



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1329

H.P. 981

House of Representatives, March 30, 2021

An Act To Establish the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative in the Department of Education To Lower Barriers to Career Advancement

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

R(+ B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT Clerk

Presented by Representative TALBOT ROSS of Portland. Cosponsored by Representatives: CLOUTIER of Lewiston, CUDDY of Winterport, RIELLY of Westbrook, TEPLER of Topsham, Senator: BAILEY of York.

Be it enac	ted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:
Sec. 1	. 20-A MRSA §8601-A, sub-§1-A is enacted to read:
	Adult education hub. "Adult education hub" or "hub" means a group of local
adult education	ation providers located within a geographic area specified by the commissioner.
Sec. 2	2. 20-A MRSA §8601-A, sub-§2-B is enacted to read:
navigation	Career advancement and navigation specialist. "Career advancement and specialist" or "specialist" means a person employed by the department under the o help participants access education and training and obtain employment.
Sec. 3	3. 20-A MRSA §8601-A, sub-§4-A is enacted to read:
	Initiative. "Initiative" means the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative d in section 8614.
Sec. 4	4. 20-A MRSA §8601-A, sub-§6-A is enacted to read:
6-A.	Office. "Office" means the office within the department that coordinates adult
	programs and services.
Sec. 5	5. 20-A MRSA §8601-A, sub-§7-A is enacted to read:
7-A.	Participant. "Participant" means an individual participating in or receiving
services th	arough the initiative.
Sec. 6	5. 20-A MRSA §8614 is enacted to read:
<u>§8614. Ca</u>	<u>areer Advancement and Navigation Initiative</u>
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1 2 3 4	B. Creating partnerships with private employers and industry-specific trade associations in the State including, but not limited to, employers and associations in industries identified by the Department of Labor as paying high wages or having high workforce demand, and collaborating with these private sector partners to:
5 6 7	(1) Identify the employer and industry-specific workforce needs and corresponding skills, including job skills, academic skills and English language proficiency required by employers in the State; and
8 9 10 11	(2) Design appropriate training classes to address identified needs, which may include, but are not limited to, training in workplace culture, on-site training or other vocational training elements, and contextualized skills or industry-specific English language acquisition instruction;
12 13 14	<u>C.</u> Creating partnerships with state and local government agencies or other organizations that provide employment and workforce services and support to address participants' needs related to occupational licensure and credentialing;
15 16	D. Providing direct services and assistance to participants, including, but not limited to:
17 18 19 20 21	(1) Guidance and assistance accessing appropriate education and training to prepare for entry into gainful employment within 12 to 24 months of the beginning of the education or training. Such training may include intensive workforce preparation classes that cover habits of work, workplace culture and basic skills necessary to obtain, maintain and advance in employment;
22 23 24	(2) Assessment, career planning and case management services, including services to assess participants' education and training levels, qualifications, skill sets, credentials, work experience, work-readiness and English language proficiency;
25 26 27	(3) Assistance for participants who have limited English language proficiency or who are foreign-educated, foreign-trained or foreign-experienced workers to facilitate:
28 29 30	(a) Enrollment in English language acquisition instruction, including industry- specific English language and vocabulary classes to meet the needs both of initiative participants and of employers; and
31 32 33	(b) Obtaining English translations and equivalency evaluations of educational credentials, references and other evidence of skills, training and experience acquired abroad; and
34 35	E. Referring participants to legal aid services to address any legal issues that pose barriers to workforce participation and employment, when appropriate.
36 37 38	3. Service areas. The initiative, through the career advancement and navigation specialists, must serve participants and adult education programs in specific geographic service areas in accordance with this subsection.
39 40 41	A. During the first 2 years of the initiative, the career advancement and navigation specialists shall serve participants in adult education hubs associated with the following areas:
42	(1) Kennebec County;

1	(2) Androscoggin County and Oxford County;
2	(3) Lincoln County, Knox County, Sagadahoc County and Waldo County; and
3	(4) York County.
4	If the needs for adult education hubs shift from the geographic areas listed during this
5	period, the resources and services of the initiative must be aligned to serve regions where the need is greatest; and
6	
7	B. In the 3rd and subsequent years of the initiative, the department may expand the
8 9	initiative to serve additional adult education programs or adult education hubs, beyond those specified in paragraph A, to meet the needs of the State.
10	4. Rules. The commissioner shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this section.
11	Rules adopted to carry out the purposes of this section are routine technical rules as defined
12	in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.
13	Sec. 7. Report. The Commissioner of Education shall prepare and submit a report
14	to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and
15	cultural affairs no later than November 4, 2022, regarding the Career Advancement and
16	Navigation Initiative established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, section 8614.
17 18	The report must include, but is not limited to: information regarding the services, trainings and referrals provided by career advancement and navigation specialists employed by the
19	Department of Education; aggregate data regarding individuals participating in the
20	initiative, participating employers, employment opportunities and employment placements
21	of participants under this initiative; and an evaluation of programs and services most
22	effective in carrying out the purposes of Title 20-A, section 8614. The joint standing
23	committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs may
24	report out a bill to the First Regular Session of the 131st Legislature to expand or amend
25	the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative based upon the report.
26	SUMMARY
27	This bill establishes the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative within the

This bill establishes the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative within the Department of Education to provide educational and career guidance, support and services to help underemployed and unemployed individuals acquire additional education, skills, licensure or other preparation needed to participate to their fullest potential in the workforce. The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education to submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs no later than November 4, 2022, regarding the initiative.