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Adult Workforce Readiness in Maine

**Report to the Joint Select Committee on
Maine's Workforce and Economic Future**

Submitted by the Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness

January 1, 2014

**A report of findings on, and recommendations for,
Improving adult workforce readiness in the State of Maine.**

December 31, 2013

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Representative Seth A. Berry
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To The Honorable Seth A. Berry:

The Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness was formed by the 126th Legislature Joint Select Committee on Maine's Workforce and Economic Future to develop a statewide plan to address the work readiness needs of adult incumbent workers, unemployed adults and employers.

The report of the working group contains findings and recommendations which we believe, if implemented, will meet the needs of employers for work ready employees and better prepare workers to succeed in the workplace through a system approach that integrates education, workforce and economic development.

As members of this working group, we look forward to seeing this initiative move forward and offer our continued assistance and support.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to work with such a capable and committed group of individuals.

Sincerely,

Gail Senese, Ph.D.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adults are workforce ready when they possess the basic academic and applied skills that meet the expectations of employers. Those applied skills are commonly referred to as “soft skills”. They include professionalism, work ethic, collaboration, responsibility, and critical thinking capabilities.

This report gives an overview of the process we used to determine what adult workforce readiness programs are already working well in Maine, what other states are doing that is effective, and what best practices we can implement in Maine. It highlights several documents which are particularly instructive, and which provide a working framework for moving forward. While there are some elements of nationally recognized best practices in place, Maine lacks the cohesive statewide approach found in effective sector partnerships.

Sector partnerships address the common needs of employers, and generate coordinated solutions that benefit workers. They create results for employers, job seekers, and public resources. A convener brings together industry members and strategic partners to create effective career pathways aligned with industry clusters.

We recommend the state move forward with integrating sometimes siloed efforts into a sector partnership approach. Maine has many committed organizations which are currently working to address Adult Workforce Readiness. However, these organizations are not unified by a statewide vision, but are all working individually. This disparate strategy leads to duplication of services, makes it difficult to replicate success, creates boundaries for workers, and is not always guided by employer needs. Sector partnerships which unite the efforts of government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations are shown to:

- Improve employment opportunities and increase wages for employees.
- Increase productivity, reduce turnover, and improve the competitiveness of companies.
- Better align state programs and resources serving employers and workers.

Sector strategies are being investigated or have already been implemented in over 25 states, so we have many effective models to look toward. The governor and state legislature can play a key role in promoting the development of sector partnerships by pursuing state action in five areas, detailed in the following report beginning on page 16.

In brief, to develop successful Sector Partnerships, the State should:

1. Create commitment and support for the establishment of Sector Partnerships
2. Establish a statewide vision and system for Sector Partnerships
3. Align the use of resources and incentives to support Sector Partnerships
4. Use data and research to establish and maintain Sector Partnerships
5. Create high quality partnerships which are essential for Sector Partnerships

FOREWORD

Origin of the Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness

Authorized under P.L. 2013, Chapter 368

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for Fiscal Years Ending June 2013, June 30, 2014, and June 30, 2015.

Part HHHHH, Section HHHHH-1. The Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness was established to develop a statewide plan to address the work readiness needs of employers, adult incumbent workers, and unemployed adults. The Working Group consists of the Maine Department of Education State Director of Adult Education and Family Literacy, Executive Director of the Maine Centers for Women, Work and Community, Executive Director of the Maine Adult Education Association, Representative of Department of Labor, Representative of the State Workforce Investment Board, Representative of a Local Workforce Investment Board, Human Resource Professional, Representative of Department of Health and Human Services, and a Public Librarian member of the Maine Library Association.

Establishment of the Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness

The Working Group was established by the 126th Legislature's Joint Select Committee on Maine's Workforce and Economic Future. The group met regularly from September through December of 2013. The State Director of Adult Education and Family Literacy served as chair. This report, *Adult Workforce Readiness in Maine*, is the product of the Working Group's research and findings.

The Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness was comprised of the following members:

Maine Department of Education

Dr. Gail Senese
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Local Workforce Investment Board

Joanna Russell
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Tri-County Local Workforce Investment
Board
Bangor

Scott Cuddy
Chairman, Training Review Committee
Tri-County Local Workforce Investment
Board
Bangor

State Workforce Investment Board

Garret Oswald
Staff
State Workforce Investment Board
Augusta

Maine Library Association

Nissa Flanagan
President
Augusta

INTRODUCTION

Charge to the Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness

The Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness was charged with:

1) developing a statewide plan to address work readiness needs of adult incumbent workers, unemployed adults, and employers; 2) including strategies that develop a coordinated system to meet the training needs of adult workers and the workforce needs of employers across the state; and 3) developing a plan to implement those strategies.

Each of these tasks was further addressed as follows:

1. Defining Workforce Readiness

The Working Group reviewed a number of definitions of workforce readiness as employed or advocated by a variety of workforce groups and agencies.

- A scan of nationally produced workforce readiness documents regarding the definition of workforce readiness for potential and incumbent workers and what elements should be included in workforce readiness training programs. Those workforce readiness and employability skills include professionalism, reliability, communication skills and teamwork. (See Appendix 1 for definitions).
- Maine employers define workforce readiness as displaying communication and teamwork skills with an emphasis on behavioral skills such as compliance with work rules, timeliness, and proper dress (Data source: Maine Development Foundation, *Jobs in Maine: Online Job Postings by Industry, Occupation, Skills, and Education, Third Quarter 2013*. <http://www.mdf.org/publications/Jobs-in-Maine-Online-Job-Postings-by-Industry-Occupation-Skills-and-Education/708/>)

The following is a clear and useful definition and is recommended by the Working Group:

Adults are workforce ready when they possess the basic academic and applied skills that meet the expectations of employers. Those applied skills are commonly referred to as "soft skills". They include professionalism (interview skills, knowing how to dress appropriately for the workplace), work ethic (punctuality, good attendance), teamwork /collaboration working with others, speaking and listening skills), responsibility, and critical thinking/problem solving capabilities.

2. Determining Current Status of Workforce Readiness Training

- What efforts are currently underway in the area of workforce readiness?
- What efforts, if any, are already underway to coordinate with various providers and employers to share information on work readiness efforts?

3. Determining the Need for Adult Workforce Readiness

The Working Group identified both national and Maine sentiments regarding the need for workforce readiness.

- A nationwide survey of more than 400 employers found that 75% of them felt that workforce readiness was as, or more important than, technical skills in securing entry-level employment. "While employers want outstanding technical and academic skills, they absolutely demand outstanding employability skills," David Bunting, executive director of the Iowa Association of Career and Technical Education.
- Maine employers consistently call for workforce readiness skills (Data source: Maine Development Foundation, *Jobs in Maine: Online Job Postings by Industry, Occupation, Skills, and Education, Third Quarter 2013*).
- Testimony delivered by employers during the L.D. 90 public meetings repeatedly referred to the need for employees who possess basic readiness skills.
- Employers view workforce readiness as the responsibility of education.

Process and Resources

To fulfill its charge, the Group was guided by the following questions.

1. What strategies are states with successful workforce readiness systems implementing to meet their needs?
2. What are the common best practices that should be implemented in Maine?

The Working Group met in the fall of 2013 to address the questions above. Members of the Working Group shared their expertise on the topic and reached out to other local and national resources to learn more on the topic of workforce readiness. This information gathering also included members of the Working Group attending presentations on national workforce trends and Maine's workforce by Garrett Groves of the National Governor's Association and Glen Mills, Maine's Chief State Economist. Much of the information in this report is based on the data and insights contained in *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age: Implications for State Workforce Policymakers*.

<http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1301NGASSSReport.pdf>

The following documents were also reviewed and proved to be especially instructive. The complete documents are either included in the appendix or have a link provided.

State Sector Strategies Coming of Age: Implications for State Workforce Policymakers, National Governor's Association. This paper provides an overview of sector strategies and summary details on how several states are using this strategy to successfully integrate supply and demand-side activities. <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-ehsw-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/state-sector-strategies-coming-o.html>

America Works: Education and Training for Tomorrow's Jobs, National Governor's Association Chair's Initiative 2013-2014. Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin, Chair of the National Governor's Association calls on the nation's governors to "...align education institutions and workforce training efforts..." www.nga.org

Educating and Training Tomorrow's Workers, Garrett Groves, National Governor's Association presentation at Maine Department of Labor on November 12, 2013. This presentation dealt with Sector Strategies as a way to align education, workforce and economic development to address workforce readiness.

www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2013/1309GEPAInstitute

Alliance for Quality Career Pathways Beta Framework Executive Summary, September 2013. Summary of a 10-state alliance formed to create a statewide framework for meeting employer workforce needs. This report was prepared by CLASP (Center for Law and Social Policy). <http://www.clasp.org/postsecondary/pages?id=0029>

Jobs in Maine: Online Job Postings by Industry, Occupation, Skills, and Education, Third Quarter 2013 prepared by Maine Development Foundation includes data on Maine's labor market and workforce. <http://www.mdf.org/publications.php>

Education Indicators for Maine 2013 was prepared by EducateMaine and released in October 2013. This report focuses on Maine's "educational pipeline" and clarifies the need for an integrated approach to attainment of educational competencies to result in a college and career ready workforce. <http://www.educatemaine.org/>

Maine's Industry Partnership/Sector Strategy was prepared in December 2011 by the Manufacturers Association of Maine. This report highlights The Maine Industry Partnership model (MIPI) as a sustainable model that is applicable and replicable to all sectors in Maine. The report contains a comprehensive approach to industry partnership/sector strategy and provides a synthesis of the two workforce strategies. (www.maine.gov/swib/documents/MaineMIPI.pdf)

Maine's Workforce Development Challenges presented by Glen Mills, Chief State Economist, Maine at Maine Department of Labor on November 12, 2013. Mr. Mill's PowerPoint outlines the importance of providing Maine residents with the education and training needed to compete in the workplace today and tomorrow. (Appendix 15)

A Case Study: Assessment of Career Pathways in Maine, prepared by Lisa Bowie, MSW Intern, Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy, Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine, May 17, 2013. This report details the value of career pathways initiatives as a workforce strategy that includes workforce readiness, builds cross-agency partnerships, and aligns education, workforce development, social services and economic development. For a copy of this report contact Sally Sutton, Senior Policy Analyst, University of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service: ssutton@usm.maine.edu

Findings

Overview

Research shows that the most successful approaches to address workforce readiness needs integrate supply-side strategies with the demands of local industry. Positive workforce readiness outcomes have developed in states that have initiated a policy framework that results in a coordinated approach involving education, training, and workforce development with sector strategies and economic development.

Sector partnerships that consistently demonstrate effectiveness address the common needs of employers and rely on strategic partners (education, organized labor, community-based organizations, local area workforce boards, social service organizations, one-stops and economic development) to generate coordinated solutions. Relevant workforce readiness solutions can then be developed as a result of partner employers identifying their industry sector needs.

"More than half of the nation's states are exploring or implementing sector partnership strategies, making the model the most consistently adopted approach to meeting businesses' needs for skilled workers and workers' need for good jobs. Sector partnership strategies are among the few workforce interventions that statistically evidence shows to improve employment opportunities for workers and to increase their wages once on the job. Employers report increases in productivity, reductions in customer complaints, and declines in staff turnover, all of which reduce costs and improve the competitiveness of their companies." (*State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*, pg. 2).

In addition to national examples of workforce readiness systems, the Working Group examined several successful integrated approaches and workforce readiness programs in Maine.

Definition of Terms in Workforce Readiness Systems (Source: *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*)

- **Industry Clusters** - Consist of large and small firms in a single industry.
- **Career Pathways** - A clear sequence of coursework and credentials aligned with natural paths of advancement in an industry or related industries.
- **Sector Partnerships** - Align education and training programs with industry needs to produce readily employable workers.

Common Best Practices Involved in a Sector Partnership Approach to Workforce Readiness

1. State policymakers, employers, economic and workforce development agencies and education/training providers partner to create a system that provides leadership, aligned policies and resources to identify, develop and maintain a skilled workforce.
2. Agreement and understanding of terms such as workforce readiness, soft skills, career pathways, industry clusters, and sector partnerships.
3. A common, industry-recognized assessment tool is used to determine workforce readiness.
4. Development of effective Career Pathways (see diagram in Appendix 2) to coordinate education and training programs aligned with identified employer needs.
5. Formation of Industry Clusters (see diagram in Appendix 3) by like industries to address their common workforce needs.
6. Establishment of Sector Partnerships (see diagram in Appendix 4) to align education and training programs with industry to produce work-ready workers.
7. Alignment of state and local organizations as well as industry to coordinate and leverage funding streams.
8. Ability for partners to share data and use it for decision making and planning.
9. The use of a respected Convener who is able to bring all stakeholders to the table.

Examples of Workforce Readiness Efforts in Maine

The Working Group explored several Maine efforts that deal with workforce preparation. It should be noted that there are agencies who were not part of the Working Group, but who have a place in workforce readiness. Some examples include the university and community college systems, private colleges, career and technical education, Maine Development Foundation and EducateMaine.

While there are some elements of nationally recognized best practices in place, Maine lacks the cohesive statewide approach found in effective sector partnerships.

What follows are brief summaries of programs and promising initiatives that should be integrated into a statewide approach.

1. **Maine Adult Education** - In 2012, the Maine legislature adopted into statute the definition of Maine Adult Education as a career pathways system. This comprehensive approach includes intake, assessment, advising, instruction and individual learning plans. At the heart of career pathways is a process that connects multiple public and private services and agencies to make up a comprehensive education and training system. These education and training systems are to be aligned with employers' workforce readiness standards. Academic and applied skills courses are offered at local

adult education sites throughout the state. These courses provide Maine adults with a starting point on a career pathway for employment or further training and often, a postsecondary degree or industry credential. (See Appendix 5 for additional information.)

2. **WorkReady Credential** – WorkReady is an established collaboration with the four LWIB regions, Maine Adult Education programs and employers, and uses trained facilitators and a standardized curriculum. Successful completion of this 60-hour soft skills training (expectations for a good work ethic, interview skills, resume writing, team work, workplace communication) results in a credential issued by the Maine Department of Education. WorkReady is offered at no-cost to participants. Some WorkReady sessions have been developed as the result of working with an employer to incorporate industry specific skills and expectations. (See Appendix 6 for additional information.)
3. **LearningExpress 3.0**- An initiative of the Maine State Library, LearningExpress 3.0 is available statewide for public libraries, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, career centers and adult education locations and to Maine citizens at home. LearningExpress 3.0 is known for basic skills improvement in reading, writing, math, and basic sciences and test preparation for academic and career testing. (See Appendix 7 for additional information.)
4. **Women, Work and Community (WWC)** - Women, Work, and Community's (WWC) workforce readiness program areas include career development, financial education and asset development, and self-employment/microenterprise development. WWC has a unique place in the pipeline of workforce readiness because of its statewide presence and history of creating bridges to training and educational resources, particularly the University of Maine System and Maine Community College System. Their online Career Planning class is reaching adults in all Counties of the state and is being utilized by several Maine Adult Education programs to meet the career and education planning requirements of Maine College Transitions. (See Appendix 8 for more information.)
5. **Career Centers** - Maine Department of Labor – There are 12 Career Centers located throughout the State and services are provided at no cost. The Career Centers administer or refer clients to the employment services offered by federal, state or local programs with the primary goal of assisting individuals with employment search. Career counselors are available to help clients assess their skills and interest in various careers. Direct services may be provided or referrals made to employment services offered by federal, state or local programs. (See Appendix 9 for more information on the Career Center/Maine State Library Collaboration.)

6. **Department of Health and Human Services** – Adults receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) in Maine will complete a vocational assessment through contracted services provided by Maine Medical Center’s Department of Vocational Services. Five assessment tools are utilized to identify each recipient’s strengths, skills, interests, as well as challenges. The assessment results are then used by the recipient and their assigned ASPIRE (Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment) Specialist to develop an individualized employment plan. The ASPIRE Program offers support for individuals (i.e. child care, transportation costs, etc.) while they are taking action steps to complete their training and employment efforts and meet their federally mandated work requirement. (See Appendix 10 for more information.)
7. **Tri-Department Collaboration** –Since the fall of 2012, the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services have been working together to address the needs of their common clients. Their work has led to a memorandum of understanding and monthly meetings of the three agency commissioners, a joint vision and guiding principles for their work, interagency conferences, and regional meetings that include staff from the three agencies. (See Appendix 11 for more information.)
8. **The Pathways Out of Poverty Project 2010-2012 – Utilizing WorkReady in Sector-based Training Programs.** This Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) project brought together a group of educational, economic development, and industry stakeholders to address the need for energy efficient housing in the tri-county region. Successful outcomes were: 67% of trainees went on to higher education or gained full-time employment and six energy efficient homes were built. Factors contributing to the project’s success were the integration of WorkReady, businesses saw the project as a source of work ready employees, potential employees were connected with potential employers, and all stakeholders were consistently at the table. (See Appendix 12 for more information.)
9. **Maine’s Health Care Sector Grant** - The four primary objectives of the project were to: 1) increase the number of employees and unemployed workers who advanced their training, 2) reduce Maine’s clinical training bottleneck, 3) improve access to information about health-career pathways, and 4) maintain and strengthen partnerships between employer, education and workforce sectors. The success of this project resulted from the construction of career pathways, employer engagement, data-driven decision making, leveraging of funds, partnership building and policy alignment. (See Appendix 13 for more information.)

National Best Practices in Maine Workforce Readiness Examples

Best practices common to the success of each of the above Maine-based programs are:

- Collaboration amongst the different stakeholders
- Public-private funding
- Awarding of widely recognized state or national certifications
- Integration of soft skills within a broader training framework
- Sector partnerships (i.e. Pathways, Healthcare Grant)

Limiting Factors in Maine Examples

Factors that limited the total effectiveness of the Maine programs cited above are the absence of:

- A cohesive statewide approach to address the gaps in access to services
- A statewide career pathways system
- Formalized partnerships, especially with economic and workforce development
- Deep employer engagement
- Common language on what workforce readiness means
- Strong connections between education and industry
- Absence of statewide industry recognized workforce readiness credential (See National Career Readiness Certificate <http://www.act.org/products/workforce-act-national-career-readiness-certificate/> in Appendix 14 and WorkReady Appendix 6).

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR A STATE WORKFORCE READINESS FRAMEWORK

(adapted from *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*)

Based on its research and discussions, the Working Group on Adult Workforce Readiness recommends that Maine address workforce readiness through the development of sector partnerships.

Sector partnerships that bring together government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations are well positioned to address workforce skills needs from entry level to advanced. The partnerships enable businesses to identify and address specific workforce needs in almost every industry. In addition, sector strategies help to reduce inefficiencies and streamline state efforts by coordinating various programs and braiding funding streams intended for the same purpose (Source: *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*).

Steps To Establish Sector Partnerships

1. Create Commitment and Support for Establishment of Sector Partnerships:

- a. Governor LePage makes the development of Sector Partnerships a priority of the administration to address the issue of Workforce Readiness.
- b. Establishment of a Sector Strategy Committee comprised of industry representatives, leadership from workforce, education (K-12, CTE, Adult Education through postsecondary), economic development, employment support services, health and human services support, and the legislature to help guide state sector strategies.
- c. The Maine legislature publically announces its support of the administration and employer efforts in the development of sector partnerships to improve adult workforce readiness, works to secure funding to support sector partnerships, and works to put sector strategies into statute.

2. Establish a Statewide Vision and System for Sector Partnerships:

- a. Convene Sector Strategy Academies where local teams representing the local workforce areas, economic development, university and community colleges, community-based organizations, education (K12, CTE, Maine Adult Education), and

other stakeholders (Women Work and Community, unions, industry associations, etc.) come together to learn about the sector partnerships model, including effective industry analysis, employer engagement, partnership building, and design of industry-relevant training programs.

- b. Implement the industry recognized and portable National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and WorkReady credential as part of a statewide baseline approach for training and recognition of potential and current employees who are work ready. (See Appendix 2 for diagram.)
- c. Develop messaging campaigns to help constituents and stakeholders understand that sector strategies are a “new way of doing business,” and not just another “program”.
- d. Create a media campaign about workforce readiness training opportunities available statewide and how they can be accessed.
- e. Utilize such groups as the four LWIBs, Chambers, industry associations, and private workforce supporters to disseminate the workforce readiness message and training opportunities and report activities with outcomes to the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB).
- f. Create and message the State’s vision and mission that Maine has a unified approach to education and training, workforce development and economic development that will benefit Maine residents and businesses.

3. Align Use of Resources and Incentives to Support Sector Partnerships

- a. Policies must be coordinated at the state level to remove barriers and align strategies so that local stakeholders can work together more effectively.
- b. Legislative and industry leadership work to find and leverage the funding necessary to support sector partnership for workforce readiness implementation. Make use of private, public and foundational funding to provide staff to coordinate and facilitate sector partnerships.
- c. Conduct statewide asset or capacity mapping (using the four LWIBS, educational/community partners, DOL and/or other appropriate entities) to identify various programs serving workers and employers.

- d. Develop a statewide workforce readiness framework where education, training and other support programs coordinate efforts to meet employer needs.
- e. Maximize use of technology throughout the state to increase equity of access to workforce readiness services.

4. Use Data and Research to Establish and Maintain Sector Partnerships:

- a. Support the uses of data and research to inform changes in policy and to implement and assess improvements.
- b. Work with Maine Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) and other appropriate data sources to create and share industry reports, cluster analyses and multiple industry databases to create regional industry profiles.

5. High Quality Partnerships Essential for Sector Partnerships:

- a. Establish policy partnerships amongst state agencies concerning the use of their resources to work together to address workforce readiness.
- b. Education, Training and Workforce Development and Economic Development all work together to establish a new state policy framework for sector partnerships.
- c. Each partner in sector partnerships focuses on their area of expertise to avoid duplication of efforts.
- d. Establish Career Pathways which rely on coordination across education and training programs to offer a clear sequence of industry-relevant coursework and credentials to job seekers and incumbent workers.
- e. Support Industry Clusters which consist of businesses of all sizes in a single industry who will then benefit from synergies related to a shared labor force, sources of innovation, suppliers, markets, technology and infrastructure.
- f. Sector Partnerships bring together the interests of employers and educators to align education and training programs with industry needs to produce employable workers.
- g. The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBS) and the Chambers of Commerce should work in cooperation with each other to meet identified employer needs.

- h. Support the expansion of a variety of Maine industry partnerships in such areas as hospitality, healthcare, construction, education, transportation, manufacturing and forestry.

Summary

Work Readiness Goals

The goals of a successful work readiness system are measurable increases in work readiness skills including world-of-work awareness, labor market knowledge, occupational information, values clarification and personal understanding, career planning and decision making, and job search techniques (resumes, interviews, applications, and follow-up letters).

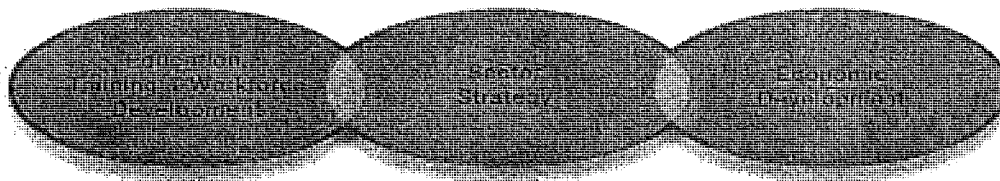
A State recognized work readiness program should also include instruction regarding positive work habits and attitudes, and behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. This also entails developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills, and acquiring an improved self-image.

To ensure that all Maine workers are ready to succeed, and that a supply of work ready employees are available for Maine industries, workforce readiness programs must also recognize and address the needs of the increasing numbers of foreign born workers relocating to Maine. In addition to the skills identified as critical for workforce readiness, training should be provided that includes instruction ranging from how to transfer foreign education and certifications to U.S. recognized credentials, and, for those with more limited education and work experience, provide basic educational services as well as the all-important daily living skills such as using the phone, telling time, shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, and using public transportation.

Next Steps

Workers are not able to gain these work readiness skills on their own. Now is the time to address the workforce readiness needs of Maine employers, incumbent workers, and the unemployed through a new State policy framework that coordinates the efforts of education, workforce development and economic development through Sector Partnerships.

Sector Strategies – State Policy Framework



APPENDIX 1. Definitions of Work Readiness and Work Readiness Training Programs

Work Readiness for Potential Employees

- Basic literacy and numeracy programs help individuals earn their high school equivalency credentials, be able to read with understanding and use math to solve problems. May also offer technology training to familiarize learners with using a computer and the Internet in the workplace.
- Soft skills -Two of the most important soft skills (non-technical) necessary to be successful in finding and keeping a job are reliability and a good attitude. Other areas of soft skills job readiness programs focus on oral communication, problem-solving, teamwork, interpersonal skills and personal qualities.
- Job Search instruction on how to find jobs from different sources, such as on the Internet, through networking or in the newspaper. It also includes how to fill out and submit a job application, write a resume and successfully complete a job interview.
- Job Retention efforts help individuals develop a good work ethic. Instruction in showing up to work on time, being a good team member, having a good attitude and being helpful on the job should be part of the job retention curriculum.
- Career assessment and planning help individuals figure out what job path they are interested in taking. Counselors help them decide on an educational path to reach their career goals and help them identify specific employers or job training programs to help them reach their goals.
- Employability skills such as how to communicate effectively, work with others and be creative.
- A person who is “work ready” is able to consistently demonstrate the skills, competencies and behaviors (aka soft skills) necessary to secure and maintain meaningful and gainful employment in a way that contributes positively to one’s own personal and professional growth and to the success of the business and local economy in which he/she works and lives.
- Soft skills is the cluster or combination of personality traits, social skills, communication style, use of language, personal habits and foundation skills (indicating a level of overall self-management) that determines one’s relationships with other people and thereby their likelihood for success in the workplace and other areas of life.

Appendix 1 continued

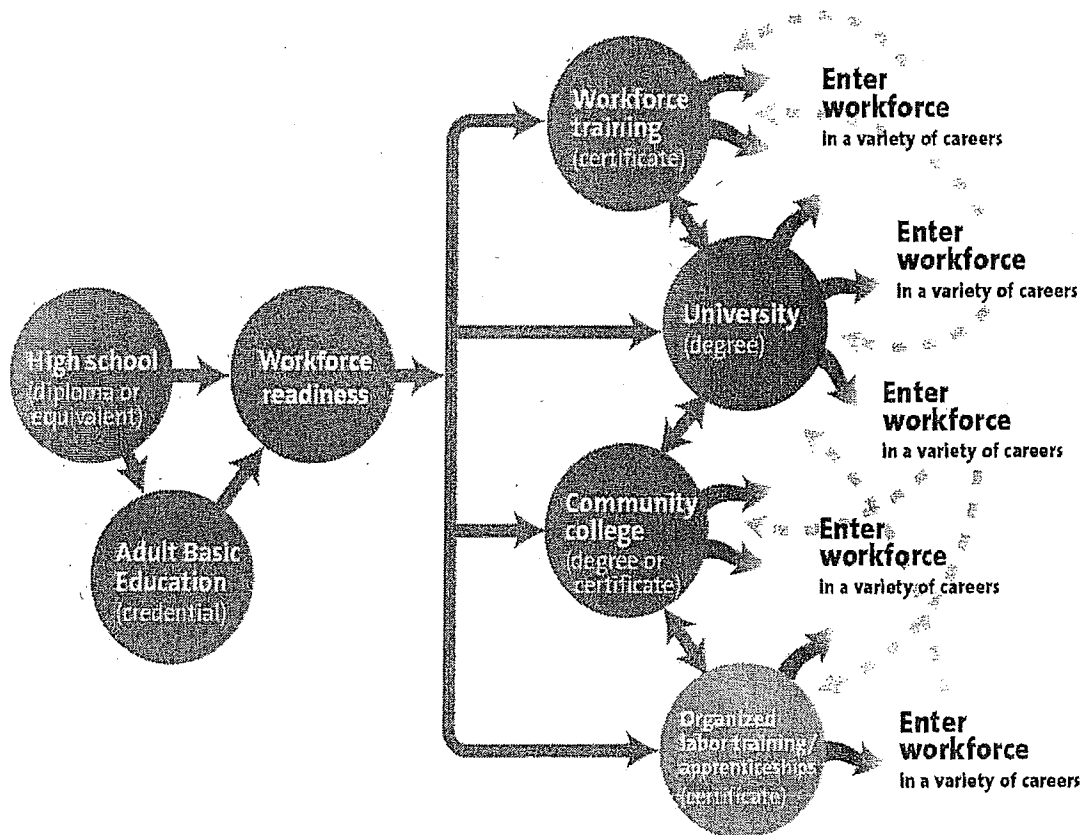
Work Readiness for Incumbent Workers

- Occupational skills training designed to provide or upgrade an industry's current workforce with technical skills and information required to perform a specific job or groups of jobs.
- Skill Upgrading and Retraining provided to individuals whose skills have been rendered obsolete or outdated by the development of new technologies or processes. Retraining is provided to those individuals whose skills are not transferable and require new skills set to maintain or obtain employment.
- Literacy Activities related to Basic Work Readiness provide an employee with basic literacy skills that will enable them to compete for different employment opportunities. Activities included would be remedial in nature and may not result in a diploma or equivalency.
- Job Readiness Training or Work Readiness Training on the essentials of maintaining a job. This may include employee training in the areas of time management, developing good work habits, social skills and employer expectations.
- On-the-Job Training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that provides knowledge or skills assessment to the full and adequate performance of the job; provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50% of the wage of the participant, for extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training, and; is limited to the period of time required for a participant to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is being provided.

Appendix 2 Career Pathways Diagram with Inclusion of Work Readiness Training As a Pathway from Secondary to Postsecondary or Industry Training Programs

Career Pathways

Effective career pathways rely on coordination across education and training programs in order to offer a clear sequence of industry-relevant coursework and credentials to job seekers. Today's education and training programs include online and in-person opportunities.

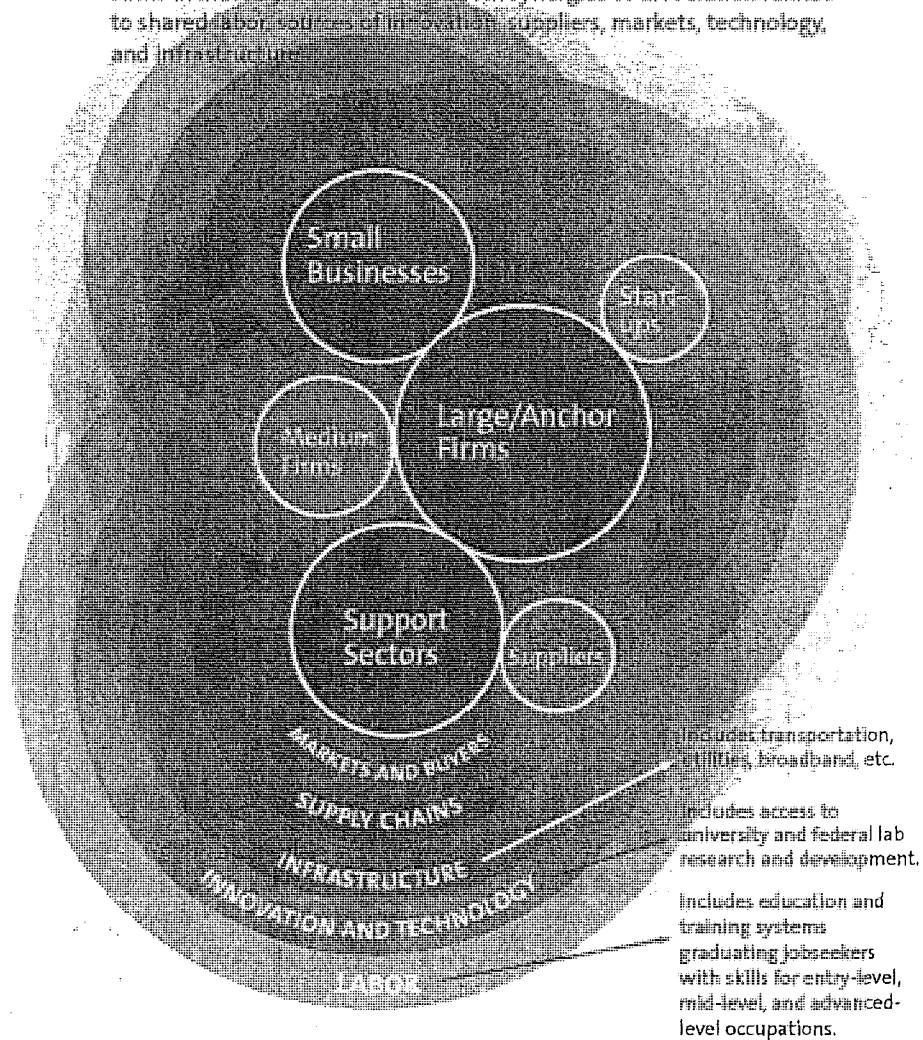


After being in the workforce, a person may choose to go back for more credentials to make an upward or lateral career move.

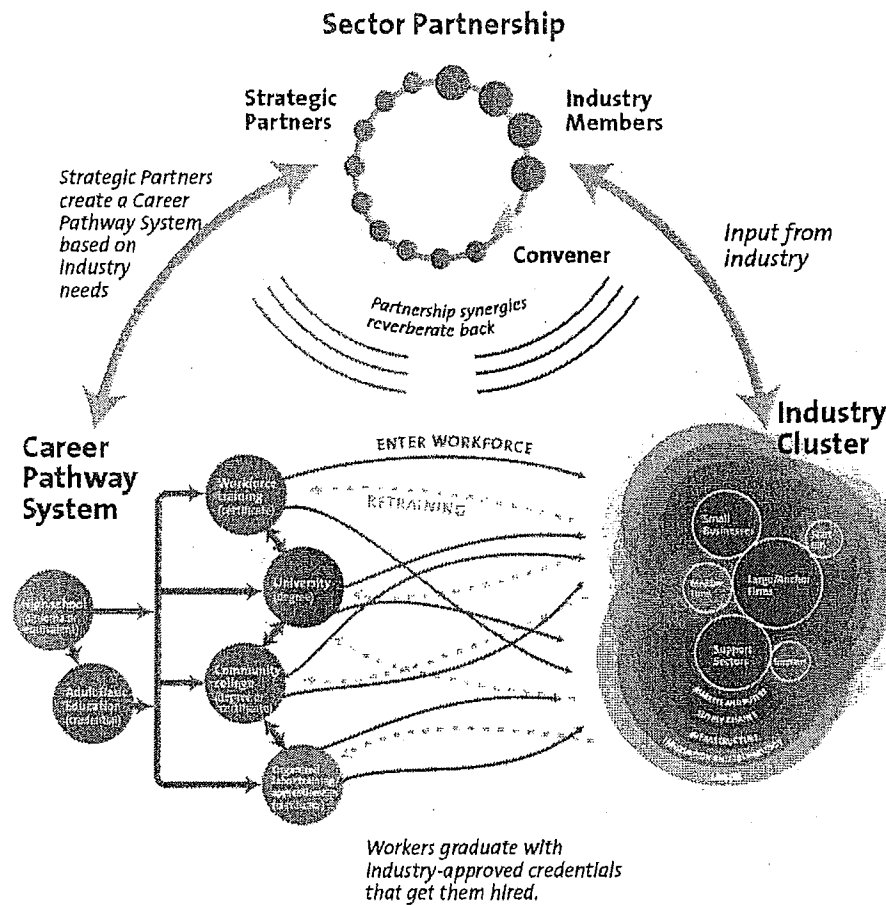
Source: *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*

Industry Cluster

An industry cluster consists of large and small firms in a single industry. Firms in industry clusters benefit from synergies of association related to shared labor, sources of innovation, suppliers, markets, technology, and infrastructure.



Source: *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*



Source: *State Sector Strategies Coming of Age*

Appendix 5

Maine Adult Education Pathways for Education, Career and Life

The mission of over 90 local adult education programs is to provide a series of connected education and training strategies along with support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific occupational sector and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. In addition, Maine Adult Education recognizes the value of enrichment courses (fitness, nutrition, parenting, foreign languages, etc.) which enhance a participant's quality of life and often serve as an introduction to the other services of adult education. Course listings in all program areas are available on the Maine Adult Education web portal www.maineadulted.org. The portal is searchable statewide and allows for online registration and payment.

Instruction is available in the areas of Basic literacy instruction for low level learners; Instruction in English as a Second Language; High school completion courses; College transition courses to prepare adults for a successful college experience and academically prepare so they will not need remedial courses; vocational and technical training; and Enrichment courses. Examples of Maine Adult Education's vocational training include the WorkReady credential; Welding; Auto body; Automotive; Electricity; Pharmacy Tech Certificate; Computer Courses; Medical Transcription and Coding; and Paralegal Certificate.

Realizing that most adults often have little discretionary time for their own education, Maine Adult Education provides a comprehensive process to assure each learner's goals can be met most effectively. This process includes a student intake, educational and career assessments to inform appropriate instruction and course placement, advising, instruction and individual student learning plans.

Maine's geography can make equitable access to services a challenge. To address what might be a barrier for learners, Maine Adult Education offers a variety of instruction approaches. Courses are offered at local school buildings and Career and Technical Education facilities, online using computers, and also through video-conferencing where students can participate in a class with students and an instructor in other parts of the state.

Maine Adult Education, through its more than 90 local programs located all over the state, provides opportunities that are accessible, affordable, and make use of local resources and facilities, as well as the opportunities available online. Local programs also have a successful history of creating and delivering customized training in response to needs of employers. Stand-alone and certificate programs provide Maine adults with a starting point for employment and a career pathway for further training, and often, an industry recognized credential or postsecondary degree. For additional information <http://www.maine.gov/doe/adulted/>

Appendix 6

WorkReady Credential

WorkReady is an initiative of Maine's four Local Workforce Investment Boards and the Maine Department of Education. It is guided by a statewide steering committee comprised of representatives from the Maine Department of Education Division of Adult Education, Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Department of Corrections, and Maine's four Local Workforce Investment Boards. First piloted in 2006 there are currently 49 approved WorkReady sites spread throughout Maine.

The 60-hour soft skills based training is designed to provide participants with the applied skills needed in today's rapidly changing and complex world of work. Endorsed by businesses throughout the state, the WorkReady curriculum addresses seven basic standards including personal motivations and challenges to employment, effective communication and interpersonal skills, understanding taxes and benefits, job searching, and resume and portfolio preparation. Graduates of the WorkReady training must also demonstrate 8th grade levels in reading and math.

As a standards-based program, WorkReady offers flexibility to programs and the populations they serve. The training is customizable and WorkReady trainings have been developed and provided for those in corrections, those over 55, as well as for those interested in a particular employment sector (i.e. health care). Since 2009 approximately 900 people have enrolled in WorkReady and 67% have earned the credential. Sixty eight percent of those who have participated have secured employment or gone on to post-secondary education or further training.

While the name "WorkReady" may imply that the program is designed for individuals with little to no work experience, it is actually highly applicable to a wide variety of individuals with varying degrees of training, education, and occupational skills.

The WorkReady website is: <http://workreadyforme.org/>

For additional information on WorkReady, contact Megan Dichter, Statewide WorkReady Coordinator, Maine Department of Education, megan.dichter@maine.gov

LearningExpress Library™ 3.0 Quick Start Guide for Maine

At LearningExpress, our mission is to help students and adult learners improve the skills required for academic and career success. Our LearningExpress Library™ platform provides the most comprehensive selection of educational resources—including more than 800 tutorials, practice exams, eBooks—for basic skills mastery, academic success, job preparation, and career advancement. The LearningExpress Library for Maine also includes Popular Software Tutorials and Basic Computer Instruction to increase much needed computers skills in today's job market.

Access to LearningExpress Library™ 3.0 for Maine

LearningExpress Library™ 3.0 is an online resource accessible from the Maine State Library website, MARVEL, and some individual campus and career center websites. Although you can browse the LearningExpress Library website, you must register to use any resource. Registration enables you to store any tests, eBooks, or tutorials for future use. You create your own private learning space. To register from any computer, simply click the *Register* link on the top right of the landing page. You may get a pop up registration window instead and be prompted to accept pop ups from LearningExpress Library. Enter your name and email address, create a password, read and accept the disclosure agreement and click Register.

Access to LearningExpress Library™ 3.0 from Home

If you are on a computer outside of your library, school, college, adult education or career center website (at home), you can access LearningExpress Library via

Maine State Library website – <http://www.maine.gov/msl/lcl.htm> or

MARVEL databases website at: <http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/>.

Access from **Home** requires 2 logins – one at MARVEL and one at LearningExpress Library. Please remember that the MARVEL login “opens the door” to LearningExpress Library. Once at the LearningExpress Library website, you will need to login (or register if this is your first visit) to create your own personal learning space to store all your courses and tests. For future visits to the site, remember to login with your email address and the password you created at registration.

All LearningExpress Library 2.0 users must register as new users for 3.0. If you are a registered user of LearningExpress Library 2.0, your login will not work on LearningExpress Library™ 3.0.

Site Navigation

On the landing page, you'll find prominent icons for our core content areas—we call them Centers. Our Centers house all of our tutorials, practice exams, and eBooks. They are organized by areas of interest. Simply click the icon of a Center that interests you. If you are uncertain about your next step, then review the Guidance tab in the Center, which will provide helpful guidance and recommendations on how to start on your path to learning.

For Help using the LearningExpress Library website

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Help tab in the upper right corner of the homepage provides answers to the most commonly asked questions. If you require further assistance, contact Customer Support at libraries@learningexpressllc.com or call 800-295-9556, Ext. 2. Customer Support is available Mondays – Fridays, from 9 AM to 5 PM Eastern Time

For Help with connectivity issues or questions

Use the form at: <http://www.maine.gov/msl/digital/learnexp/help.htm> or call the Maine State Library 207-287-5620.

For thirty-five years, Women, Work, and Community (WWC) has been providing workforce readiness training and individual assistance to adults in work/life transitions, including displaced homemakers, single parents, dislocated and unemployed workers, underemployed incumbent workers, people with disabilities, and older adults. Our approach is comprehensive, collaborative, and based on sound adult learning principles and respect for individual experiences and accomplishments. Our staff is comprised of skilled trainers and career advisors.

Building “soft skills” and career pathways is at the core of our work in career development.

We help individuals: identify skills, interests, and work values; analyze cost benefits of career and occupational choices; identify education and training required to qualify for emerging careers; develop workplace skills, competencies, attitudes and behaviors, including problem solving, critical thinking, communication, and teamwork; build a career pathway through short and longer term goals; develop job search skills, including how to research, maintain confidence, and network; write a resume that includes transferable skills and a career development plan of action; develop the tools, attitudes, and beliefs that lead to sound money management. Workforce readiness training includes:

Career Planning—live and online classes delivered statewide. Both teaching/supported learning methods emphasize the effective use of technology and interpersonal skills in career and education research, decision-making, planning and goal setting, and networking. Linkages are provided to other education and training resources, including Adult Education and the Maine Community College System and University of Maine System Campuses and Centers, financial and scholarship assistance, and the use of online learning platform Blackboard.

Creating Your Future—a longer live class that introduces high skill, high wage emerging industries through field visits and panel presentations of local employers, education and training providers, and employees in targeted sectors. This class provides an effective workforce readiness pipeline to Career Pathways Sector Partnerships; current collaborations include the Midcoast Technology Occupations through Pathways Strategies (TOPS) at Brunswick Landing coordinated by Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. and the Careers in Energy Services and Technology program at Kennebec Valley Community College.

Financial Education and Asset Development—short workshops and **My Money Works** classes in basic money management skills (budgeting, debt reduction, savings); assistance in identifying resources to pay for college, creating a financial plan for education and/or employment, and opportunity to apply for matched savings accounts (Family Development Accounts) to pay for college, business or home ownership.

All services can be located at WWC’s website: www.womenworkandcommunity.org including training and assistance for self-employment and microenterprise development.

In the past year the Maine Department of Labor Bureau of Employment Services has partnered with the Maine State Libraries in an effort to bring more access points to individuals who are unable to access one of the state's 12 Career Centers. There are over 200 libraries in Maine and those libraries have broadband internet access where job seekers can access the Maine Job Bank and other job seeker services without ever entering a Career Center. Recently, the Maine State Library announced that LearningExpress Library is now available statewide for public libraries, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, career centers and adult education locations and to Maine citizens at home. In addition to the expanded access there is also a brand new platform and look -- LearningExpress Library 3.0!

LearningExpress Library 3.0, known for basic skills improvement in reading, writing, math, and basic sciences and test preparation for academic and career testing—features a new tutorial and test-preparation platform, with easier access to skill-building resources and new features designed to help students and adults prepare for success in school and in life. Also included for Maine is access to the Computer Skills Center video tutorials. This online learning resource provides all Maine library patrons, K-12 students, college and adult learners and job seekers the tools to improve their academic skills, achieve educational goals, prepare for careers, and successfully enter the job market.

Access LearningExpress Library 3.0 online via the Maine State Library's web site:

<http://www.maine.gov/msl/lcl.htm> or via Maine's Virtual Library, MARVEL:

<http://libraries.maine.edu/mainedatabases/>

APPENDIX 10 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office for Family Independence (OFI)

OFI has several programs that support job readiness for recipients of public benefits – primarily the ASPIRE (Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment) program for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) or PaS (Parents as Scholars) recipients, and the FSET (Food Supplement Employment and Training) program for Food Supplement recipients.

The ASPIRE program is administered by 54 statewide ASPIRE Specialists located in 16 regional DHHS offices. Adults receiving TANF complete a vocational assessment which is used to inform individualized employment plans. Most of these recipients are required to meet a federally mandated work requirement. Work activities may include paid employment, community service work, education and training. The program offers supports such as child care and transportation necessary for adults to participate. Job preparedness is critical in the work of the ASPIRE Program as TANF recipients are limited to 60 months of cash assistance.

ASPIRE participants will soon benefit from partnership initiatives between the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) and DHHS. A Memorandum of Agreement between the two departments guides MDOL to begin providing work site development services for ASPIRE participants. Dedicated staff will be located in statewide CareerCenter locations to support job search efforts and develop work experience opportunities that are critical in developing work skills, career exploration and preparedness.

Maine's FSET Program focuses on job readiness and job search assistance for Food Supplement recipients. A pilot project will begin in 2014 demonstrating the partnership between the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services and OFI. Dedicated staff will be located in the Augusta and Machias CareerCenter locations to assist this population.

For additional information contact Liz Ray, DHHS ASPIRE Program Manager, liz.ray@maine.gov

Appendix 11

Tri-Agency Collaboration Inter-Agency Letter

October 23, 2012

To: Affected DOE, DHHS, and DOL Staff Members

Subject: Coordinated efforts to redesign and re-energize Maine's welfare-to-work activities

During the last two years, you have all likely seen stories or heard messages that have stressed Governor LePage's commitment to move people who are receiving welfare benefits (including unemployment) back to work and to a place of self-sufficiency. As Commissioners, we recognize that each of our respective Departments play a role in supporting the Governor's vision. We also recognize the importance of our staff working together to develop an integrated, efficient and effective approach to help bridge the gap from dependency on public assistance to self-support through employment.

Last year, Maine adopted legislative changes that, for most Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, established a lifetime benefit limit of 60 months. The public policy underlying this change was to treat TANF as a *temporary* support system to help people to get back on their feet, rather than as a program that enables a level of permanent dependency. DHHS's ASPIRE program is charged with assisting TANF recipients to develop work skills. With the adoption of a five-year cap, we must take more aggressive actions to make sure that *all* TANF recipients are given the training, tools and career development coaching that will enable them to become and stay gainfully employed.

In addition to TANF, all unemployment benefit recipients need the same services to reduce the time people remain unemployed. Long term unemployment is becoming an epidemic in Maine and the effects hurt not just the job seeker but our entire family units.

We have also acknowledged that the funds we receive from our federal partners for employment and training for Food Supplement recipients is not being used to its maximum potential. We need to revitalize this effort along with our ASPIRE program to make Maine a leader in supporting work skill development and actively connecting people with jobs.

Earlier this month, a team from each of our respective Departments and a representative of the Maine Community College System met and began the hard work of developing a unified vision and designing a coordinated plan of action. We are all excited by the promise that this approach brings. While we are separate Departments; we must collectively deal with people who need a unified face of Maine government to help them toward a clear path to independence. Our goal is to assure that our Departmental programs and efforts are a part of a seamless, effective, unified initiative that achieves measurable and meaningful results. More details of this plan will be shared as it unfolds. We welcome your questions and suggestions and thank you in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Stephen Bowen, Commissioner, Department of Education

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner, Department of Health and Human Services

Jeanne Paquette, Commissioner, Department of Labor

Appendix 12 Eastern Maine Development Corporation Pathways Out of Poverty Project 2010-2012 – UTILIZING WORKREADY IN SECTOR BASED TRAINING PROGRAMS

The intent of The Pathways Out of Poverty Project, a Department of Labor, ARRA funded discretionary grant, was to train unemployed and underemployed people in the construction trades, with the outcome of putting people back to work with new skills. Lasting three years, and enrolling 109 people, the program built six houses with six cohorts of trainees, while providing both classroom and experiential based learning that awarded nationally recognized credentials.

For any training program, technical skill training is only half of the equation. Employability skills (such as those taught in WorkReady), provide essential training for the participants, including interviewing, resume writing, conflict resolution, teamwork and other fundamentals required in today's competitive workforce environment.

As part of Pathways, EMDC and its partners integrated the State of Maine WorkReady program into its 9 month long curriculum. Because it was cohort and sector based training, this offered the unique opportunity of bringing together businesses in the trades, engaging them in both the training and outcomes. This involvement included; mock interviews, speaker panels, advisory boards and direct referrals to and from those business owners.

This approach provides advantages for both the businesses and the participants.

For the businesses:

1. Businesses were involved in the training, providing feedback that led to changes and additions to the program because of this feedback
2. Businesses were able to meet the trainees for potential future hires
3. Businesses became invested in the training and therefore a part of the workforce standards for the region
4. Businesses had a "pipeline" for hiring, and on the job training

For the participants:

1. Participants were able to speak directly with relevant business owners – what skills and credentials were they seeking
2. Participants saw firsthand the variety of employment opportunities in the construction trades
3. Participants were able to test their interviewing skills in a live situation with immediate feedback
4. Participations were able to "pre-sell" themselves to business owners

Because of this direct involvement of construction businesses in this training, we were able to place many of our workers with those same businesses, including electricians, remodelers, renovators, and weatherization companies. Participants were supported by a career counselor and workforce specialist for one year after job placement. This very often was crucial for the successful on-boarding and retention of someone with little or no work experience, or with someone who had been out of work for a period of time. Since Pathways, EMDC has imbedded WorkReady as a key component in all workforce cohorts training it provides.

For more information contact www.emdc.org 207-236-4215

Funding for the Maine Health Care Sector was a \$4.9 million grant awarded to the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL). The HC Grant was funded by the Employment & Training Administration of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The goal of the project was to increase the training, education and employment of credentialed health care workers in Maine. Upgrading the skills and credentials of incumbent health care employees was a major focus of the grant funding.

A Health Workforce Forum was formed to bring together the various project partners. Those partners, who had traditionally worked in siloes, were the University of Maine and Community College Systems, Maine Adult Education, Nursing Board, Department of Health and Human Services, Healthcare Industry Representatives, Maine Department of Labor, Local Area Workforce Boards, and the Career Centers and other Service Providers. The USM Muskie School served as the Sector Partnership Convener.

Through their coordinated sector partnership approach, the outcomes of the project far exceeded expectations. 797 incumbent health sector employees were trained to upgrade their skills and credentials and 340 unemployed dislocated workers entered the healthcare field. The average wage increase from incumbent workers ranged from \$.10 to \$17.04 and the average starting wage for the unemployed as \$12.07.

Bottlenecks for current employees to up skill were reduced, capacity for training was increased, partnerships were strengthened and promising practices which can be replicated were identified. Those promising practices included educational institutions talking to employers and developing programs together to meet workforce training needs; upskill/backfill strategies; engaging incumbent employees in the education process and energizing them; and engaging employers with the workforce development system.

For additional information contact Joan Dolan at Joan.M.Dolan@Maine.gov
<http://www.mainecareercenter.com/workforce/hcgrant/>

APPENDIX 14

National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success.

This credential is used across all sectors of the economy and verifies the following cognitive skills:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text
- Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
- Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics

Individuals can earn the NCRC by taking three WorkKeys® assessments:

- Applied Mathematics
- Locating Information
- Reading for Information

WorkKeys assessments measure “real world” skills that employers believe are critical to job success. Test questions are based on situations in the everyday work world.

Educators can use the skill levels required by the National Career Readiness Certificate as benchmarks in communicating with economic developers and businesses—to help prepare students for the workplace. Because WorkKeys is tied to specific training and curriculum for skill improvement, educators can offer programs for individuals wishing to improve their skills and enhance job opportunities. WorkKeys provides a common language for employers, schools, and students.

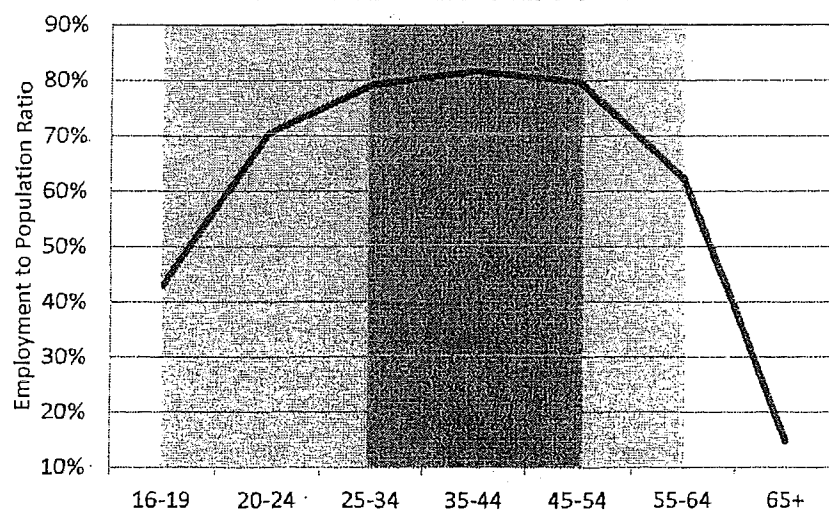
For additional information on NCRC visit <http://www.act.org/products/workforce-act-national-career-readiness-certificate/>

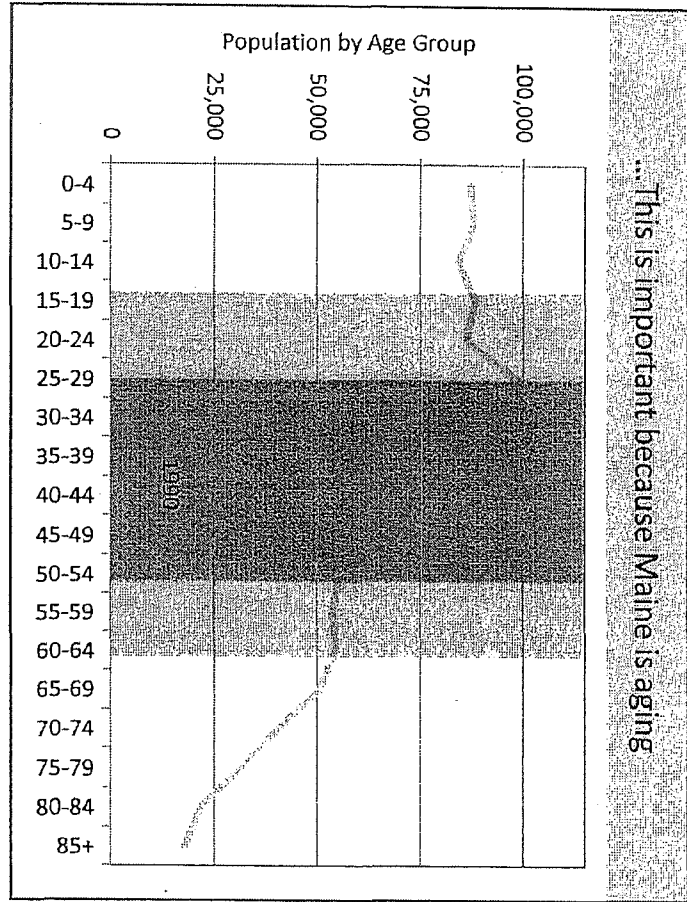
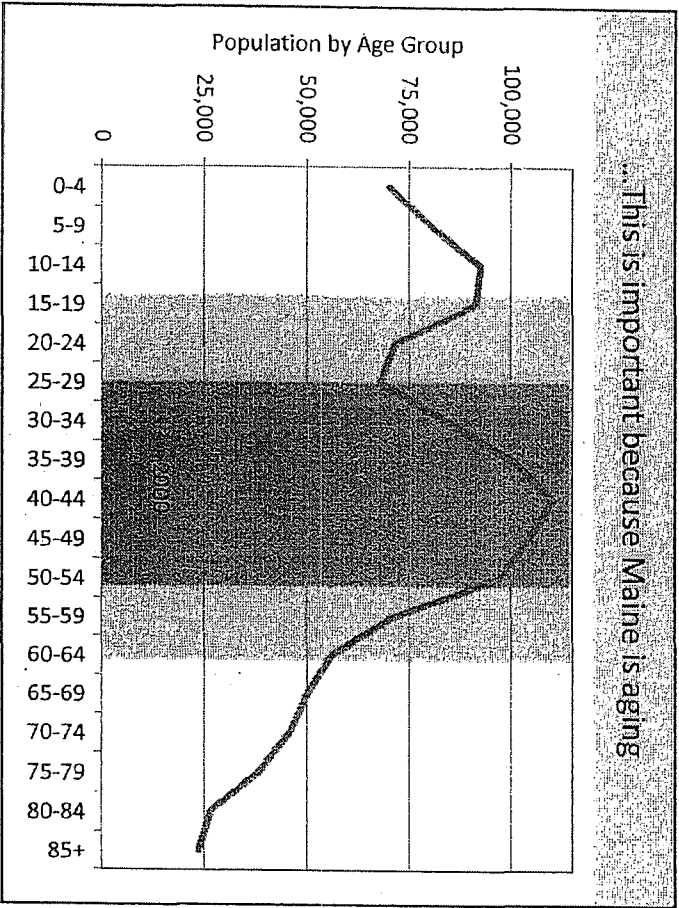
A powerpoint presentation delivered by Glen Mills, Maine Chief State Economist, on November 12, 2013.

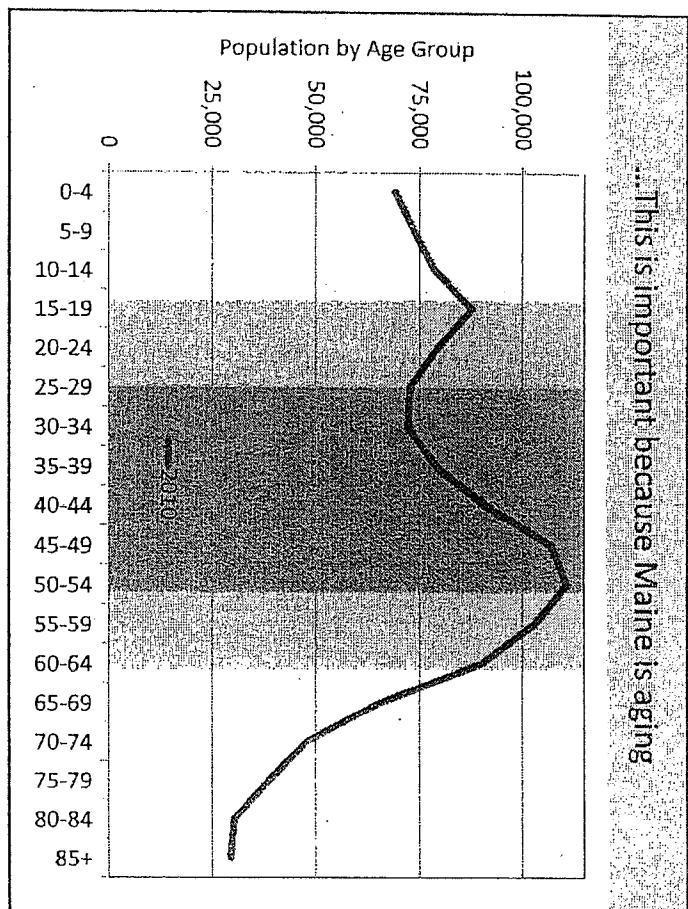
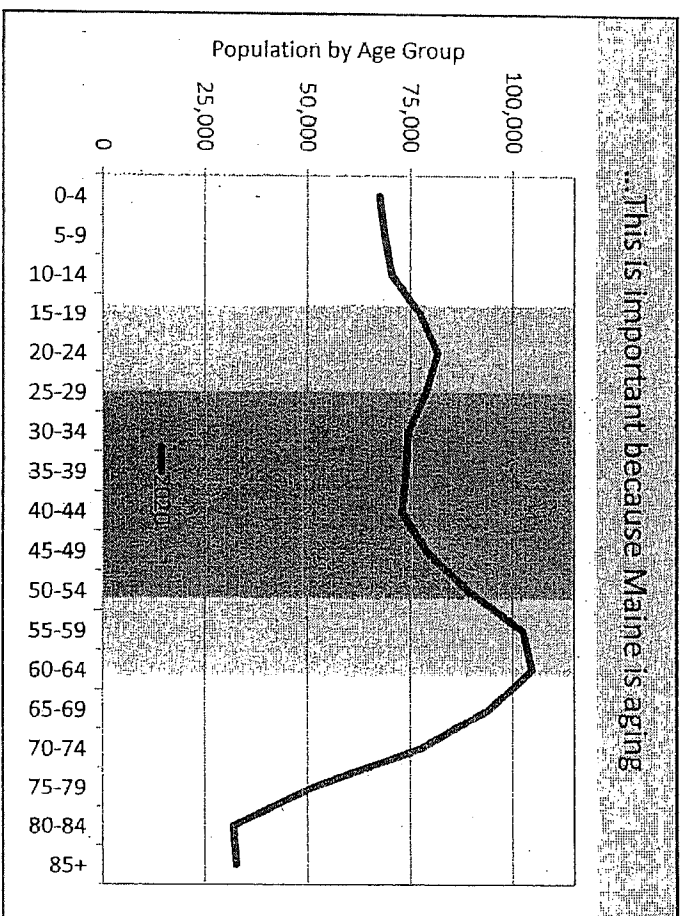
Maine faces major workforce development challenges:

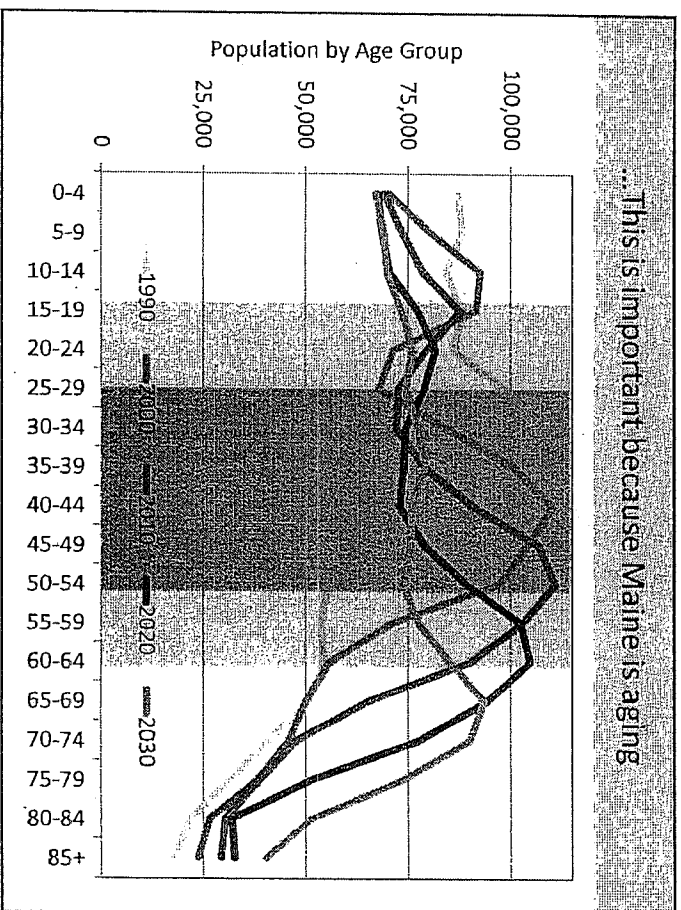
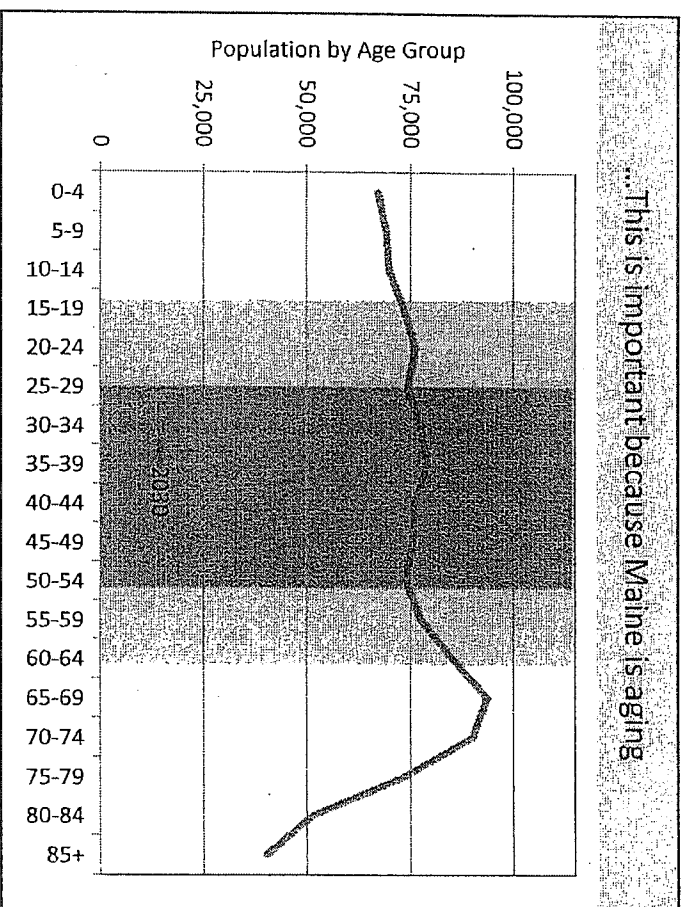
1. Aging
2. Structural shifts in employment that are rapidly changing performance requirements of jobs

As we move through the lifecycle, our attachment to the labor force is highest between age 25 and 54 before declining at an accelerating rate with age...

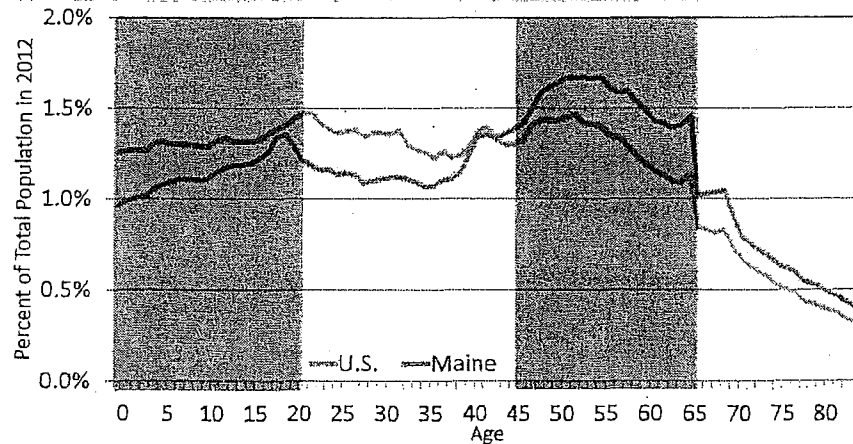




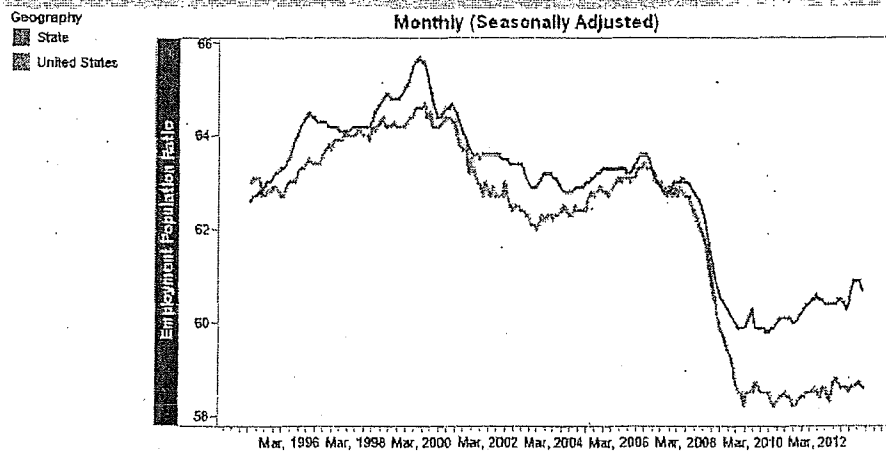




Our "oldest state in the nation" status has less to do with a high share of seniors than an unusually high share of Baby Boomers in their 50s & 60s who didn't have many kids. To stem the demographic tide we must entice large numbers of working-age people to move here.

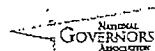


Aging has been impacting employment since 2000 when the share of employed population reached an all-time high. The recent rise is bounce-back from the recession, but the longer-term trend will be down as Baby Boomers advance to retirement.



Skill Demands are Changing

EDUCATION, WORKFORCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



High-skill Occupations: Highly educated workers with analytical ability, problem solving, and creativity.

Automation

~~**Middle-Skill Occupations:** Workers who perform routine tasks that are procedural and repetitive.~~

Low-Skill Occupations: Workers with no formal education beyond high school. They work in occupations that are physically demanding and cannot be automated.

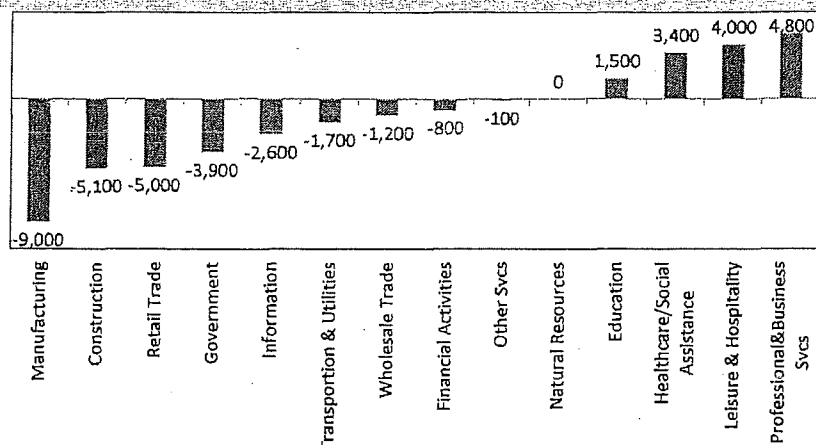
Sources: Kansas City Federal Reserve Bank, Dilem Tüzemen and Jonathan Willis, (2013).
"The Vanishing Middle: Job Polarization and Workers' Response to the Decline in Middle-Skill Jobs,"

NATIONAL GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

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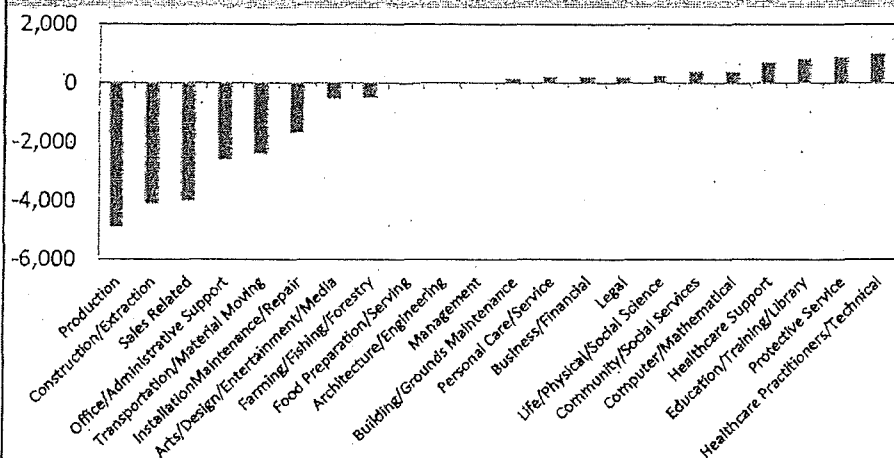
Job losses have primarily been in labor-intensive industries involved in making, moving, or selling goods as well as government; gains have primarily been in human capital-intensive industries...

(Net change in jobs by sector since Dec 2007)



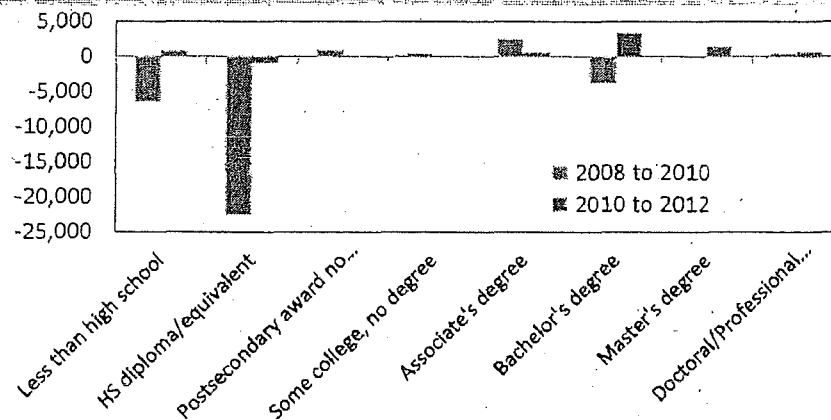
...This has caused major displacement in middle-skill blue-collar and administrative support occupations, which have been the primary path to a middle-class lifestyle for those without post-secondary education...

(Change in jobs 2008 to 2012)



...Jobs that do not require post-secondary education are way down. Growth has been concentrated in occupations that require education beyond high school. Many job seekers do not qualify for openings in growing fields of work. This is a serious impediment to growth.

(Change in jobs by usual education requirement)



The work attributes valued in growing middle-income occupations are very different from those in declining occupations.

Knowledge, skill, and ability examples:

Growing occupations – critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, mathematics, reading comprehension, deductive reasoning, processing information, analyzing data

Declining occupations – machinery operation, equipment inspection, tool selection, strength, following instructions, manual dexterity, handling objects, clerical functions

Performance requirements of jobs are rising. The skills and experience of many displaced workers have become obsolete. This compounds our demographic challenge. How well we do providing people with the education and training to compete in the workforce of today and tomorrow is an important part of our response to the aging situation.