

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

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Legislative Document

No. 647

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H.P. 468

House of Representatives, February 7, 2019

### **An Act To Attract, Educate and Retain New State Residents To Strengthen the Workforce**

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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 CLOUTIER of Lewiston.  
Cosponsored by Senator LIBBY of Androscoggin and  
Representatives: BICKFORD of Auburn, BRENNAN of Portland, COOPER of Yarmouth,  
CRAVEN of Lewiston, DODGE of Belfast, INGWERSEN of Arundel, KORNFIELD of  
Bangor, Senator: POULIOT of Kennebec.

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

2               **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §8614** is enacted to read:

3       **§8614. Welcome Center Initiative**

4               The Welcome Center Initiative, referred to in this section as "the initiative," is  
5               established and administered by the department's office of adult education and family  
6               literacy, referred to in this section as "the office."

7               **1. Welcome centers.** The initiative operates through a welcome center created  
8               within the adult education program of participating school administrative units in  
9               municipalities or regions in the State that have immigrant populations or that have  
10              industries that are experiencing a shortage of trained workers. A welcome center  
11              educates and provides vocational training for foreign-trained workers, including  
12              foreign-trained professionals, and matches those workers with employers in the State,  
13              focusing on employers in industries that are experiencing a shortage of trained workers.

14              **2. Coordinator.** Each welcome center under subsection 1 must employ a full-time  
15              coordinator. The coordinator shall:

16              A. Administer the center;

17              B. Collaborate and work in conjunction with the department including the office to  
18              carry out the purposes of this section, including developing a program or series of  
19              programs designed to serve the needs of initiative participants; and

20              C. Secure additional funding from public and private sources, including donations,  
21              grants or public-private partnerships, to provide ongoing funding of the welcome  
22              center.

23              **3. Functions of a welcome center.** The functions of a welcome center under  
24              subsection 1 include:

25              A. Providing services and training to prepare initiative participants for entry into  
26              gainful employment in the State within 6 to 18 months of the beginning of services or  
27              training;

28              B. Providing education and career planning case management;

29              C. Providing English language acquisition instruction;

30              D. Creating partnerships with employers in the State that may employ initiative  
31              participants;

32              E. Identifying employment skills, academic skills and English language skills needed  
33              for available positions with employers in the State in general or with employers in  
34              paragraph D;

35              F. Collaborating with state and local organizations that provide employment and  
36              workforce services and support;

37              G. Referring initiative participants to legal aid services; and

1           H. Collecting and analyzing data about the initiative participants.

2           **4. Rules.** The department may adopt routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,  
3 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of this section, including the  
4 placement of a welcome center under subsection 1.

5           **Sec. 2. Department of Education to establish a welcome center in the City**  
6 **of Lewiston under the Welcome Center Initiative.** The Department of Education  
7 shall establish a welcome center within the City of Lewiston adult education program  
8 pursuant to the Welcome Center Initiative under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A,  
9 section 8614.

10          **Sec. 3. Vocation-specific English language acquisition and workforce**  
11 **training program.** A vocation-specific English language acquisition and workforce  
12 training program for immigrants in the State, referred to in this section as "the program,"  
13 is established.

14          **1. Program requirements.** The Department of Education's office of adult education  
15 and family literacy, referred to in this section as "the office," shall administer a 2-year  
16 program. The program must prepare immigrants for identified workforce needs of  
17 employers in the State to accelerate entry into livable wage employment and enhance  
18 employer retention of the immigrants by combining vocation-specific English language  
19 acquisition with training in the specific vocational areas required by the employers.  
20 Training classes must be conducted at a participating employer's workplace pursuant to a  
21 grant process under subsection 2.

22          **2. Training grants.** The office shall establish a statewide competitive grant process  
23 to carry out the purposes of subsection 1. The amount of a grant under this subsection is  
24 determined by the office based upon the needs of the area to be served and the availability  
25 of funding. The office shall consider grants to cover all areas of the State with emphasis  
26 on areas with large immigrant populations or where there is a need for skilled workers  
27 that training under this section may provide. A proposal for a grant under this subsection  
28 must include:

29           A. Intensive vocation-specific English language and vocabulary classes;

30           B. Intensive workforce training classes that include soft skills and acquaint  
31 immigrants with the culture of the workplace in the State. For purposes of this  
32 paragraph, "soft skills" means those basic skills necessary to obtain and maintain  
33 employment, such as interviewing and communications skills;

34           C. Interviewing immigrant participants and identifying the education level, English  
35 language ability, skill set, work experience, qualifications and credentials of each  
36 immigrant participant;

37           D. Collaboration with participating employers to:

38               (1) Identify the employers' specific workforce needs;

39               (2) Identify skills needed for positions required by the employers;

(3) Receive input from the employers for the design of the training, including information on required English language proficiency, workplace culture, on-site space or other vocational training elements such as tools, manuals or site tours; and

(4) Ensure that the employers provide the time and space to offer training classes on-site at the employers' workplaces;

E. One or more training courses to prepare the immigrant participants as potential workers to enter into and retain livable wage employment within 6 to 18 months of the beginning of the training; and

F. Collection and reporting of data including outcomes of employment and job retention.

The office shall give special consideration to proposals for grants under this subsection that provide incentives for immigrants to participate in the training, such as agreements with employers to pay an employee the employee's hourly rate to attend the training.

**3. Criteria for applicants.** An applicant for a training grant under subsection 2 must have demonstrated expertise and experience in the following:

A. Providing English language acquisition training, including the administration of appropriate academic and vocational assessments and research-based instructional approaches appropriate for English language learners;

B. Working with employers to develop relevant employee training; and

C. Working with partners in the state workforce and state agencies with expertise in serving and preparing immigrants for employment through a case management approach.

**4. Rules.** The office shall adopt routine technical rules as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of this section.

**5. Report.** The office shall prepare a report on the training that includes:

A. The number and amount of grants awarded under this section;

B. The training and services provided by the grant recipients;

C. Aggregate demographic information about immigrant participants in the training, participating employers, employment opportunities, employment placements and retention by employers of immigrant participants placed under this section; and

D. An evaluation of programs and services most effective in carrying out the purposes of this section.

By November 4, 2021, the office shall submit the report along with any recommended legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs. The joint standing committee may report out a bill based upon the report to the 130th Legislature.

1       **Sec. 4. Local community planning support program.** The Department of  
2 Education's office of adult education and family literacy, referred to in this section as "the  
3 office," shall establish a local community planning support program, referred to in this  
4 section as "the program."

5       **1. Local community planning support program.** The office shall implement a 2-  
6 year program to assist communities within the State to manage new immigrant  
7 populations that have settled in the communities or to attract immigrant populations to  
8 address depopulation or workforce shortages in the communities.

9       **2. Program elements.** The office shall establish by rule the elements of the  
10 program. The program must provide a planning process for communities to provide  
11 English language acquisition and training in vocational skills, identify employers or areas  
12 that would benefit from immigrant residency or employment and cultivate community  
13 support to integrate immigrants into the communities and local workforce.

14       **3. Funding.** The office shall consider applications from governmental entities  
15 located in or containing communities that are affected by or wish to attract immigrant  
16 populations and provide grants to those communities in a number and amount determined  
17 by available funding. An application for funding under this subsection may be made by  
18 one governmental entity or a combination of 2 or more governmental entities and may  
19 include a partnership by the governmental entity with a private or nonprofit organization.  
20 For purposes of this subsection, "governmental entity" includes a county, municipality or  
21 school administrative unit.

22       **4. Rules.** The office shall adopt routine technical rules as defined in the Maine  
23 Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of this  
24 section.

25       **5. Report.** The office shall prepare a report on the program that includes every  
26 governmental entity receiving a grant, the amount of the grant and an evaluation of the  
27 outcomes and effectiveness of the grant on the target communities. By December 5, 2020,  
28 the department shall submit the report along with any recommended legislation to the  
29 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and  
30 cultural affairs. The joint standing committee may report out a bill based upon the report  
31 to the 130th Legislature.

32       **Sec. 5. Department of Education to provide grants for English language**  
33 **acquisition instruction for adult education programs.** The Department of  
34 Education's office of adult education and family literacy shall develop and implement a  
35 grant process to provide funding on a competitive basis to adult education programs in  
36 communities experiencing an increase in immigrant populations or demand to reduce the  
37 waiting list for English language acquisition classes and to increase the level of English  
38 language acquisition instruction offered as needed by the communities applying for the  
39 grants. The department shall award grants under this section to eligible communities in a  
40 number and amount determined by available funding. The department shall adopt routine  
41 technical rules as defined by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter  
42 2-A to carry out the purposes of this section.

**Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF**

**Adult Education 0364**

Initiative: Provides ongoing funds for expansion of the Welcome Center Initiative within the City of Lewiston's adult education program to attract, educate and retain foreign-trained workers residing in Androscoggin County.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

**Adult Education 0364**

Initiative: Provides ongoing funds for the New Mainers Resource Center within the City of Portland's adult education program to assist foreign-trained professionals.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>

**Adult Education 0364**

Initiative: Provides one-time funds for grants for proposed welcome centers.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$50,000	\$50,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

**Adult Education 0364**

Initiative: Provides funds for grants to adult education programs to increase English language acquisition instruction in communities experiencing an increase in immigrant populations or demand, which will serve 800 participants in both fiscal years of the biennium.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$600,000	\$600,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>	<b>\$600,000</b>

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<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$150,000	\$150,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$150,000</u>	<u>\$150,000</u>

Initiative: Provides funds in fiscal year 2019-20 and fiscal year 2020-21 for grants to service providers to provide English language instruction and vocational training and to place immigrant populations in the State with employers in the State. The grants will serve 500 participants in each fiscal year.

<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>
All Other	\$400,000	\$400,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$400,000</u>

EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF		
DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2019-20	2020-21
GENERAL FUND	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$1,500,000</u>	<u>\$1,500,000</u>

This bill creates various programs to provide education, services and training for the State's workforce immigrant populations in the following ways:

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1           2. It directs the Department of Education's office of adult education and family  
2 literacy to:

3           A. Administer a vocation-specific English language acquisition and workforce  
4 training program for immigrants in the State and establish a statewide competitive  
5 grant process to carry out the purposes of the program;

6           B. Establish and implement a local community planning support program to provide  
7 a planning process for communities to provide English language acquisition and  
8 training in vocational skills, identify employers or areas that would benefit from  
9 immigrant residency or employment and cultivate community support to integrate  
10 immigrants into the communities and local workforce. The office must establish a  
11 grant process to carry out the purposes of the program; and

12          C. Develop and implement a grant process to award grants to adult education  
13 programs to increase English language acquisition instruction.

14          The bill provides funding for the vocation-specific English language acquisition and  
15 workforce training program, the local community planning support program and grants to  
16 increase English language acquisition instruction; and

17          3. It directs the Department of Education to establish a welcome center under the  
18 Welcome Center Initiative within the City of Lewiston's adult education program to  
19 attract, educate and retain in employment foreign-trained workers, patterned after the  
20 New Mainers Resource Center in Portland, and provides funding for that purpose. It also  
21 provides ongoing funding for the New Mainers Resource Center in Portland.