

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2017

Submitted by
the Maine Department of Labor
and
the State Workforce Board

January 2018

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Introduction

Per Section 5 of The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) By-Laws, the Board shall make an annual report to the Governor and Legislature at the beginning of each calendar year describing the state of Maine's workforce, and making recommendations for public and private action related to workforce development. This report shall also address annual report requirements in state law for disabilities, apprenticeship, the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, and youth. It covers the 2016 calendar year and includes data during Program Year 2016 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). The following report includes the Commission on Disability and Employment Report.

PY16 Performance Overview

The US Department of Labor did not require States to submit an annual performance report narrative for Program Year 2016 because under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) States had no WIOA performance information available. Performance information is collected up to one year after program exit and employment outcome measures require an additional quarter (three months) to obtain, resulting in an overall period of 15 months after exit for most performance outcomes data to become available.

The following tables will have missing and/or non-validated data because PY16 under WIOA had no WIOA performance information available.

Statewide Performance Report

PROGRAM		TITLE (select one):			
STATE:	Title I Local Area:	Title I Adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title II Adult Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
REPORTING PERIOD COVERED (Required for current and three preceding years.)		Title I Dislocated Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title III Wagner-Peyser	<input type="checkbox"/>
From (mm/dd/yyyy) :	To (mm/dd/yyyy) :	Title I Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Title I and Title III combined	<input type="checkbox"/>		

SUMMARY INFORMATION				
Service	Participants Served Cohort Period:	Participants Exited Cohort Period:	Funds Expended Cohort Period:	Cost Per Participant Served Cohort Period:
Career Services				
Training Services				
Percent training-related employment¹:		Percent enrolled in more than one core program:		Percent Admin Expended:

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period:	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period:		Employment Rate (Q2) ² Cohort Period:		Employment Rate (Q4) ² Cohort Period:		Median Earnings Cohort Period:	Credential Rate ³ (Cohort Period:		Measurable Skill Gains ³ Cohort Period:	
					Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
					Negotiated Targets		Actual						
Total Statewide													
Sex	Female												
	Male												
Age	< 16												
	16 - 18												
	19 - 24												
	25 - 44												
	45 - 54												
	55 - 59												
Ethnicity/Race	60+												
	American Indian / Alaska Native												
	Asian												
	Black / African American												
	Hispanic / Latino												
	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander												
White													
More Than One Race													

PLEASE NOTE: TABLES ON PAGES 2 – 17 ARE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

BY EMPLOYMENT BARRIER ⁴												
	Total Participants Served	Total Participants Exited		Employment Rate (Q2) ²		Employment Rate (Q4) ²		Median Earnings	Credential Rate ³		Measurable Skill Gains ³	
				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
				Negotiated Targets		Actual						
Total Statewide												
Displaced Homemakers												
English Language Learners, Low Levels of Literacy, Cultural Barriers												
Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)												
Ex-offenders												
Homeless Individuals / runaway youth												
Long-term Unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)												
Low-Income Individuals												
Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers												
Individuals with Disabilities (incl. youth)												
Single Parents (Incl. single pregnant women)												
Youth in foster care or aged out of system												

¹Applies to Title I only.

²This indicator also includes those who entered into a training or education program for the Youth program.

³Credential Rate and Measurable Skill Gains do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser program.

⁴Barriers to Employment are determined at the point of entry into the program.

WIOA - EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

STATE:		PROGRAM YEAR	
PERIOD COVERED			
From (mm/dd/yyyy) :		To (mm/dd/yyyy) :	
REPORTING AGENCY:			
EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS			
Employer Services		Establishment Count	
Employer Information and Support Services			
Workforce Recruitment Assistance			
Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development			
Accessing Untapped Labor Pools			
Training Services			
Incumbent Worker Training Services			
Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance			
Planning Layoff Response			
Pilot Approaches		Numerator	Rate
		Denominator	
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate			
Employer Penetration Rate			
Repeat Business Customers Rate			
State Established Measure			

REPORT CERTIFICATION/ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Report Comments/Narrative:

Name of Certifying Official/Title:	Telephone Number:	Email Address:
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PROGRAM		TITLE (select one):			
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STATE:		Title I Dislocated Worker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Title I Youth	<input type="checkbox"/>		
MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS¹					
Skill Gain Type	Total Skill Gains				
Achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving educational instruction below the postsecondary level					
Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent					
Transcript or report card for either secondary or post-secondary education that shows a participant is achieving the state unit's academic standards					
Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones from an employer/training provider who is providing training (e.g., completion of on-the-job training (OJT), completion of 1 year of an apprenticeship program, etc.)					
Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation, progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams					
TOTAL					

¹For performance accountability purposes, the measurable skill gains indicator calculates the number of participants who attain at least one type of gain. However, this report is designed to examine the number of total gains within each type of gain.

WIOA - EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

STATE:		PROGRAM YEAR	
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REPORTING AGENCY:			
EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS			
Employer Services		Establishment Count	
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Pilot Approaches		Numerator	Rate
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State Established Measure			

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Career Services				
Training Services				
Percent training-related employment¹:		Percent enrolled in more than one core program:		Percent Admin Expended:

BY PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS													
		Total Participants Served Cohort Period:	Total Participants Exited Cohort Period:		Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q2) Cohort Period		Youth Employment/Education/ Training Rate (Q4) Cohort Period		Median Earnings Cohort Period:	Credential Rate ³ (Cohort Period:		Measurable Skill Gains ³ Cohort Period:	
					Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
					Negotiated Targets								
Total Statewide													
				Actual									
Sex	Female												
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					Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
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				Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
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			Actual									
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Apprenticeship

The Maine Apprenticeship Program is an employer-provided, nationally recognized, workforce training program developed in collaboration with individual employers. Apprenticeship programs engage employees in learning skills specific to their occupation both on the job and through a minimum of 144 hours per year of formal coursework. The program has worked collaboratively with employers/sponsors since 1941 and is a time-proven, effective training model that continues to innovate and adapt to meet employers' needs for skilled labor and workers' need for good wages with a clearly defined career pathway to advancement.

Between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017, 14 new employers became sponsors of apprenticeship in Maine, increasing the number of actively sponsored apprenticeship programs from 54 to 68. During the fiscal year, 111 apprentices were issued certificates of completion. The Apprenticeship Program strategy in recent months has been to reach out to associations and education providers to become group, non-joint (non-union) sponsors of apprenticeship. The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Maine, with 190 member employers, is very close to becoming a group non-joint sponsor of apprenticeship. This approach has the potential to increase the number of apprentices in Maine exponentially, with the administrative burden of the program being placed on the association, rather than the employers, increasing the likelihood of their participation. The AGC plans to recruit new apprentices for their member employers by establishing agreements with Career and Technical Education High Schools. At the end of the fiscal year, Maine Apprenticeship Program staff were working with 31 potential new sponsors including 23 individual employers, 7 associations and 1 education provider.

The Maine Apprenticeship Program is doing groundbreaking work in expanding apprenticeship training programs into the healthcare field and combining multiple state and federal workforce development streams to do so. Medical Assistant training designed for MaineGeneral Medical Center in Augusta is a current workforce development cohort training project underway in Maine. Through social media and targeted email notification to individuals registered in the Maine Job Link, 253 individuals attended an information session on becoming a medical assistant apprentice. One-hundred twenty-five individuals chose to take the next step in the process: screening for 10th grade math and reading competency with our adult education partners, and the completion of an online work interest profiler to determine if they were a good match for being successful as medical assistant apprentices.

When recruitment and assessments were complete, twenty-five individuals (12 MaineGeneral incumbent employees, primarily kitchen and housekeeping staff along with 13 potential new hires) were ultimately enrolled in a fast-tracked 5 month compressed curriculum medical assistant class. The evening medical assistant classes were offered through adult education at a cost of \$2,700 per trainee. Eligible individuals were enrolled in WIOA or in the state funded Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) which paid 100% of the cost of classroom training as well as providing necessary support services. The employer paid the classroom costs for the individuals not eligible for enrollment in the workforce funding streams. Twenty-four of the twenty-five individuals originally enrolled completed the classroom training and all twenty-four passed the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) national certification examination.

MaineGeneral interviewed successful trainees for jobs as medical assistant apprentices, with starting pay of \$13.85. On the job training (OJT) contracts were developed for individuals enrolled in workforce funded programs prior to hire resulting in the employer recouping 50% of the new apprentices' wages for three months. The paid apprenticeship training program will last for a year and include mentorship, structured on the job learning and an additional 100 hours of classroom activities. At the completion of their experience the workers will earn an apprenticeship certificate indicating the attainment of journey worker status as medical assistants and they will

be employable in any medical facility or physician's office requiring certified medical assistants. The Maine apprenticeship program director is working with the Maine Community College System academic dean to determine the college credit that individuals will receive for both their classroom training and on the job learning so that individuals will be able to earn an associate's degree in medical assisting as well as an apprenticeship certificate and the CCMA national certification.

Multiple hospital systems in Maine are inquiring with the Maine Apprenticeship Program office about how they can adopt the medical assistant apprenticeship (MAA) training program for their businesses. The MAA program has also spurred interest within the sector to adopt apprenticeship for their certified nursing assistants, surgical technicians and nursing specialty training programs.

By continuing to collaborate with workforce development partners, education providers, associations and employers, we can ensure that our apprenticeship and other workforce training programs are meeting the workforce needs of Maine's employers and that our limited financial resources are aligned and being used wisely. The apprenticeship program is positioned to grow and to significantly expand apprenticeship programs into high-wage, high-demand occupations such as those found in healthcare, precision manufacturing and information technology. To effectively do so, we need to increase the financial resources allocated to the program. Without an increase in funding, the apprenticeship program will continue to support existing sponsors and programs, but will not expand to become a major catalyst in developing a skilled workforce to meet the demands of Maine's high-wage, high-demand businesses.

Veterans Services

This level of veteran activity and employment success in the past year is outstanding. In large part the success is the result of support from Maine's top leaders and legislators and the strength of our partnerships. Beginning with the kick-off the Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign on September 1, 2016, the Governor, First Lady and the State of Maine Director of HR all shared their commitment to getting veterans hired in Maine. The 100-day campaign ended on a high note with 147 employers, 197 veterans hired for an average wage of \$22.53 per hour (up \$5 per hour from the year before!). At the heart of the campaign are its partners, which include MDOL, Maine's CareerCenters, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Boot2Roots, Easterseals Maine, Veterans Inc., Maine Bureau of Veterans Services (MBVS), VA Togus VR&E, the VA Homeless Program, the Transition Assistance Advisors and the State of Maine Bureau of Human Resources (MBHR) – most of whom are members of the State Workforce Board's Veterans Employment Committee. Over 100 employers participated in the Military Culture 101 Training that provides an overview of military structure, branches, ranks, pay grades, culture, language, discipline and qualities of veterans. The training was so popular that the Hire-A-Vet team made the decision to have it videotaped and shared on YouTube for all to see.

In 2016, the Governor was also busy crafting an executive order and legislation that awards an interview to all veteran applicants (to Maine State Government) who meet minimum qualifications for the job. The bill, **LD1658, An Act To Reform the Veteran Preference in State Hiring and Retention** passed and was signed into law in September 2016. Another bill, **LD1592 An Act to Remove Barriers to Professional Licensing for Veterans** was also signed into law and gives Commissioner Anne Head the authority to waive pre-licensing requirements for veterans in the occupational trades to expedite the licensing process.

In addition, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program hosted another Veterans Conference for Vet Reps, their spouses and partners and our program partners statewide. We hosted this conference to coincide with the 150th Anniversary Celebration of Maine's Togus VA Hospital, the oldest VA hospital in the nation. The retreat was held at the Senator Inn in Augusta with keynote speaker, Claire Starnes, one of the authors of the book "Women Vietnam Veterans; Our Untold Stories."

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), a USDOL funded program, provided \$946,711 in PY 2017, supporting 13.5 full-time employment (FTE) veterans staff positions, three of which were limited term positions added to build veterans staffing capacity in different regions of the state. Maine's staffing was comprised of six full-time and four half-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) and five full-time and one half-time Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) working within 12 CareerCenter offices and numerous itinerant sites. One of the LVERs serves as the state Veterans Program Manager based at central office in Augusta. This staffing plan includes a heavier emphasis on DVOP positions to ensure that intensive services are adequately provided to veterans with barriers to employment.

Performance Targets and Outcomes for Jobs for Veterans State Grants July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.

<i>DVOP Specialists: (Source: WIOA JVSG Performance Report Q3 Ending June 30, 2017):</i>	Negotiated Standard	Actual Outcome
Intensive Services Provided to Individuals by DVOP Specialists/Total Veterans and Eligible Persons Served by DVOP Specialists in the State <i>(New)</i>	90	94
Veterans' Entered Employment Rate (VEER) <i>Weighted</i>	60	
Veterans' Employment Retention Rate (VERR)	78	
Veterans' Average Earnings (VAE) (Six Months)	\$12,750	
Disabled Veterans' EER (DVEER)	50	
Disabled Veterans' ERR (DVERR)	72	
Disabled Veterans' AE (DVAE) (Six Months)	\$13,750	

Data on the actual performance as compared to the negotiated standards is unavailable this quarter, as anticipated, due to change over to WIOA Participant Information Record Layout (PIRL) Reporting. We were able, however, to create the WIOA JVSG Program Report, which captures provision of services to veterans from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. From this report, we are able to calculate the Intensive Service rate, which was at 94.3% statewide. There is still a small technical issue to be resolved that is pulling this number down slightly. The actual intensive service rate is over 95% statewide. A couple of our CareerCenters experienced 100% intensive service rate this quarter, which is excellent!

The JVSG staff development plan for 2017 included training for both JVSG grant funded staff as well as training for our CareerCenter partners. Three of our CareerCenter and Program Managers and six of our DVOPs and LVERs attended trainings at NVTI in Denver in 2016/2017 to include: Leadership for the Integration of Veterans Services (LIVS), Facilitating Veterans Employment (FVE), Intensive Services (IS) and Employer Outreach (EO). We plan to enroll additional program managers and AJC staff in both NVTI's online and in-person trainings in the year ahead.

Maine's DVOPs and LVERs continue to collaborate with local agencies and programs such as Easterseals of Maine, Volunteers of America, Goodwill's Veterans Program, , Maine's Business Leadership Network (promotes the hiring and advancement of people with disabilities), the Apprenticeship Program, Ticket to Work, Bureau of Veterans Services, Maine Military Community Network, Vocational Rehabilitation, VR&E, Chambers of Commerce, LWIBs, Homeless Shelters, American Legion, Maine National Guard, Employer Support of Guard and Reserve. In addition, the Veterans Program Manager provides staff leadership on the State Workforce Board's (SWB) Veterans' Employment Committee, which focuses on Veteran 'Priority of Service' programs and other issues impacting Veterans.

Priority of Service

Maine continues to implement the Veterans' priority of service as defined and required by 38 U.S.C 4215(b) and 20 CFR Parts 1001 and 1010. The Maine one-stop delivery system (Maine CareerCenters) is the core mechanism that is used to support, expand and maintain services to our Veteran population throughout the State. Priority of Service is made available and provided to all eligible veterans and eligible spouses, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 veterans, Native American veterans, and other groups targeted for special consideration, including difficult to serve veterans and veterans with barriers to employment.

Maine’s Degree & Credential Attainment Goal¹

In 2017, the State of Maine adopted a long-term attainment goal of 60% of Mainers ages 25 – 64, with a postsecondary credential of value by 2025.

To meet current and future workforce needs, most Mainers will need to attain some postsecondary credential of value in addition to their high school degree.

This includes a skilled trade credential, a professional certificate, or college degree that connects them to a good job and career in Maine.

Educational attainment in Maine is very similar to the nation. We have a higher share of high school graduates and similar shares of people with associate’s or bachelor’s degrees.

Educational Attainment in the United States and Maine

Highest Attainment	Maine Total	Maine Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Population Age 25 plus	957,066	100 %	100 %
Less than 9 th grade	27,537	3 %	6 %
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	49,768	5 %	7 %
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	317,373	33 %	28 %
Some college, no degree	188,695	20 %	21 %
Associate’s degree	93,123	10 %	8 %
Bachelor’s degree	180,436	19 %	19 %
Graduate or professional degree	100,134	10 %	12 %
No college degree	583,373	61 %	62 %
Associate’s degree or higher	373,693	39 %	38 %
Bachelor’s degree or higher	280,570	29 %	30 %

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012 to 2016 averages.

While annual state-level estimates from the U.S. Census track adults with college degrees, they do not tell us about professional credentials or certificates.

The Lumina Foundation now publishes annual estimates of the proportion of adults in each state that hold a high-quality certificate as their highest earned credential. In Maine, 2% of working-age adults hold a certificate, which is below the New England average of 3.3% and the national average of 4.9%.

With a college degree attainment level of 41%, the Maine workforce has a combined postsecondary credential of value attainment level of 43%.

There are a wide range of credentials and differences in credential requirements across industries and occupations, as well as within industries and occupations. There also are differences in licensing requirements among states for a wide range of fields of work. The U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics are both aware of the rising credential requirements in many fields of work. They are attempting to develop some standards to be able to provide better measures.

¹Educate Maine 2017 Education Indicators Report

Local Workforce Board Highlights

Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB) Program Year 2016 Report

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB) is one of three local workforce development boards in the State of Maine and part of a vast workforce development system that includes a variety of partners and stakeholders. Program Year 2016 (PY16) marks the beginning of the NWDB which is the result of consolidating Local Areas 1 (Aroostook and Washington Counties) and 2 (Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Hancock Counties), this network of potential partners has grown even larger, presenting new opportunities to leverage additional resources and more effectively provide services to all customers.

During PY 16 board members, service providers and partners put their primary focus on transitioning from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to the new Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) and providing a program that enhances business relationships. The work culminated in submitting a new four-year strategic plan <http://www.northeasternwdb.org/strategic-plan-1/strategic-planning/> to the State Workforce Board. The NWDB pushed hard to develop new partnerships and reinforce existing ones, the goal as always is the same: more effectively provide services to job seekers and employers, address skill gaps impeding economic growth, and develop and share career pathways that support the efforts of workers to access higher wages and more skilled employment. It is in this spirit that the NWDB and its Partners engaged in a process for the completion of its first consolidated regional plan.

The following summary focuses on the big picture vision and strategies of the NWDB, developed during its strategic planning process.

Vision: The Northeastern Workforce Development Board, as an active member of the region's overall economic, educational and social service network—and together with One-Stop Partners, regional partners and community stakeholders— during PY16 and onto PY17 effectively identifies and responds to the workforce development changes and needs of businesses and workers alike as they strive to create and expand economic opportunities within the region's high wage, high growth industries. The goal is to cultivate, convene, manage and participate in successful partnerships that bring traditional and non-traditional—and public and private—partners together to address economic and workforce challenges. The Board approaches the building of these partnerships with the view that we can accomplish our mutual goals more effectively—and that the region is more successful—by working together.

As a newly formed Board, the NWDB is constantly engaged in developing and enhancing new and existing relationships and partnerships. The Board recognizes a wealth of new opportunities to collaborate more broadly, as it now represents five counties while maintaining programs, initiatives, and resources that meet the unique needs of the various parts of the region.

Key priority areas and related strategies are:

Key Priority 1: Communication

Key Priority 2: Upskill job seekers including the unemployed and underemployed to meet employer and job seeker needs

Key Priority 3: Improve coordination and seamlessness of workforce system for customers and partners

Key Priority 4: Grow labor force

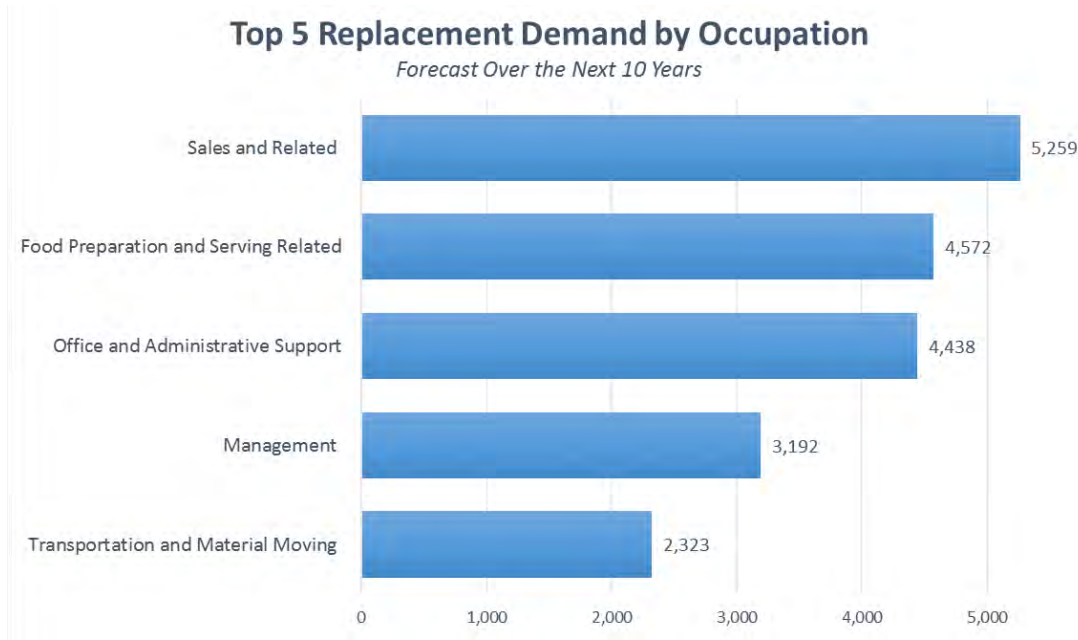
Key Priority 5: Assess, Adapt, and Administer

A summary of the strategies that will be implemented throughout PY16 and into the future are:

- Continue facilitating robust meetings among groups of partners – including meetings focused on the One Stops, Adult Education, and the implementation of other Core Programs.
- Develop committees on an “as needed” basis to address new challenges or capitalize on new opportunities and initiatives.
- Encourage the “cross pollination” of board memberships by encouraging partners to serve on the NWDB and NWDB representatives to serve on partner boards.
- Improve mechanisms of communications to ensure that all partners are operating efficiently, avoiding duplicating services, and aware of all the resources in the region that can support job seekers and employers.
- Engage with businesses regularly and meaningfully to understand their projected workforce needs, current challenges, and assistance needed. This engagement may also take place through robust communication with intermediaries, such as chambers and economic development organizations, who already have strong engagement with employers.
- Capitalize on new initiatives, such as TechHire, to not only engage employers and develop new training initiatives but also to pilot innovative ideas and strategies that may be applied to other industries and/or initiatives.
- Collaborate with partners and employers to develop a deep understanding of career pathways and utilize that information to develop better training programs and help job seekers, both unemployed and underemployed, to make informed decisions.
- Collaborate with state, regional, and local partners for provision of technical assistance, information, programs, and services to support entrepreneurship and business/job creation including the Small Business Development Center, start-up initiatives, and services through the higher education system.
- Regularly engage with partners providing services to job seekers with barriers to employment to ensure workforce training programs, initiatives, and resources are accessible to individuals with disabilities, formerly incarcerated individuals, youth, long-term unemployed, and others with barriers.

The NWDB’s vision, priority areas and strategies are grounded in the assessment of data and information conducted as part of the strategic planning process. One of the most noted key findings includes:

Replacement Demand will drive workforce demand over the next ten years, and as a result will be an important focus of regional workforce strategies – while there will be some growth resulting from industry growth in healthcare and some sub-industry subsectors, workforce demand will be driven largely by the demand for replacement workers (workers retiring or otherwise leaving the workforce). It is projected that replacement demand will drive the need for 37,454 positions.



Source: JobsEQ

Key Industries for future workforce demand in the region based on a combination of existing employment, projected employment, replacement demand, and industry concentration are:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Retail Trade
- Educational Services
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting

The NWDB will continue to target Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Information Technology as priority industries for support with Construction and Hospitality (including accommodation and food services) also being identified as important in-demand industries. Based on the data analysis, NDWB and its partners will also continue to track and provide information, programs, and services at some level for Educational Services and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting.

Core Partners for NWDB and their corresponding WIOA Titles are:

NWDB WIOA Service Providers – Title 1 – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs

1. Aroostook County Action Program
2. MDOL’s Bureau of Employment Services
3. Eastern Maine Development Corporation

Adult Education – Title 2

Wagner-Peyser – Title 3 – Maine Career Centers also known as American Job Centers
MDOL’s Bureau of Employment Services

Vocational Rehabilitation – Title 4

1. MDOL’s Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
2. Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
3. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The following is a summary of the program performance for Program Year 2016.

WIOA PY16 QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

ADULT SERVICE SUMMARY

	PY16 PLAN	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Total Participants	340	310	91 percent
Total Exiters	171	136	90 percent
Total Entering Employment	138	85	62 percent

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	PY16 PLAN	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Employment 2nd Quarter	76.3 percent	NA	
Employment 4th Quarter	62.2 percent	NA	
Median Earnings	\$4,800	NA	
Credential Attainment Rate	69.7 percent	NA	

TOTAL BUDGET

	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE VARIANCE
PY 2015 Adult Carry-In	\$68,357	\$68,357	100.0 percent
PY 2016	\$646,650	\$600,485	92.9 percent
Total	\$715,007	\$668,842	93.5 percent

DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICE SUMMARY

	PY16	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Total Participants	122	150	123 percent
Total Exiters	94	72	77 percent
Total Entering Employment	82	55	67 percent

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	PY16 PLAN	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Employment 2nd Quarter	72.0 percent	NA	
Employment 4th Quarter	68.5 percent	NA	
Median Earnings	\$6,189	NA	
Credential Attainment Rate	75.4 percent	NA	

TOTAL BUDGET

	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE VARIANCE
PY 2015 DW Carry-In	\$255,611	\$255,611	100.0 percent
PY 2016	\$608,986	\$388,877	63.9 percent
Total	\$864,597	\$644,488	74.5 percent

YOUTH SERVICE SUMMARY

	PY16 PLAN	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Total Youth	195	178	91 percent
In-School Youth (IS)	102	97	95 percent
Out-of-School Youth (OS)	169	181	107 percent
Total Exiters	119	116	97 percent
Total Entering Employment	61	44	72 percent

COMMON MEASURES

	PY16 PLAN	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE ATTAINED
Employment 2 nd Quarter	67.7 percent	NA	
Employment 4 th Quarter	72.0 percent	NA	
Credential Attainment Rate	68.4 percent	NA	

TOTAL BUDGET

	PLANNED	ACTUAL	PERCENTAGE VARIANCE
PY 2015 Youth Carry-In	\$285,052	\$285,052	100.0 percent
PY 2016	\$759,830	\$481,500	63.4 percent
Total	\$1,044,882	\$766,552	73.4 percent

Great Northern

Grant Beginning Date: 7/1/2014

Ending Date: 6/30/2017

Participants	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Receiving Intensive Services	254	181	71.3%
Receiving Supportive Services	210	173	82.4%
Exits	254	132	52.0%
Entered Employments at Exit	229	71	31.0%
Entered Employments Rate	90%	54%	59.7%
Total Participants	254	181	71.3%

Total Budget	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Core/Intensive	\$268,538	\$270,605	100.8%
Support Services	\$99,526	\$84,754	85.2%
Total	\$368,064	\$355,359	96.5%

Lincoln Pulp and Paper

Grant Beginning Date: 1/1/2014

Ending Date: 12/31/2017

Participants	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Receiving Intensive Services	172	148	86.0%
Receiving Supportive Services	142	125	88.0%
Exits	142	85	59.9%
Entered Employments at Exit	127	72	56.7%
Entered Employments Rate	89%	85%	94.7%
Total Participants	172	148	86.0%

Total Budget	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Core/Intensive	\$174,894	\$145,046	82.9%
Support Services	\$70,857	\$46,170	65.2%
Total	\$245,751	\$191,216	77.8%

Sector Partnership

Grant Beginning Date: 7/1/2015

Ending Date: 6/30/2018

Participants	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Receiving Intensive Services	98	84	85.7%
Enrolled in Training	59	69	116.9%
Enrolled in OJT	30	13	43.3%
Receiving Supportive Services	53	46	86.8%
Exits	69	19	27.5%
Entered Employments at Exit	60	14	23.3%
Entered Employment Rate	89.60%	73.68%	82.2%
Entered OJT Employments at Exit	9	6	66.7%
Entered OJT Related Employments at Exit	10	0	0.0%
Entered OJT Employment Rate	90.40%	NA	#VALUE!
Total Participants	112	110	98.2%

Total Budget	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Core/Intensive	\$213,315	\$237,097	111.1%
Training	\$65,823	\$71,742	109.0%
OJT/Transitional Jobs	\$79,422	\$53,322	67.1%
Support Services	\$27,732	\$23,488	84.7%
Total	\$386,292	\$385,649	99.8%

JD-NEG

Grant Beginning Date: 9/1/2014

Ending Date: 6/30/2017

Participants	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Receiving Intensive Services	276	355	128.6%
Enrolled in Training	179	213	119.0%
Enrolled in OJT/Transitional Jobs	106	63	59.4%
Receiving Supportive Services	205	137	66.8%
Exits	249	227	91.2%
Entered Employments at Exit	215	171	79.5%
Entered Employments Rate	83%	75%	90.8%
Entered OJT Employments at Exit	76	10	13.2%
Entered OJT Related Employments at Exit	36	43	119.4%
Entered OJT Employment Rate	0	0	#DIV/0!
Total Participants	277	371	133.9%

Total Budget	Total Planned	Actual	% Variance
Core/Intensive	\$239,373	\$227,251	94.9%
Training/Transitional Jobs	\$225,625	\$130,868	58.0%
OJT	\$200,000	\$47,684	23.8%
Support Services	\$58,541	\$45,538	77.8%
Total	\$723,539	\$451,341	62.4%

Central/Western Maine Workforce Development Board (CMMWDB) Program Year 2016 Report

SP-NEG 6th Quarterly Report for period ending December 31, 2017

Summary of Grant Activities:

Since the start of the grant we have enrolled 41 people. In order to stay within the 30% required for work based training, we continue to focus on employer driven projects and not on individual training. One staff from WMCA continues to serve as navigator/liason to cover the 5-counties in the CMMWDB area, and she is available to assist with each of the area CareerCenters. This staff assists with recruiting for the employer projects which now include Oxford County. She also remains an active member of the Lewiston business assistance team and the Augusta business assistance team.

Area businesses and community partners SP-NEG staff have met with during this quarter:

We continue our same strategies to increase enrollments and are now at 47% of the plan total. We added 2 new people this past quarter. We continued employer driven projects in Androscoggin, Kennebec, and Skowhegan. We also started an employer driven training in Oxford County.

SP-NEG staff continues to meet with area businesses and community partners to promote the grant and to maintain OJT contracts and active projects. Meetings were held with the following:

Business Assistance Team weekly meetings, Lewiston CareerCenter
Lewiston – Auburn Rotary - monthly and committee meetings
Lewiston Ad Ed –Construction Class, C N A project
Mount St. Joseph’s Residence & Rehabilitation, Waterville – OJT meeting
Augusta CareerCenter – OJT invoices
Lakewood Continuing Care Center, Waterville – OJT invoices, partnership meeting
John T. Gorman Foundation, City of Lewiston – Design team meetings for 3rd construction project
Hahnel Bros – visits, construction project visit
HE Callahan – construction project visits
Northeast Painting & Coatings – construction project visit
Hebert Construction – OJT contract and invoices
Fortin’s Construction – construction project visits
BES, St. Mary’s, Gray-New Gloucester Ad Ed – Medical Assistance training
Northeast Technical Institute, area Ad Eds, LWDB, CSSP-B – Manufacturing Tech training
Catalyst, Rumford – OJT contract development
Androscoggin County Jail –job fair
MCA Cast Stone
Augusta Fuel Company

Status Update on Leveraged Resources:

Resources from WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and CSSP-B have been combined with the SP-NEG to assist with recruitment, assessment, and enrollment. The John T. Gorman foundation has been involved with our construction projects picking up some of the costs. Several community and business partners have assisted with planning, recruitment, and assessment for their projects. WIOA IB funding has been extremely important to these projects. The uncertainty of the IB contract has negatively impacted future projects.

Status Update on Strategic Partnership Activities:

To date we have enrolled 20 people in work based training through the SP grant. The breakdown is as follows: **5** people for manufacturing, this was in projects with Mechanic Falls/Poland Adult Education and NTI; **2** people in construction in partnership with Lewiston Ad Ed.; **7** people for medical assisting with St. Mary's and MeGen; **2** people for CNA for Lakewood and Mt. St. Joseph's, and **4** OJTs with no R2W attached. All our employer projects are a mixture of people eligible for all funding titles.

We completed our second construction trades project. Five candidates, all of them New Mainers, were enrolled. WMCA, Lewiston CareerCenter, The John T. Gorman foundation, Lewiston Ad Ed, several community partners, and several businesses were involved. This project included WorkReady and OSHA 10 Construction training during the first 3 weeks along with Scissor Lift Training and Renovation, Repair, Painting (RRP) followed by the construction training and work experience for the next 8 weeks. Two candidates completed the classroom and WE and 2 started OJTs but only 1 completed with one of the participating employers. Two candidates left early for other jobs and one was injured off hours and unable to continue.

Classroom training for the medical assisting project was completed on Dec. 15th. Partners for this project included WMCA, CareerCenter, Gray-New Gloucester (GNG) Ad Ed, and St. Mary's. Twenty candidates completed the class which was composed of incumbent and non-incumbent students. WIOA/SP funded 13 of the students. Other funding was provided through CSSP-B and the NBRC. Currently, 9 students have been selected by St. Mary's for hire and will be enrolled in OJT and Apprenticeship. WIOA IB students were co-enrolled in CSSP=B for OJT or assistance with job placement. The SP-NEG will be used to write the OJTs for those enrolled through that grant.

The 4th Ready2Work CNA project for St. Mary's will be completed in Jan. 2018. All eight candidates were funded through WIOA IB. Lewiston Adult Ed is providing both the WorkReady and the C N A instruction. St. Mary's held interviews in Dec. Five students are being considered for hire by St. Mary's and will be co-enrolled in CSSP=B to complete the OJT.

We enrolled 8 candidates in our first manufacturing project which ended on Nov. 22nd. WorkReady was provided through MSAD #52 for the WIOA IB participants. Partners included WMCA, CareerCenter, MSAD #52 Adult Ed, and Northeast Technical Institute. The manufacturing technician course was held at the NTI Lewiston campus and started Sept. 11th. Seven of the students are funded through WIOA, and 1 through CSSP-B. All 8 students successfully completed and are working with the school and CareerCenter on placement.

We began another Ready2Work CNA project for Mt. St. Joseph's starting on Sept. 5th. Partners included WMCA, Augusta and Skowhegan CareerCenters, Adult Ed and Mt. St. Joseph's. This included WorkReady and C N A instruction by Adult Ed followed by OJT for those selected by Mt. St. Jo's. WIOA IB funds the majority of students.

Another Ready2Work CNA project for Lakewood was supposed to start in October but was cancelled.

Staff continue working with Catalyst in Rumford to develop training and recruitment strategies for papermill workers. A subcommittee is looking at possible Pre-and New hire training. SP-NEG is funding an OJT which began on Dec. 7th.

A medical assisting project in Franklin Co. started this quarter. It is being funded through CSSP-B. WIOA IB funding was slated to be used but a contract has not been signed.

Staff from WMCA and BES continue to meet with area adult education offices and other training providers to discuss possible projects. SP-NEG funds are still available along with CSSP-B.

Status Update of Performance Measures:

We have exited 23 people from the grant. Fourteen entered employment; 1 moved from the area before placement; 1 is working temporary jobs due to illness in the family; the others had medical, family and personal issues.

Key Issues and Technical Assistance Needs:

SP-NEG staff participate in the statewide grant meetings to learn and share ideas. Enrollments are now at 47% of plan with 2 new people enrolled this past quarter. We continue to promote the program through our community partnerships, such as Rotary, and other CareerCenter activities. As the business community becomes more interested in what we're doing, we will need to assess how best to handle multiple projects with existing staff. The shrinking "labor supply" continues to be a concern; employers are desperate for workers in all 5 counties and jobs go unfilled; we continue to encourage employers to consider underutilized populations. Another concern is that our UI rate is just over 3% which makes it difficult to find dislocated workers to utilize the grant regardless of all the recruitment methods we use. WIOA IB has provided the majority of funding for these projects; however, with the disruption of the contract makes it difficult to assist participants.

We are talking more with employers about expanding training opportunities through apprenticeship and are starting to see more interest.

Best Practices and Success Stories:

In Area III we are very committed to employer-based training. Our business assistance team meets on a regular basis. At these meetings, and whenever necessary, we discuss how best to meet business needs and what might lead to training projects. Our business assistant team along with our ability to mobilize staff to address recruitment, assessment, and enrollment is a big plus as is our ability to work together as a team and not "in silos."

We continue to increase our marketing with press releases involving the projects. Staff also gather testimonials from employers and participants. The press releases have resulted in contacts from community partners seeking assistance for their participants and from businesses who are interested in what we are doing. Monica's business contacts through the Rotary have also been spreading the word among their networks.

We are working more closely with our participating employers to do recruitment for all of the projects. Several of these employers are posting R2W information on their company social media and on line application sites.

Combining the grant with WIOA IB and CSSP-B in order to meet both customer and employer needs is a good practice. Thinking of the employer's needs first and then determining which training dollars to utilize allows for flexibility. Working with community partners such as Adult Education, the City of Lewiston, Tree Street Youth, and the John T. Gorman foundation has been particularly helpful with recruitment and leveraging resources.

Our model for work based training is operating well; outreach to businesses and community partners is growing; projects with the hospitals and nursing facilities and have been particularly successful. We are also pleased with the continued increase in OJTs.

Businesses that we have worked with for R2W projects and training:

Maine General Health
Maine Veterans' Home
St. Mary's D'Youville Pavilion
St. Joseph's Rehabilitation
Lakewood Nursing
Bonney Staffing
John T. Gorman Foundation and other community partners
North Country Associates – Market Square Health Care
Catalyst
MCA Cast Stone
Maine Awards
Spiller's
Community Credit Union
HE Callahan
Hahnel Bros.
Industrial Roofing Inc.
Augusta Fuel

Construction Group: HE Callahan, Hahnel Bros., Industrial Roofing Inc., Northeast Paining & Coatings, Fortin Construction, Hebert Construction, St. Laurent & Sons, Gendron Construction, Renovate Right Construction, and ETTI.

Long-term Nursing Care Group: Schooner Estates, Montello Manor, Russell Park, Clover Health, Pinnacle, and Rumford Community Home.

Manufacturing Group: Maine Machine Products, Downeast Machine & Engineering, Elmet Tech, International Paper, UF Strainrite, Enterprise Foundry, General Electric, Kennebec Technologies, Mountain Machine Works, Alternative Manufacturing, Panolam Industries, Auburn Manufacturing, and Boston Brands.

SP-NEG Projects Quick Summary July 1, 2015 – Dec. 31, 2017

St Mary's	Med. Assistant with WorkReady	Gray – New Gloucester Adult Ed	4 SP (20 in class)
St. Mary's	CNA with WorkReady	Lewiston Ad Ed	0 SP (9 in class)
Elmet Tech, and Others	Mfg with WorkReady (2 rounds)	MSAD #52 Ad Ed and NTI	2 SP (8 in class) 0 SP (X in class)
Downeast Mfg and others	Mfg R2W Academy	Mechanic Falls AE, et al	3 SP (5 in class)
Lakewood Nursing	R2W to CNA to OJT	Waterville Ad Ed	1
Mt. St. Joseph's	R2W to CNA to OJT	Skowhegan	1
Maine General	Med. Assistant with WorkReady	Augusta Ad Ed	3
Hahnel Bros, and Others	R2W/Construction to OJT (2 rounds)	Lewiston Ad Ed and community partners	2 SP (7 in class) 0 SP (5 in class)
Me Awards	OJT - stitcher	Training at Me Awards	1
Spiller's	OJT- sales	Training at Spiller's	1
Catalyst	OJT - papermaker	Training at Catalyst	1
Augusta Fuel	OJT - HVAC	Training at Augusta Fuel and HVAC class at MEMA	1

41 people enrolled through 12/31/17 as follows: _____

OJTs - 10

7 enrolled in manufacturing: 4 in R2W; 1 in R2W/OJT; 2 OJT

2 Stitching (1 R2W/OJT; 1 OJT)

5 enrolled in C N A training: 2 in R2W/OJT

2 CNA (2 R2W/OJT)

8 enrolled in truck driving

3 Med. Asst. (3 R2W/OJT)

11 enrolled in medical assisting: 4 in R2W; 3 in R2W/OJT

1 Sales

3 enrolled in HVAC: 1 OJT

1 Papermaker

1 enrolled in sales: 1 OJT

1 HVAC

2 enrolled in medical coding and billing

1 enrolled in forensic science

2 enrolled in construction: 2 in R2W

1 enrolled in MHRT-C

(7) manufacturing + (5) C N A + (8) truck driving + (11) medical assisting + (3) HVAC + (1) sales + (2) medical coding and billing + (1) forensic science + (2) construction + (1) MHRT-C = 41

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) Program Year 2016 Report

Excerpt from CCWI's 2016 Annual Report – Full Report can be accessed at: [CCWI-Annual Report-](#)

Throughout 2016 as part of our strategic planning efforts, much work was devoted to implementing five occupational sectors with accompanying career pathways and pipelines developed for partners and field staff. The five targeted sectors are Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation & Logistics, and Finance & Banking. There is still much to be done, but the groundwork has certainly been well laid.

CCWI also began a new and important engagement with our Adult Education partners and, although our working together is not new, both parties are excited to find new ways to dovetail efforts between workforce and education programs. A series of meetings have been planned with workforce partners and Adult Education Directors in our Region to explore how “integration” of both systems is to occur.

In July, we learned that our application to USDOL for the \$4 million TechHire grant was approved. Since the grant announcement, we have been busy writing policies and request for proposals, as well as putting contracts in place with partners in order to operationalize this statewide grant. TechHire is very exciting as it allows us to try a new “bootcamp” training approach within the Maine workforce system, which we expect will have some important learning gains for other sector trainings we orchestrate. You can read more about this and other efforts in this report.

November 2016 saw the end of our highly successful Technology Occupations through Pathways Strategies (TOPS) grant effort. After 5 years, 449 individuals received mid- to high-level, STEM-related occupational training involving nearly 80 companies. Workforce Solutions management and staff were key to this grant’s success and made important business contacts which ultimately resulted in employment for 365 Mainers. Southern Maine Community College staff were important players in providing key training, as well as grant leveraging via the Maine Quality Centers. Likewise, New Ventures Maine, Maine Department of Labor, and the Midcoast Maine Redevelopment Authority were also important contributors.

More recently, the new administration released its proposed budget for 2018. Budget cuts for USDOL are at \$2.7 billion or a 21% overall decrease. This is hard news to receive, especially when the need for workforce skills training remains so high. Our hope is that Congress has a better understanding of the impact the workforce system makes on the lives of the employed and unemployed alike.

The Commission on Disability and Employment

The Commission on Disability and Employment (CDE), established by the Maine Legislature in 1997, promotes collaboration with the public and private sectors to increase awareness and influence policy related to employment for people with disabilities (PWD). The CDE is a statutory committee of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and meets six times a year.

The Chair of the Committee is Jennifer Kimble, Director of the Department of Vocational Services at Maine Medical Center. The members of the Committee this year were: Mel Clarrage, Jeanie Coltart, Gayla Dwyer, Rachel Dyer, Karen Fraser, Jane Moore, and Donald Rice.

Challenges

Issues identified in previous years continue to present challenges for PWD and employment in Maine.

Poverty: Research correlates poverty with high unemployment, low educational attainment, low-wage jobs, and lack of access to services. Mainers with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by poverty, experiencing it at twice the rate of Mainers without disabilities. According to Maine's Center for Workforce and Research Information (CWRI), from 2010 through 2014, nearly 60 percent of working-age Mainers with a disability lived at or near poverty, compared to Mainers with no disability at 27 percent. Even when employed, the percentage of Mainers with disabilities in or near poverty is 71% higher than the rate of employed people without disabilities (36% vs. 21%).

Over 10 percent (10.29%) of Maine's working-age population receives a disability benefit from the Social Security Administration, ranking Maine 6th in the country, preceded only by southern states with high poverty, high unemployment, and a rural landscape (West Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi). Many recipients of Social Security disability or SSI benefits are at or near poverty, but fear that earning income will cause immediate loss of the financial and medical safety net on which they rely. Although this is largely untrue due to special rules that support workers with disabilities, myths and misinformation on this topic persist among PWD and the social service providers that support them. The state should continue to support efforts to provide accurate information about working and how it affects benefits and identify additional means of educating individuals, their families and service providers to dispel the myths and increase the economic self-sufficiency of PWD and their families.

Cultural Perceptions: An area of ongoing concern to the Commission is the impact of societal and cultural messages regarding people with disabilities. These cultural beliefs are longstanding, with even the dictionary defining "disability" as something that "substantially limits activity especially in relation to employment or education." People with disabilities are often seen as individuals who receive services rather than as potential contributors to the economy as employees or business owners. This belief is alive and well among employers, individuals who provide services to PWD, PWD themselves, and even their family members. The reality is that every person with a disability is unique and has individual skills, interests, talents, and abilities that should be considered through the lens of employment. It is critical for Maine to continue existing efforts and develop additional strategies to combat these assumptions and stereotypes about PWD and employment for all of these groups, particularly considering Maine's workforce shortage.

Access to Effective Services: To effectively serve people with disabilities, all parts of the Workforce Development System (WDS) must improve its accessibility to and engagement of this population. This is specified by rules in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regarding access to services for people with disabilities. Often, if a CareerCenter customer mentions disability, they are directed to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) only, limiting that customer's opportunity to access the wide range of valuable programming available to all Mainers seeking employment. Not all people with disabilities require or meet eligibility requirements for VR. The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), which ended in March 2017, has focused on this issue and has developed recommendations for sustainable change in the CareerCenter system. To better assist in advising the WDS on this topic, the CDE invited Edward Upham, the Director of the Bureau of Employment Services, to help explain the structure and accountability of CareerCenters and external partner agencies (LWB providers) in the May 2017 meeting. The Commission also shared with Mr. Upham the DEI recommendations and previous SWB Committee Chairs' recommendations.

Transportation: As a very rural state, availability of and accessibility to reliable transportation is a major concern for any Maine citizen living in poverty. People with disabilities are faced with additional challenges in transportation. The Committee has been following initiatives to address transportation issues, particularly the proposed legislation based on recommendations from the Commission on Independent Living and Disability. The State should seek out successful models in other rural states and work to identify a solution to this pressing need.

Opportunities

Impacting Cultural Perceptions:

1. 2016 Empowerment Forum

The Commission Chair met with Chairs of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SRC-DBVI), the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (SRC-DVR), the State Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (CDHHLD) regularly throughout the year to share information about common disability-related issues, identify points of advocacy, and to plan and implement the 2016 Empowerment Forum for People with Disabilities in August 2016. The forum included Travis Mills as a keynote speaker, education for the attendees on keeping informed of legislation and advocacy opportunities, and a panel of four Mainers with disabilities that have experienced transitions in their lives and spoke about how they successfully managed those transitions. The forum was well-attended and received high satisfaction ratings from attendees.

2. Employment First Maine

The Employment First Maine Act of 2013 created a Coalition that met regularly through October 2016, the sunset date of the group identified in the Act. The culmination of this group includes a report that outlines recommendations to improve Maine's employment outcomes for PWD, and specifically notes enhancing the employment competencies of educators and providers of services to children and adults with disabilities. The report is slated to be presented to the 128th Legislature.

3. Department of Health and Human Services contract requirements and public reporting

Contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHS) to provide Community Integration and other services to people with psychiatric illness under MaineCare Section 17 will see changes effective July 1, 2017. New contract language requires providers to document a service recipient's desire to obtain employment, opening the door to developing employment as an individual's treatment plan goal; this must recur every 90 days. In addition, SAMHS began publicly reporting employment data from its Behavioral Health Home agencies (MaineCare Section 92), providing a dashboard to compare performance between agencies. While seemingly small steps, these requirements ensure the topic of employment is addressed with all service recipients and demonstrate the SAMHS commitment to ensuring employment is an encouraged goal for recipients of service.

Improving Access to WDS Services:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The State's four-year WIOA Unified Strategic plan is the system's operating manual and specifies how individuals with disabilities are served by system partners. The plan received final approval with provisions in October 2016. The Steering Committee has been meeting to gather all the elements to accomplish what needs to be done with the implementation strategy of the plan. One of these elements is a Universal Access Work Group, which has been meeting every few months since February 2017. The Commission Chair is a member of this group, which is charged with updating related policies for the Workforce Development System, identifying and developing tools for workforce partner agencies, and establishing Universal Access assessment standards for the system.

Dispelling myths to reduce poverty:

Work and Benefits Navigator Training (WBNT)

Through specialized, time-limited funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Health and Human Services with consultation from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services contracted with vendors to provide training and services to increase the capacity of the DHHS service system to support integrated, community-based employment for PWD across DHHS. This included the development and delivery of a "Work and Benefits Navigator" training to current providers of DHHS-funded services to PWD, to better equip providers to engage in conversations about employment, benefits, and economic opportunity. In this reporting year, eighty-nine providers have attended across the state, resulting in more individuals being equipped with information and knowledge to spread the word about employment opportunities and resources and to dispel myths about work and benefits during their work in disability service provider agencies across the State of Maine. Contracts to continue this training in FY18 have been established, and the Maine Department of Education is joining in the effort, funding a high school WBNT Pilot for FY18. CMS funding expires in September 2017.

What does the CD&E want to see in Maine regarding employment of people with disabilities in 2018?

- Increased opportunity for people with disabilities to be engaged in the employment and training process, and encouraged to have a voice regarding the access to and effectiveness of services that are designed to facilitate their access to employment and economic advancement.
- Promotion of ability and reduced cultural stigma regarding the role of people with disabilities in our communities and economy.
- Development of creative and aggressive strategies to get people with disabilities hired in jobs that meet their financial needs. This should include development of employer awareness and recognition of people with disabilities as a potential untapped labor pool.
- Universal design and access to services – where everyone in the State of Maine who needs employment-related services is able to access them easily and efficiently, including people with disabilities of all kinds.

In the current and future Maine economy and in the interest of having Maine residents available and appropriately skilled to fill existing and new jobs as employers need them, the Workforce Development System (WDS) must improve its accessibility to and engagement of people with disabilities.

Maine Department of Labor Highlights related to Employment of People with Disabilities

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) continued to target the preparation of youth with disabilities for post-secondary education and employment again this year. This focus complies with regulations enacted in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, but also is supported by evidence that shows that participation in a paid work experience before high school graduation is the best predictor of post-secondary employment for students with a disability (Luecking & Fabian, 2001; Test et al., 2009; Carter et al., 2010; Sima, et al. in press). Having a paid work experience in high school is likewise correlated with obtaining higher wage jobs after high school (Colley & Jamison, 1998). Importantly, research has also shown that participating in work-based learning can keep a high school student engaged – leading to decreased dropout rates and higher academic achievement. (Medrich, Calderon & Hoachlander, 2002).

Experience has led BRS to recognize that seeing young people with disabilities successfully at work as members of the Maine workforce helps to raise post-secondary expectations by families, schools and employers. The following are some examples of the many ways that BRS is investing in youth with disabilities and offering opportunities for their skills to be developed and abilities seen.

- The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)'s **Transition Work-Based Learning (TWBL) Model Demonstration grant** is well underway. In partnership with Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG), students with disabilities that are within two years of graduation from high school will be offered employment services to test whether a model of work-based learning improves attainment of competitive integrated post-secondary employment and educational outcomes. Specifically, under the grant, JMG is expanding its services to five new high schools in the Bangor area and DVR is now able to offer Progressive Employment services in the Augusta and Bangor regions. Progressive Employment is an initiative that introduces employers to a new generation of workers through a range of experiences, including job tours, job shadows, paid work experiences and on-the-job training.
- The Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) offered many activities this year as part of the **Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)** for students who are blind or visually impaired. Supplementing the core academic curriculum to increase success at school and ultimately in employment and adulthood, the ECC focusses on nine core areas: compensatory and functional academic skills; orientation & mobility; social interaction; independent living; recreation and leisure; career education; assistive technology; visual efficiency; and self-determination. One such activity involved five students attending the Common Ground Fair where they were required to navigate a large and crowded space and had the opportunity to direct fairgoers on how to sort their trash, as well as then re-sort items placed in the wrong container. Instructing others was a new experience for many of the students, and required a level of assertiveness they were not used to. They also were given an opportunity to budget money when choosing and ordering their own lunches.
- Additionally, DVR and DBVI offered over 200 students and youth innovative **summer employment opportunities**. Students developed job-related and specific work skills and many earned their first

paycheck. These summer work programs engaged universities, schools, county/ town offices, restaurants, recreation centers, hotels, hospitals, retail stores, florists, farmers, and more. See below for some of the specific programs around the State.

- Learning Independence, Fun and Employment (LIFE) 101 and LIFE 201 programs at Southern Maine Community College in Portland. Two & three week residential programs immersed students in practicing organization, home management, vocational awareness, independent travel, self-advocacy, and social skills. These DBVI programs included explicit instruction, community based instruction, volunteer opportunities, and paid work experiences.
- Summer Transition Workshop at the University of Maine in Augusta. This one week experience included a campus tour, instruction on differences between high school and college and accessing accommodations in college, and workshops to increase self-confidence, understand self-disclosure, and interviewing skills. Additionally, participants job shadowed employees at several local employers.
- Biddeford High School's Summer Work Program employed students from three high schools at several local employers and provided peer mentors to help develop work readiness and independent living skills.
- Massabesic High School's Summer Work Program engaged with nine employers and sixteen students, who also received peer mentoring to improve work readiness and independence skills. Six of the sixteen students landed jobs at the end of the summer!
- Eastern Maine Community College's Summer Work Experience Program offered six weeks of work experiences in three job settings and career exploration workshops daily. Students from Bangor, Orono, Old Town, and Hampden participated in the program.
- We-Do Summer Work Program placed seven Lake Region Vocational Center students in five-week paid work experiences. Students also worked with peer mentors.
- Lewiston VR's Summer Work Experience represented a partnership with Fryeburg Academy, Spruce Mountain High School, Leavitt High School, and Poland Regional High School. Community Rehabilitation Providers partnered to provide employability skill workshops and establish work experiences with numerous local employers. Several students have been offered full-time employment since their summer experiences.
- Dexter High School's Summer Work Experience extended students' class work and school-year work-based learning experiences into paid work. Several students were offered part-time jobs through their summer work.
- The Career Exploration Program provided weekly work readiness activities with DVR, including self-awareness regarding skills and interests, career opportunities, and job applications, as part of the Extended School Year program at both Kennebunk High School and Scarborough High School.