
28 Title 13-B for a program that assists low-income immigrants and refugees in starting  
29 and developing businesses.

30 **4. Outside contract.** The department shall contract the administration of subsection  
31 3, paragraph A to a nonprofit corporation incorporated in the State under Title 13-B that  
32 assists low-income immigrants and refugees in starting and developing businesses.

33 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and  
34 allocations are made.

35 **ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF**  
36 **New American Start-up Fund**

37 Initiative: Provides funds to capitalize a loan program for start-up and development of  
38 businesses owned by immigrants and refugees.

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<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
All Other	\$250,000	\$0
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$250,000</u>	<u>\$0</u>

**New American Start-up Fund**

Initiative: Provides operational support for a nonprofit corporation incorporated in the State for a program that assists low-income immigrants and refugees in starting and developing businesses.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
All Other	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$150,000</u>	<u>\$150,000</u>

<b>ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, DEPARTMENT OF DEPARTMENT TOTALS</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS</b>	<u><b>\$400,000</b></u>	<u><b>\$150,000</b></u>

**SUMMARY**

This bill creates and capitalizes the New American Start-up Fund administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development to provide loans to assist immigrants and refugees to start or expand businesses and to provide operational support to a nonprofit corporation that assists low-income immigrants and refugees in starting and developing businesses.