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2015 Annual Report of the

# Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

Submitted by

Jeanne S. Paquette, Commissioner

Maine Department of Labor



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**2015 Report**  
**Of the**  
**Competitive Skills Scholarship Program**

Transmitted to:

Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development

by:

Jeanne S. Paquette, Commissioner

Maine Department of Labor

As Required by 26 MRSA §2033(10)

# Executive Summary

The success of Maine's economy will ultimately be tied directly to the skill of our workforce. Maine's shrinking population and aging workforce combined with relatively low levels of education attainment and a workforce lacking the skills/qualifications desired by Maine's employers presents a serious challenge for Maine's present and future economy. The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) is a successful State funded program that is helping to move our workforce and economy forward.

The CSSP is open to all qualified Maine residents and pays for education/training and necessary support services for high wage jobs in demand in Maine. Individuals who qualify for the program must have a family income of at least 200 percent of federal poverty level and a desire to earn a marketable college degree or post-secondary occupational certificate that is considered to lead to high-wage and in-demand Maine occupations.

Following are some highlights of the CSSP program:

- **Improved Financial Security.** Successful CSSP completers earn more than unsuccessful trainees and significantly increase their opportunities for future advancement.
- **Increased Wages.** The average starting wage of individuals who complete their CSSP training program is \$15.46 per hour compared to their average wage of \$10.14 at entry to the program. It is expected that on average, successful completers of the program will more than double their earnings over time.
- **Relevant training for employers.** Healthcare is the largest employment sector in Maine accounting for 17 percent of jobs; 25 percent of CSSP trainees enter healthcare occupations at exit. CSSP is training individuals for in-demand jobs available in Maine.
- **Improved recession resiliency.** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 84 percent of individuals with bachelor's degrees and 77 percent of individuals with associate's degrees in Maine are employed as compared to 70 percent of individuals with high school diplomas. College degrees help individuals find and retain employment; 61 percent of CSSP trainees are pursuing two and four year degrees.
- **Decrease in program costs.** Rule changes enacted in 2014 have decreased the average per person CSSP costs from \$8735 to \$4445.

New CSSP Programs, targeting entry level incumbent workers and high school students were launched in 2015. CSSP Business is designed to meet individual business training needs for CSSP eligible new hires or incumbent trainees. Businesses choose which CSSP eligible applicants to accept into the training program and receive up to \$6000 per trainee to offset the cost of the business specific training.

- CSSP Business completion rate is 73 percent in contrast to regular CSSP rate of 68 percent.
- CSSP Business has an average hourly starting wage of \$15.98 versus \$15.12 for the overall program.

Beginning in 2016, CSSP Bridge Year Students will graduate from high school having a year of college courses behind them and CSSP funding and CareerCenter consultants to support them as they pursue a CSSP supported college degree on the CSSP approved high-wage in-demand occupations list.

CSSP is a successful program, helping to strengthen the Maine economy by helping businesses meet the demand for skilled workers while offering workers higher wages and better employment outcomes.

# Introduction

This report is being provided as required by the law establishing the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP) and instructing the Maine Department of Labor (Department) to report on the status of the program and on any data that is collected to evaluate the program.<sup>1</sup>

The start of CSSP in November of 2007 came at a time in Maine when the effects of the national economic downturn began to impact employment levels.<sup>2</sup> This economic downturn lasted longer than any of the previous four recessions.<sup>3</sup> In Maine, employment declined further and longer than in previous recessions with its effects lingering long after it's officially declared end in June 2009.

Many displaced workers continue to face significant reemployment challenges, and CSSP is providing an opportunity for them to train for good paying jobs that are in demand and to graduate with skills needed by Maine employers. As growth picks up, this training is more important than ever to align workers with the needs of Maine employers and to address the needs of the long-term unemployed.

The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program has just concluded its eighth year and since its inception has helped many low income Mainers meet the new employment demands placed upon them. This report offers findings for the 2015 program year and includes: participant career choice alignment with Maine's economic needs, education and training profiles and investments, program outcomes, participants' projected earnings, how graduates fared in the slowly recovering economy, and participant demographics. As more participants complete their studies and more data becomes available, data will drive continuous program improvement through policy review, providing insight into how to best help low-wage workers forge well-paying career paths while meeting Maine's demand for skilled workers.

## Background

The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program was established with bi-partisan support by the Maine Legislature in 2007, with the primary goal of providing eligible individuals with access to postsecondary education, training for industry-recognized credentials, and support that lead to skilled, well-compensated jobs with anticipated high employment demand. CSSP provides support to adults with family income lower than 200 percent of the federal poverty level; CSSP is financed by the state Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund.<sup>4</sup> The Fund is financed by contributions from employers; the cost of which is offset from their unemployment insurance (UI) taxes. Targeted outcomes from the program include: improvement of the economic well-being of participants, decreased reliance on financial support from public funds, and a workforce trained to meet ever changing employer demand.

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1 26 MRSA §2033(10).

2 Dana Evans, "The Maine Labor Market: Trends and Issues" (Center for Workforce Research and Information, Maine Department of Labor, September 2009) (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/pubs.html>) 23 Jan. 2010.

3 Center for Workforce Research and Information, Maine Department of Labor, "Tracking the Recession" (<http://www.maine.gov/labor/lmis/recession.html>) 23 Jan. 2010.

4 Public Law 2007, ch. 352.

# Skills Needed in Maine's Economy Gained by CSSP Enrollees

The employment outlook from 2012 to 2022 is for 2.3 percent job growth and the continuation of a structural shift from production-related industries to service-providing industries. Net job growth is expected to be concentrated in education and health services, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality industries. During this period, 13 of 22 occupational categories are expected to experience a net increase in jobs. Most new jobs and those with the fastest growth rates are expected to occur in service occupations and in professional and related occupations.

Occupational groups expected to grow at the fastest rates are: healthcare support (12%), healthcare practitioners and technicians (12%), personal care and service (11%), computer and mathematical (9%), and community and social service (7%). Occupations expected to gain the most net jobs are: healthcare practitioners and technicians (5,050 jobs), healthcare support (2,940 jobs), personal care and service (2,940 jobs), food preparation and serving (1,980 jobs), and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (1,350 jobs).

**Education Attainment Lags the Nation** – Only 40% of Maine's working adults hold a two or four year college degree, a rate similar to the national average of 39.4%<sup>5,6</sup>. However, when we compare the higher education attainment rate of Maine young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 to the New England and national rates our education attainment deficit is more egregious. For example, the percent of Maine young adults with bachelor's degrees in 2013 was 7.7%. This rate is lower than the New England and national rates at 14% and 9.7% respectively<sup>7</sup>.

The number of high school graduates enrolled in college the fall after high school graduation from 2008 – 2013 dropped by 1,108 or 7% over the 5-year period. The combined low student enrollment and education attainment rates among young adults are challenging Maine to produce the skilled workforce needed to replace the retirees and to sustain and expand an innovation-based economy.

More than half of net job growth will occur in occupations that typically require some kind of post-secondary education for entry. About 30 percent of new jobs will be in occupations that require post-secondary education less than a bachelor's degree; an additional 30 percent will require a bachelor's degree or higher.

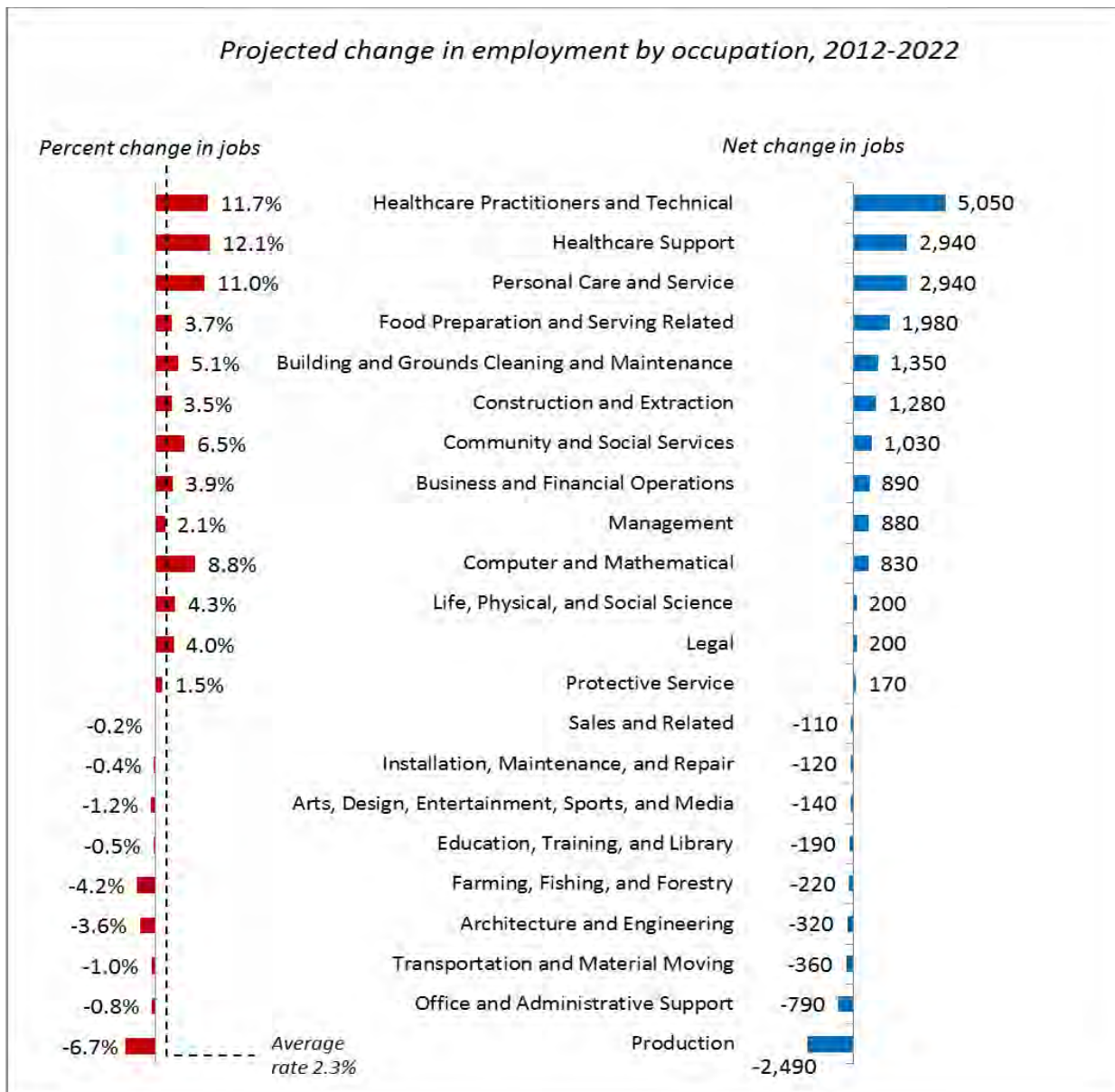
Demand is created by net growth and replacement of incumbent workers. About five out of six annual openings will be due to replacement rather than growth, creating opportunities even in industries and occupations with no expected net job growth. Among occupations identified as high-wage and in-demand, more than half of anticipated annual openings are among occupations requiring post-secondary training or education.

The following employment projections represent the foundation for establishing the high-wage, in-demand occupations targeted by CSSP.

5 "A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education: Ten-year time horizon brings Goal 2025 into focus." (2013). An annual report from Lumina Foundation. 211 pages.

6 "A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education: In Maine, the Ten-year time horizon brings Goal 2025 into focus." (April, 2015). A policy brief from Lumina Foundation. 4 pages.

7 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013



## Maine's Workforce Needs and Career Choices

Both individual economic self-sufficiency and the meeting of employers' needs for skilled labor are the desired outcomes of the CSSP program. Participants must be enrolled in training for employment in occupations that are identified by the Department as high-wage/in-demand (HWID) occupations in Maine that will result in a post-secondary certificate, degree, or industry-recognized credentials. Occupations on the 2015 HWID list had an average wage above the median (\$16.06 per hour/\$33,400 per year) and were projected by the Department's Center for Workforce and Research Information (CWRI) to be in demand in Maine.

The HWID list is reviewed by the State Workforce Board and approved by the Commissioner of Labor. Training for occupations not on the HWID list are not eligible for funding through the CSSP program. Although these criteria help target CSSP to meet the needs of Maine's employers, further comparison of CSSP participants' occupational choices with job demand is necessary. The choice of an occupational goal by participants involves many factors, including the education and training programs being offered in their area, how much time they believe they can devote to the effort, and their individual skills and interests. It is, therefore, worthwhile to analyze the extent to which the career choices of CSSP participants reflect the job market.

The following chart compares the most frequently chosen occupations of CSSP participants to date, with projected job growth and job openings in those occupations in Maine. In some occupations (for example, management occupations) projected growth of the occupation may be small or even negative, while projected annual job openings are large. This reflects the extent to which people are expected to leave or retire from the occupation, creating a significant demand for replacement workers. Thus, CSSP participants are preparing to meet the needs of both growing industries and industries that need newly trained replacement workers.

## Top Ten Occupational Groups Chosen By CSSP Trainees

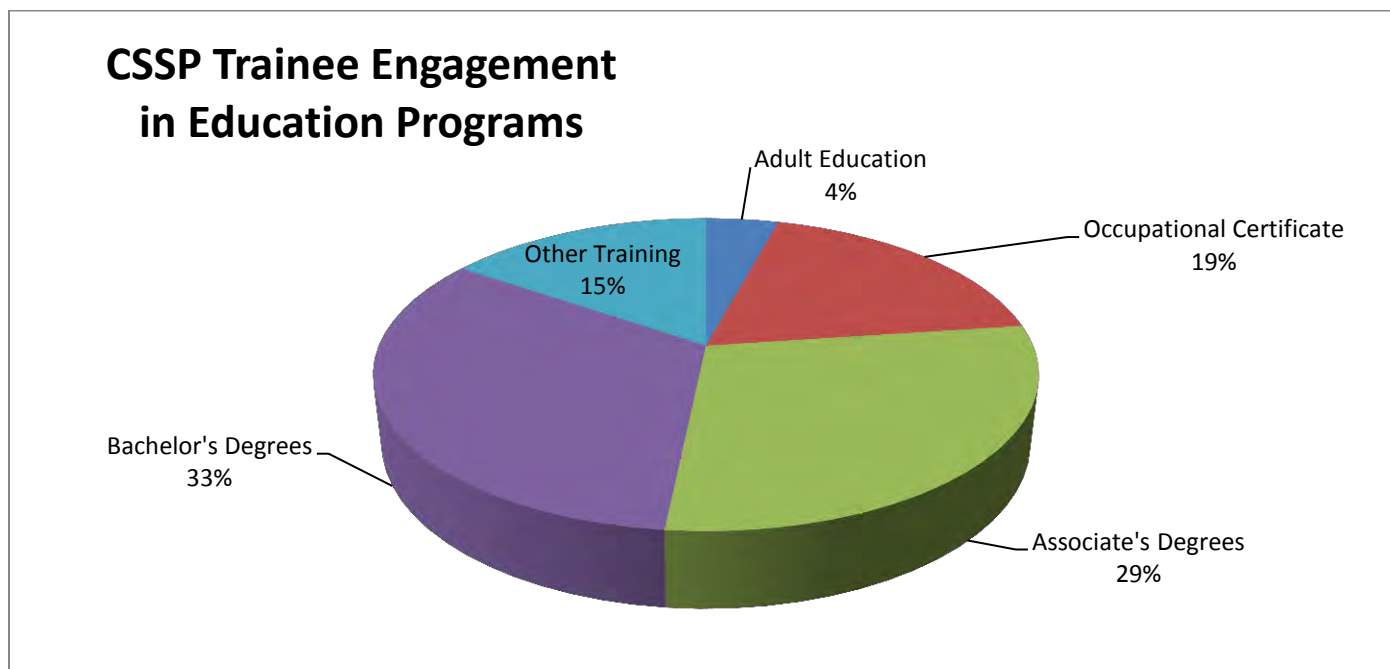
Occupational Classification	Number of CSSP Trainees Enrolled	Percent of Total	Projected net Job Growth 2012–2022	Projected Avg. Annual Openings 2012–2022
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	244	25.2%	11.98%	1,384
Community and Social Services Occupations	150	13.9%	6.5%	474
Management Occupations	110	11.7%	2.1%	954
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	59	7.8%	-0.5%	949
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	52	6.2%	8.8%	249
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	45	5.9%	3.9%	577
Healthcare Support Occupations	42	5.4%	12.1%	749
Installation, Maintenance and Repair Occupations	33	3.6%	-0.4%	657
Production Occupations	32	3.5%	-6.7%	786
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	31	3.4%	-1.0%	838
<b>Totals</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>83.1%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>17,774</b>



The distribution of career choices as reflected in the chart on the previous page indicates that the job market is, in fact, a driving factor in CSSP participant choices. Of particular note, the popularity of training in health care professions reflects Maine's high projected demand in the industry. (Note: The chart above shows the top-ten major sector groups chosen by participants and reflects total enrollments in each group; it is not to suggest total program enrollments across all sectors.)

## Education and Training Programs

CSSP participants are in a variety of programs ranging from short-term certificate programs to four-year degree programs. Many participants in developmental courses were simultaneously in courses providing credit toward their certificate or degree. Many participants continue to transition from two-year degrees to four-year degrees. Through September 30, 2015, current CSSP trainees were engaged in 1094 educational programs through a variety of education providers to advance their skills and credentials in preparation for entry to a high-wage high-demand occupation in Maine.



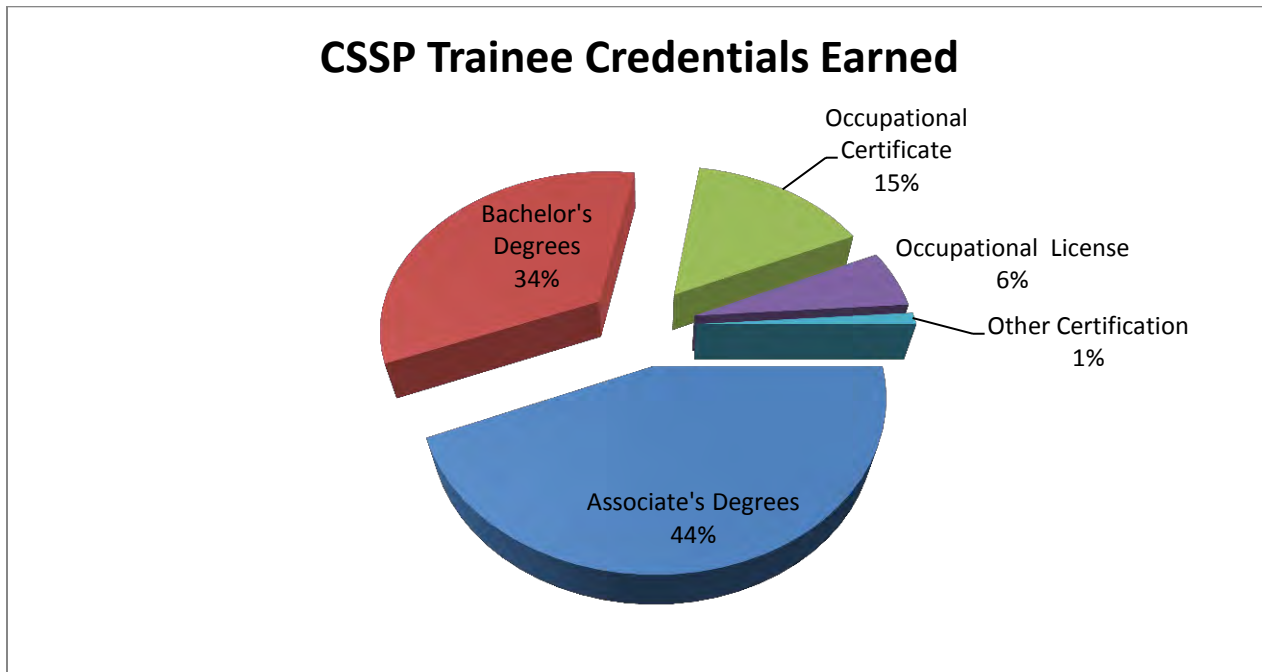
- 46 (4.20%) were enrolled in basic education courses offered through the adult-education system.
- 169 (15.45%) individuals were supported through CSSP to engage in non-categorized training which includes a combination of work-ready skill training offered through the CareerCenters and short-term certificate programs offered through approved educational institutions.
- 675 (61.70%) were enrolled in two- and four-year college degree programs; with 46.67 percent (315) trainees pursuing two-year degrees and 53.33 percent (360) pursuing four-year degree programs.

## CSSP Participants Status after Exit

Between July 1, 2012 and September 30, 2015, a total of 966 trainees were enrolled in CSSP. Of those 966 individuals, 450 have exited and are no longer receiving funding from the program, leaving a total of 516 individuals enrolled as of September 30, 2015. Of the 450 individuals who exited, 300 (67%) were employed and earned wages during their first quarter after exiting CSSP.

### Exit Reasons

Successful program completion results in a post-secondary certificate, degree or credential that is recognized by the trade or industry. Of the exited trainees, 201 individuals successfully advanced their credentials, with the credentials earned represented below.

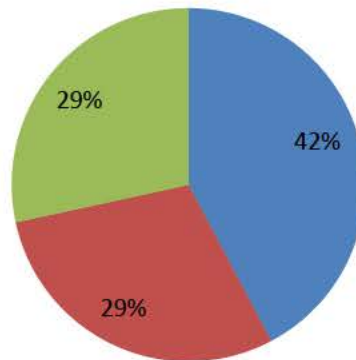


Between 2008 and 2014, short-term certificate programs and one-and two-year post-secondary degree training represent a significant share (87%) of the exit numbers. In 2015, this percentage decreased to 66 percent. Increasing numbers of participants are exiting the program as longer-term training programs come to an end. The percentage of trainees completing CSSP training with Bachelor's level degrees has increased from 13 percent in 2012 to 34 percent in 2015 (up from 19% in 2014). It is anticipated the percentage of trainees completing Bachelor's level degrees will continue to make up a larger share of the total exits as four-year training programs conclude.

Participants who do not earn degrees exit CSSP for a variety of reasons including: to get a job to meet their families financial needs; because of medical or family care needs; or their family situation changes causing them to decide that earning a degree is no longer a priority.

## Percent of Exits by Program Year\*

■ Program Year 2012 ■ Program Year 2013 ■ Program Year 2014



*\*Program year is defined as July 1<sup>st</sup>–June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.*

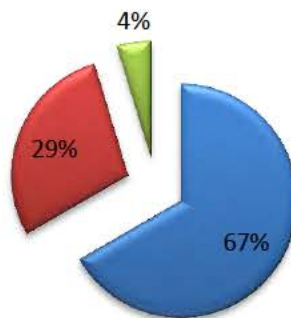
*For example, Program Year 2014 began in July 1, 2014 and concluded on June 30, 2015.*

## Exit Exceptions

The review of exit data on 21 participants shows separation from the program due to unforeseen or unexpected circumstances. Exceptions are not included in the entered employment denominator due to the nature of the exit. Of the 21 exceptions, 52 percent exited to provide family care and 48 percent exited due to personal medical or health issues.

## CSSP Exit Details July 2012 - September 2015

■ Exited to employment in the 1st quarter  
■ Exited program for undisclosed reasons  
■ Exits from program for family care / personal reasons



## Employment and Earnings – Are Participants Better Off After Training?

It is expected on average, the program's successful completers will more than double their earnings, bolstering job retention based on their marketability as well as instilling self-confidence and self-esteem. In addition, most could expect health coverage and other benefits in their new occupation at a level never experienced before. The assertion that successful trainees will more than double their wages is well supported by reviewing the data of exited CSSP trainees. Between July 1, 2012 and September 30, 2015, three hundred out of 429 trainees entered employment after exit from CSSP. The entered employment rate to date is 70 percent.

The average annual wage of this subset of individuals when they entered CSSP was \$9,786. Their projected annual wage at exit from CSSP was \$22,942—a 234 percent increase in yearly wage at entry to CSSP.

Individuals who successfully complete their CSSP training program and enter training-related employment earn an average \$15.46 an hour. Comparatively, individuals who either do not complete their CSSP training program or enter employment not related to their training earn an average of \$13.60 per hour in wages, a difference of \$1.86 an hour or potentially \$3,869 a year if placed in a 40-hour-per-week job. In addition to earning a higher hourly wage, CSSP trainees who successfully complete their educational programs will have more opportunities for future advancement because of the education received through CSSP.

## WAGES EARNED DURING THE FIRST THREE QUARTERS AFTER EXIT FROM CSSP

The following chart depicts the wages of individuals exiting to employment following their participation in CSSP.

	Individuals Earning Wages	Total Wages for Quarter	Average Quarterly Wage Earnings
1st Quarter Wages	278	\$1,645,355.00	\$5,919.00
2nd Quarter Wages	228	\$1,472,305.00	\$6,457.00
3rd Quarter Wages	205	\$1,415,415.00	\$6,904.00
Total Wages Quarters 1st - 3rd Quarters	237	\$4,533,075.00	\$6,427.00

**Note:** 1st quarter does not match 300 reported on previous page due to supplemental wage data and federal Wage Record Information System (WRIS) data where dollar values are not available. Twenty-two exiting CSSP trainees were reported as entering employment by staff in the 1st quarter with no UI wage data provided. Exiting to employment and then showing no Maine UI wages indicates that the individual is either: self-employed, employed out of State or employed in Maine in a Federal job. Due to confidentiality/privacy agreements between states we cannot see the data from other states.

Between July 1, 2012 and September 30, 2015, a total of 450 individual trainees exited the CSSP program. Of those who exited, 278 (62%) exited to employment in the first quarter, averaging \$5,919 in wages or a total of \$1,645,355 in wages during that time.

During the subsequent two quarters, CSSP participants show a continued increase in average quarterly wage earnings even though the total wages earned for the quarter goes down during the second and third quarters. This is because all wage data is not yet available for all participants. As additional wage data is finalized, total and average quarterly earnings is expected to increase.

**\*Please note that percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.**



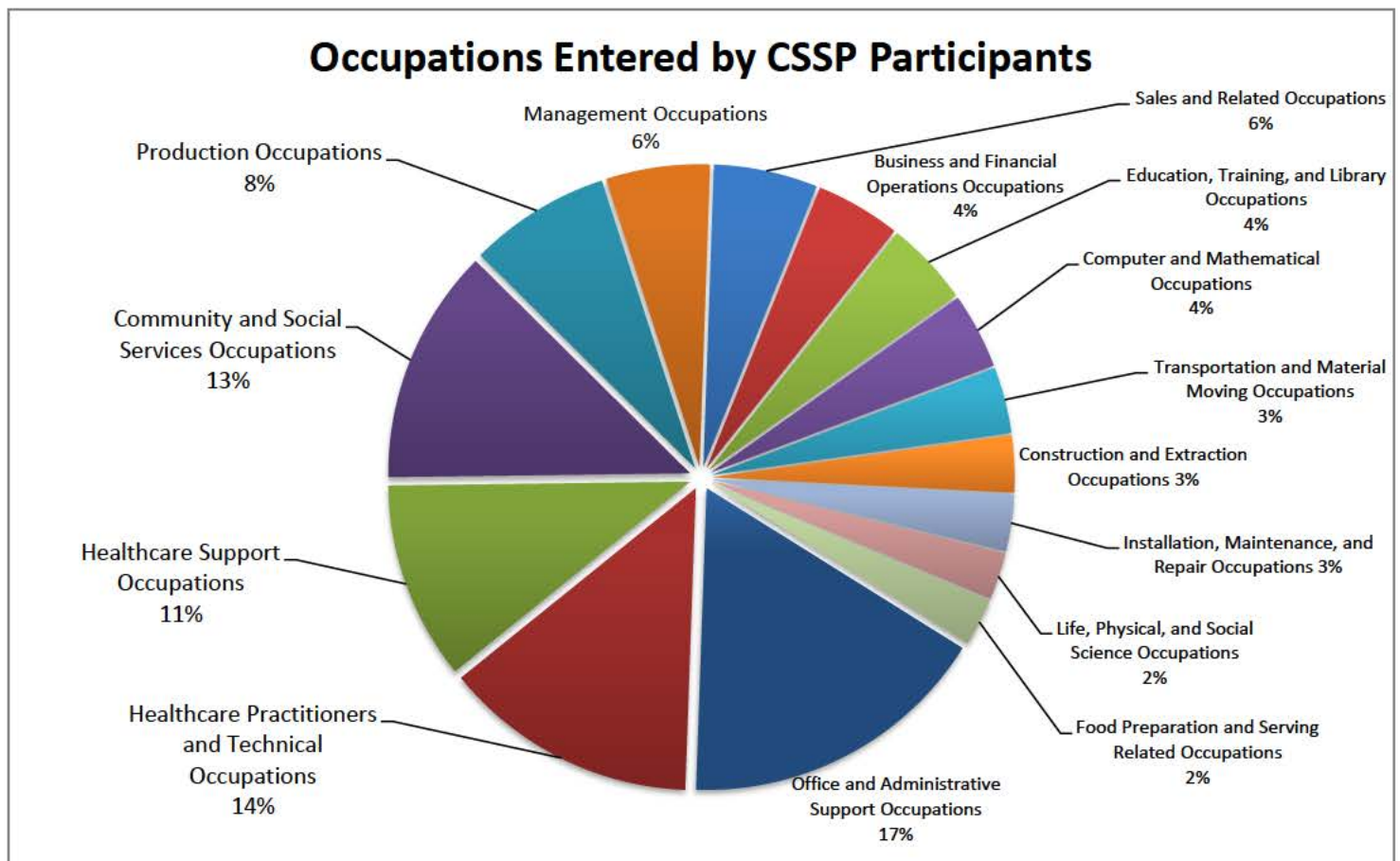
## Occupations Reported at Exit

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) System is a system developed by the United States Federal Government and used by the Maine Department of Labor to collect, classify and compare occupations across data sets. The following chart shows 22 different major occupational groups into which 210 individual CSSP participants entered employment upon their exit from CSSP. Wage data represents the average wage and the lowest and highest ranges of pay for the number of participants in each SOC occupation depicted. Job titles and hourly wage data provided are reported by the trainee at the time of exit from CSSP. The average hourly wage reported by all individuals who exited CSSP between July 1, 2012 and September 30, 2015 is \$15.12.

Occupational Placements & Wages Reported at Exit	Count	Average	Median	Minimum	Maximum
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	33	\$11.95	\$11.05	\$7.50	\$24.00
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	27	\$21.74	\$21.45	\$11.50	\$45.67
Community and Social Services Occupations	25	\$14.76	\$15.00	\$10.00	\$21.00
Healthcare Support Occupations	21	\$11.90	\$12.00	\$8.25	\$17.00
Production Occupations	15	\$12.61	\$12.50	\$8.50	\$15.75
Management Occupations	11	\$15.15	\$14.00	\$10.00	\$25.00
Sales and Related Occupations	11	\$13.12	\$10.00	\$7.90	\$30.00
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	9	\$17.31	\$16.00	\$10.00	\$24.42
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	9	\$21.75	\$14.00	\$11.00	\$83.00
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	8	\$17.10	\$17.16	\$12.00	\$21.91
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	7	\$12.55	\$11.50	\$10.00	\$20.62
Construction and Extraction Occupations	6	\$14.38	\$14.50	\$10.00	\$18.75
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	6	\$12.32	\$10.47	\$9.50	\$17.00
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	5	\$16.43	\$17.30	\$10.00	\$19.86
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	5	\$9.84	\$8.50	\$7.50	\$14.00
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	4	\$28.25	\$29.00	\$10.00	\$45.00
Personal Care and Service Occupations	4	\$10.64	\$10.40	\$7.74	\$14.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	2	\$12.25	\$12.25	\$11.50	\$13.00
Protective Service Occupations	1	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00	\$12.00
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	1	\$15.50	\$15.50	\$15.50	\$15.50
Legal Occupations	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

## Sector Occupations

This chart represents the percentage of participants entering employment in the major employment sectors listed. Sector distribution is consistent with employment projections, participant training outcomes and jobs in demand.





## CSSP Exits by County and Wages

The average last reported wage at time of entry to CSSP was \$11.70 per hour, while the average wage at exit from the program for the trainees reported as entered employment was \$15.12 per hour. It is important to note that many individuals reported higher wages at entry than at exit, but many of those individuals were not employed when they began the program due to job loss prior to application. In other words, the job they lost or no longer had at their time of entry to the program paid more than the job they entered upon exit from the CSSP program.



## CSSP Exits vs. Wage Earnings Reported in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter after Exit

### 450 Individuals Exited Including Global Exclusions

County	Number of trainees exited CSSP	Number of exiters w/wages 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	Percent of exiters earning wages in the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter after exit
Androscoggin	34	25	73.53%
Aroostook	54	40	74.07%
Cumberland	47	28	59.57%
Franklin	16	12	75.00%
Hancock	16	10	62.50%
Kennebec	48	39	81.25%
Knox	8	5	62.50%
Lincoln	11	8	72.73%
Oxford	20	10	50.00%
Penobscot	55	36	65.45%
Piscataquis	6	3	50.00%
Sagadahoc	11	6	54.55%
Somerset	31	21	67.74%
Washington	47	32	68.09%
Waldo	16	11	68.75%
York	30	19	63.33%
Statewide Data	450	305	67.77%

## CSSP Expenditures – Program and Administration

CSSP assists trainees with essentials such as tuition, fees, books and supplies not otherwise covered by financial aid, as well as assistance with transportation and child care while attending training. A small stipend is available

for those trainees with income below 125 percent of the federal poverty level and reserved for trainees who have either exhausted their unemployment benefits or were determined ineligible for unemployment compensation. For individuals enrolled under 2010 CSSP rules, the maximum monthly stipend paid in 2015 was \$569. In 2015, 125 percent of the federal poverty level was \$28,063 for a family of four and the maximum monthly stipend available to eligible CSSP trainees enrolled under the 2015 program rules was \$341. The amount of the current stipend is determined annually by calculating one-fifth of the average unemployment benefit while the stipend provided to participants enrolled under 2010 rules is one-third of the average unemployment benefit.

The average annual revenues directed toward the program, including interest, total \$3.3 million. Expenditures in calendar year 2015 totaled \$2.9 million while the average of expenditures between 2008 and 2014 was \$2.1 million per year.

**The CSSP Business Program** first piloted in 2014 has served 42 trainees through 2015. The program is designed to meet individual business training needs for CSSP eligible new hires or to advance income eligible incumbent trainees. CareerCenter staff work directly with businesses to help identify their workforce needs and trainees who meet business and CSSP eligibility guidelines. CSSP Business Program trainees are either CSSP income eligible incumbent employees in entry level jobs or income eligible individuals recruited directly through the CareerCenter. Businesses choose which CSSP eligible applicants to accept into the training program and receive up to \$6000 per CSSP enrolled trainee to offset the costs of the business specific training. At the conclusion of training, successful trainees earn an industry recognized certificate or degree and a job that pays a minimum of \$14.00 per hour. Since 2014, CSSP Business Program trainees have a 73 percent completion rate and exited to employment with an average starting wage of \$15.98 per hour. In contrast, the regular CSSP program has a 68 percent completion rate and an average hourly starting wage of \$15.12. CSSP Business is working and we hope to expand the program in 2016.

**The CSSP Bridge Program** legislated in July of 2015 with rule changes adopted in December 2015 allow the co-enrollment of Bridge Year Program students into CSSP. The program will be piloted in early 2016 with 50 seniors from seven Maine high schools who are enrolled in the Bridge Year Program and meet the eligibility requirements of CSSP. The Bridge Year Program offers a cohort based educational experience. Student cohorts are dually enrolled in high school and college courses and attend their regional Career and Technical Education (CTE) School where they participate in training for a field of their choice. CSSP Bridge students will obtain 24+ college credits (at a cost of \$40 per credit) by high school graduation through dual enrollment. These credits will be transferable to all University of Maine System schools, all Maine Community College System schools, and may be transferable to other public and private post-secondary institutions. Students enrolled in CSSP Bridge will graduate from high school and enter college with a year of college courses behind them, CSSP funding and CareerCenter consultants to support them as they pursue an Associate's Degree on the CSSP approved high-wage in-demand occupations list within 12 months following high school graduation and/or complete a Bachelor's Degree option in less than four years.

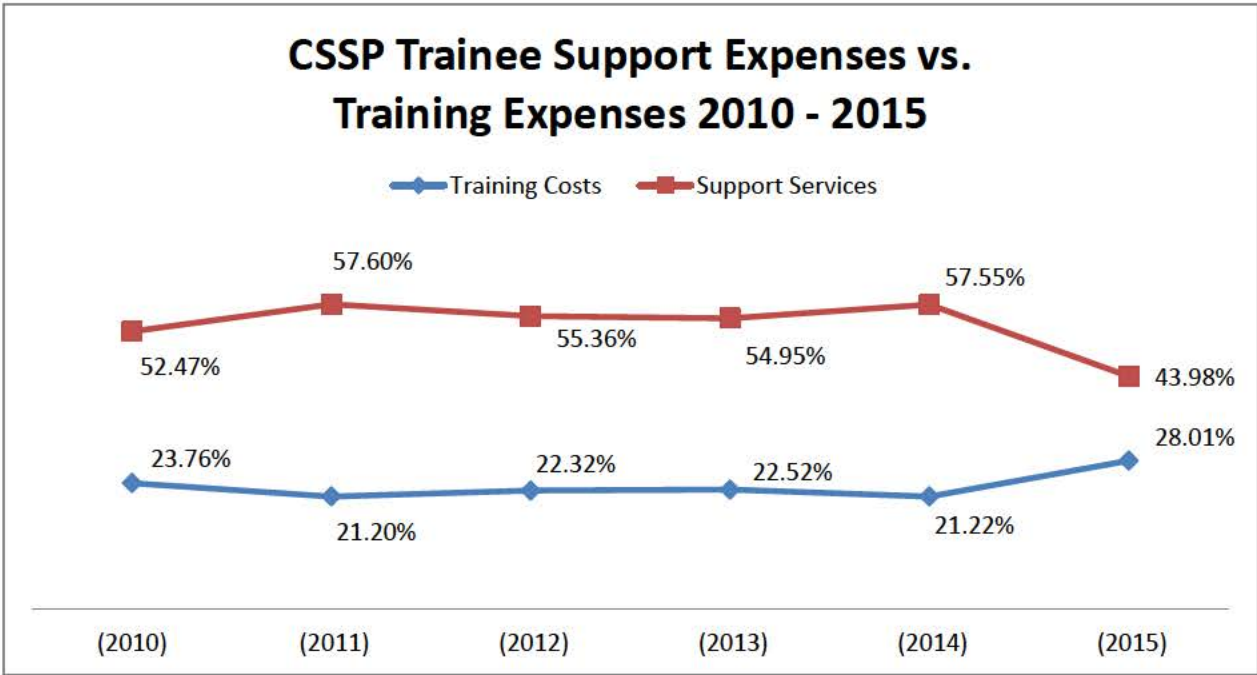
Between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015, a total of \$2,902,529 of funds were spent on CSSP training, support services and administration, with \$8,913,999 or 85 percent of total funds spent directly on CSSP participants. Participant funding was primarily dedicated to training costs, transportation, income stipends, and childcare expenses incurred by CSSP participants. When reviewing the data presented below, it is important to note that almost all CSSP trainees enrolled in college degree programs receive federal PELL grants that per CSSP rules are applied to their tuition, books and fees prior to accessing CSSP funds. In many cases, the



PELL grants cover the majority of the direct training costs while the support services covered by CSSP are used to pay for the indirect yet real cost of participating in training. Without the support of CSSP, the PELL grants would not be sufficient to allow the CSSP trainees to pursue post-secondary education programs.



Rule changes in 2014 increased the percentage of CSSP funds spent on training expenses. As the 67 remaining individuals enrolled in CSSP under 2010 rules exit the program, it is anticipated the percentage of funds spent on CSSP trainee support services will remain greater than the percentage of funds spent on training costs, though the categories will continue to move closer together.



## Collaboration and Leveraged Resources

CSSP program administrators pursue opportunities to collaborate and align available resources within and outside the Maine Department of Labor to support CSSP service productivity. Many participants (41%) leverage other resources (such as co-enrollment in federal Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act-funded programs, utilizing federal PELL grants or other available non-federal grants) in combination with CSSP funds to pay for their training.

**The CSSP Food Supplement Employment and Training Program (CSSP-FSET)** is a collaborative effort between the Maine Department of Labor's CSSP and the Department of Health and Human Services and has led to a partnership between the two agencies to assist some of Maine's most financially needy individuals. CSSP-FSET is intended to accelerate achievement of employment and independence from Maine's public services. The program provides training support for up to 75 food supplement recipients who seek training and education for more highly skilled jobs. The target population is identified as food supplement recipients who are able bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) or work registrants residing in Androscoggin, Cumberland, Kennebec and Penobscot counties. The CSSP FSET program has assisted 22 trainees to date who are working towards earning an industry recognized certification and/or an associate's degree.

## CSSP Administration

The Competitive Skills Scholarship Program is administered through Maine's CareerCenter system, a network of 12 comprehensive Centers located throughout the state. Since launched in 2007 as a small pilot project, the program has been overwhelmed with applications for a limited number of slots. In 2015, we began moving the CSSP application process from the traditional CSSP lottery system to an open enrollment system. Currently, each county is allocated a specified number of slots, and asked to maintain that number throughout the year. Moving the CSSP to an open enrollment process has helped ensure that CSSP is serving the maximum number of trainees with our limited number of full time equivalents allowed. In 2015, CareerCenters received 1080 CSSP applications for 400 openings available statewide. Since the inception of CSSP, 20 percent of eligible applicants have been accepted into the program. The overwhelming demand for CSSP services is represented in the following chart.

Overwhelming Program Demand – CSSP Applicants and Enrollees 2007 – 2015

	2007 - 2013	2014	2015	Totals
<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	5,148	889	1,080	7,117
<b>Enrolled Applicants</b>	858	233	324	1,415
<b>Percent Accepted</b>	16.67%	26.21%	30.00%	19.88%



## Program Eligibility

To be eligible for the program, applicants must be at least 18 years of age\*, have the aptitude to undertake and complete the selected occupation-specific training for high-demand employment, not possess a marketable post-secondary degree, and have income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level. First and foremost, CSSP eligibility is an income means-based program. Each year, updated federal poverty income guidelines are included in the eligibility determination process.

*\*CSSP rules adopted in 2015 allow high school juniors and seniors enrolled in the Bridge Year Program to be accepted into CSSP provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.*

## Distribution of CSSP Openings

CSSP slots are distributed to counties based on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) fund-allocation formula provided to states annually by the U. S. Department of Labor. Applicants are chosen by random selection to fill the predetermined open slots in their region.

### 2015 Slots Available by County – Total 400

COUNTY	SLOTS	% of TOTAL	COUNTY	SLOTS	% of TOTAL
Androscoggin	31	7.8%	Oxford	22	5.5%
Aroostook	30	7.5%	Piscataquis	8	2.0%
Cumberland	60	15.0%	Penobscot	50	12.5%
Franklin	12	3.0%	Sagadahoc	8	2.0%
Hancock	21	5.3%	Somerset	25	6.3%
Kennebec	33	8.3%	Waldo	14	3.5%
Knox	10	2.5%	Washington	17	4.3%
Lincoln	9	2.3%	York	50	12.5%

## Enrollment Trends 2007 to 2015

Since the start of the program, enrollment has grown steadily with the exception of 2013 when an open enrollment period was not held due to pending program rule changes. Between 2007 and 2015, a total of 1415 individuals were enrolled in CSSP. Between 2007 and 2012, the average yearly enrollment was 142 individuals per year. The average annual enrollment during the past two years was 279. The highest enrollment

in the program's history occurred in 2015 with 324 new individuals, bringing the total active enrollments on December 31, 2015 to 540 individuals.

#### **Overwhelming Demand CSSP Enrollment 2007 to 2015**

CSSP YEARLY ENROLLMENT	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Totals
Enrolled Applicants Chart	475	104	142	133	4	233	324	1415
% of total enrollments	34%	7%	10%	9%	0%	17%	23%	100%

## **Demographics of CSSP Participants**

CSSP was intended by the Maine Legislature to reach low-income workers who were likely to have a history of receiving unemployment compensation and who need the support of CSSP to succeed in gaining skills for better, more stable career paths. The data indicates CSSP is reaching this intended population.

A review of individuals enrolled in the program since 2012 shows that 73 percent (703) of CSSP enrollees had household income below 100 percent of the federal poverty level (currently \$15,930 annually for a household of two), well below the eligibility limit for the program of 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Data on 966 CSSP participants enrolled since 2012 shows that 63.5 percent are female; the average age of CSSP participants is 35.25, ranging from 18 to 73 years of age; the average number of people in a CSSP household is 2.5; and 28.1 percent of participants are single parents. In analyzing the income and employment status reported by participants enrolled since 2012, the following was identified:

#### **Employment Status at Time of Application 2012 - 2015**

- 41 percent(397) were employed and 59 percent (569) participants were unemployed.
  - 33 percent reported wages of less than \$10.00 per hour.
  - 42 percent reported wages within the \$10.00 to \$14.99 range.
- 16.5 percent (159) were receiving unemployment benefits at the time of application.
- 807 (83.5%) of enrolled trainees had either exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits or were otherwise determined ineligible to receive benefits.
- Of the trainees who were employed at the time of application, the average hourly wage of 397 enrolled trainees was reported as \$10.41.

# Individual Success Stories

The individual success stories of CSSP trainees like Brittani Roussel, Mike Rovin, Virginia Campbell and Nathan Dublin provide insight into how the program positively impacts individual earning abilities.

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## Competitive Skills Scholarship Client Brittani Roussel – Dental Hygienist



My name is Brittani Roussel, and I am a senior dental hygiene student at the University of New England in Portland, Maine. I have been enrolled in the Workforce Investment Act Youth Program since I was a senior in high school, and became enrolled in the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program in the spring of 2015. Words cannot portray how much my Counselor, Janie Small, and the CSSP Program have truly been blessings throughout my college career.

Growing up in the small town of Princeton, Maine, I never imagined that I would have the opportunity to fulfill my goals of attaining a college degree in the health care field, especially as a first generation college student. I always knew that I wanted to help others and give back throughout my profession of choice, but I was never exactly sure where, when, or how. When my heart was finally set on becoming a dental hygienist, I was determined to attend the University of New England, one of only two colleges that offered the dental hygiene program in the State of Maine. Although my parents knew that it would be a struggle, they simply wanted what was best for me. It was a huge leap for all of us, but we knew that we just had to take one step at a time. With support from the people in my life and the valuable resources made available to me, I had hope that anything was possible.

Here I am, four years later and one semester away from receiving my Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene. When I look back at the people and resources that led me to where I am today, the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program is definitely one of the most significant supports and was critical to my success. There have been many unexpected costs that have come throughout my senior year. CSSP has alleviated this pressure by compensating for most of these costs and allowing me to focus on my education. I could not be any more thankful for the financial assistance with books, dental hygiene instruments, scrubs for clinic, and national board exams. CSSP also allowed me to put new tires and fix additional problems on my car so that I could get to and from school as well as make the four hour trip back home safely. CSSP gives me hope that I can succeed and make a difference in this world, especially in Maine. I was not only able to create a better life for myself through my education and training, but I am now able to create a better life for others as a future health care professional.



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## Competitive Skills Scholarship Client Mike Rovin — Commercial Truck Driver

I found myself unemployed after 19 years in the same line of work. I sought the help of the Portland CareerCenter and was assisted by David Timmerman. He was great and helped me learn that I qualified for the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program. I enrolled at Northeast Technical Institute and less than six weeks later earned a Class A commercial driver's license. I have multiple job offers on the table and plan to be gainfully employed in the New Year. The staff and resources at the CareerCenter were extremely helpful along the way and I'm really grateful for these programs.



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## Competitive Skills Scholarship Client Virginia Campbell — Medical Assistant



In 2009, I lost my job during the Great Recession. Many boatyards closed in the State of Maine and I realized then that I should seriously consider a new line of work. I decided that I would go back to school to begin getting some of the core classes I would need to enter into a degree program. I was living in the Blue Hill area at the time and started school at Eastern Maine Community College in Ellsworth.

Going back to school in your forties is a bit intimidating. Choosing to start with a community college at a small satellite location was just perfect. There were so many people my age doing the same thing.

I was fortunate enough to meet Betty Rambo and she became my Career Center Counselor. She connected me with all the right paper work and people to obtain scholarship money to attend school. I can't thank her enough for being patient and understanding through the whole process. I don't know how many others she worked with, but without her support I might not have made it as far as I did.

In the fall 2009, I transferred to Southern Maine Community College (SMCC). After attending school full time at first, then part time, and then even taking a year off because I had moved again to obtain a new job, I finally in the fall of 2014, went back to school to finish my degree with one last big push.

During this period I was again out of work and really struggling. SMCC was now over an hour away and I still had to drive into school for some classes. If my new CareerCenter Counselor, Cornell McLellen, hadn't been so diligent and patient with sending in all the proper paperwork to obtain the financial aid I needed, I might not have finished my Medical Assistant degree. It is so difficult to go to school and worry about money at the same time. I really have to say kudos to the CareerCenter for never giving up on me. Betty and Cornell were not only my representatives- they were my personal cheering squad. It always felt good when they told me how proud they were of me and to keep up the good work. I never wanted to disappoint, and that made me work even harder.

I am currently working for Mid-Coast Medical Group in Brunswick, Maine and loving it.

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## Competitive Skills Scholarship Client Nathan Dublin — Engineer

Despite the low prices of oil and gas it is the field I have always wanted to develop my career in the Marine Trades. I graduated with Cum Laude honors from Maine Maritime Academy with my Bachelor of Science Degree in Marine Engineering Technology on May 2, 2015. Shortly after graduation, I was offered an interview by Rowan and ended up accepting a job as a 3rd assistant engineer on a new drill ship (rig) in the Gulf of Mexico. I have since worked my way up to Chief Engineer.

Since accepting this job I have been working a rotation of 21 days on an Articulated Tug Barge in the Gulf of Mexico and 21 days home. During my time off, I spend it in Downeast Maine and once in a while traveling to another state or country to take a week long work related class.



I have been more then blessed with this career and how far I have come in life. I have always had a positive outlook on life but knowing I have support keeps me going strong. I feel that I have made many people proud of what I have accomplished this far but the truth is I could not have done it without all of you. I would not be where I am today without the support I have had over the years; not only by family and friends but by the financial help received from the CSSP. Thank you.

*CareerCenter Consultant Janie Small adds: This job sounds ideal for Nathan. Over 90K a year, benefits, paid travel all over the country and the world to take classes, and to get paid for it! Wow, they are truly investing in him.*

## Looking Ahead

The Bureau of Employment Services continues to work toward the overarching CSSP goal of providing eligible individuals with access to postsecondary education, training for industry recognized credentials and support leading to skilled, well-compensated jobs with anticipated high employment demand.

CSSP is currently limited to spending 10 percent the annual revenue to the Competitive Skills Scholarship Fund (CSSF) on career counseling and administrative costs. The spending restriction imposed by CSSP rule severely limits the ability of the Bureau of Employment Services from offering the program to additional CSSP Business and CSSP regular trainees, resulting in unspent CSSF funds. Should the 10 percent cap be lifted, and our capacity to serve additional CSSP trainees be increased, the CSSP enrollment goal of maintaining 400 enrollments in CSSP will be increased.

CSSP will begin its eighth year in operation since it was launched in the spring of 2008. By the end of 2016, it is expected the program will have enrolled more than 1700 people who aspire to improve their work skills, competitive position in the Maine labor market and financial stability due to improved earnings. Clearly the demand for this program outweighs capacity. The program is meeting an otherwise unmet need for skilled workers in high-wage, high-growth occupations, helping to fill a gap for Maine businesses.

# Conclusion

Our ongoing experience with CSSP has provided important information. We know from the large number of applications compared to the number of openings available, that it remains in high demand. The benefits of postsecondary education and training are both tangible and intangible. Employers who are hiring will be more inclined towards the more educated, better trained and more experienced job seekers as they will have the competencies (critical thinking, problem solving and analytic skills, communication and interpersonal skills, collaboration and ability to execute, flexibility and adaptability, information processing, and capacity for change) most important for success – individual and corporate in the twenty-first century (Deprez/Butler, 1/2012).

CSSP is one of the few remaining state-funded programs allowing flexibility to support our state's specific training and employment challenges. The program's benefits go beyond financial and reach far into social making it possible for low-income adults to begin a journey on a career pathway leading to self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. Additionally, education better protects workers from losing their jobs during recessions as economic downturns have the greatest impact on workers with the least education.

CSSP is a successful program, helping to strengthen the Maine economy by helping businesses meet the demand for skilled workers while offering workers higher wages and better employment outcomes. Maine's young people are struggling with disproportionately high unemployment, low-wage jobs, rising college costs, and spiraling student debt. Multiple closures in Maine's manufacturing industry in recent years have caused many middle-aged workers to return to school to gain new skills and embark on new careers. The training and support received through CSSP can help to get Maine workers on promising pathways to well-paying, middle class jobs.

CSSP was designed by the Maine Legislature to help participants prepare for high-wage, skilled jobs that are in demand by Maine employers. Analysis of participants' training choices in light of projected job openings indicates the program is successfully connecting people with training for jobs that are in demand in Maine. Further, it is widely recognized that persons with more education and training increase their chances of employment in good paying jobs, and they possess the marketability to keep those jobs or advance in their professions. Finally, participants themselves have provided important insights into the critical role that CSSP is playing in helping them succeed.



## Competitive Skills Scholarship Program Brief Overview

Program Start-Year	2007
Total Served	1,415
Total Served 2015	653
Average wage at Entrance	\$10.41
Average Wage at Exit to Employment	\$15.12
1st Quarter Earnings of Participants	\$1,645,355.00

### Expense Summary 2015

Training	\$1,052,375.42
Support Services	\$630,190.54
Stipend	\$712,900.40
Administration	\$507,062.81
TOTAL Expenditure 2015	\$2,902,529.17

### Average Costs

Average Cost Training	\$1611.60
Average Cost Support	\$965.07
Average Cost Stipend	\$1091.73
Average Cost Administration	\$776.51
Average Cost Per Person	\$4444.92

### Allocations and Revenue

Average Annual Allocation	\$3,000,000
Revenue Balance as of 12/31/15	\$3,933,496

### Demographics

Female/Male	63.5/36.5%
Age Average	35.25 years
Single Parent Family Status	28.1%
Average Number of Family Members	2.5
Annual Income < 100% Poverty for a family of 2	72.8%

### Employment Status at Application

Employed	41%
Unemployed	59%