

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

August 12, 2022

Governor Janet T. Mills
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Maine Coworking Development Fund Report pursuant to 5 MRSA §13056-G, sub-§5.

Dear Governor Mills and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business:

Title 5 MRSA §13056-G enacted in the first session of the 127th Legislature directed the Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) to implement a “Maine Coworking Development Fund.” This program was updated and recapitalized during the first session of the 129th Legislature and through the Governor’s budget. The Maine Coworking Development Fund was established within the department to strengthen opportunities for entrepreneurship, stimulate innovation in the State by increasing the availability of collaborative workspace environments, and address a regional market demand for affordable work environments that support communication, information sharing and networking opportunities. The fund was established to match public and private funds to further this purpose.

Pursuant to 5 MRSA §13056-G, sub-§5, the department submits the following information constituting the annual report for this program:

A. The number of applications for collaborative workspace projects submitted to the department

A public notice for the 2022 Maine Coworking Development Fund and Program was announced on September 30. The Department posted the grant guidelines and announcement of a competitive grant process on the DECD website. DECD also released a press release and posted on social media. Questions were accepted from October 8 through November 1 with answers being posted on DECD’s website. The deadline for proposals was November 12, 2021 and the Department received 18 grant applications. This is a substantial increase from the eight proposals received in response to the 2017 Request for Proposal but slightly less than the 22 received for the 2020 round.

The award committee met on December 3, 2021 to determine successful applications and award amounts.



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

The members of the awards committee for this fund were as follows:

- SarahJoy Chaples, Small Business Development Manager – DECD (note that Ms. Chaples is no longer with the Department)
- Maggie Drummond-Bahl, Maine Connectivity Authority
- Brian Whitney, Maine Technology Institute

On December 15, 2021 DECD notified 13 of the 20 applicants of their selection as grant recipients. Seven of the grantees were fully funded and the remaining six received partial funding of their request. All contracts have been fully awarded and all \$200,000 in available funds have been designated. \$10,000 of available funding was spent on advertising with \$5,000 going to both Cloudport and CoVort in FY22.

B. The number of applications for collaborative workspace approved by the department

The following collaborative spaces were awarded grants:

Partially Funded:

- Engine, Inc. (Biddeford)
- Factory 3 LLC (Portland)
- Think Tank Biddeford LLC (Biddeford)
- Union + Co LLC (Bath)
- Cloudport LLC (Portland)
- Up With Community, LLC (Lewiston)

Fully Funded:

- Bricks Coworking LLC (Waterville)
- SYNC Gorham (Gorham)
- The Third Place (Portland)
- Four Directions Development Corporation (Orono)
- Sunrise County Economic Council (Machias)
- Ancient York Lodge (Lisbon Falls)
- Main Street Skowhegan (Skowhegan)

C. The number of collaborative workspaces created (or expanded) through the fund

Partially Funded:

- Engine, Inc. (Biddeford) – Improvements – Tools, furniture, marketing, events
- Factory 3 LLC (Portland) – Improvements – Kitchen and insulated overhead doors



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

Think Tank Biddeford LLC (Biddeford) –Improvements – Office furniture
Union + Co LLC (Bath) – Improvements – Furniture, technology upgrades, program
funding
Cloudport LLC (Portland) – Improvements – Phone booth, meeting technology
Up With Community, LLC (Lewiston) – Improvements –Business Plan/Consulting,
overhead cost

Fully Funded:

Bricks Coworking LLC (Waterville) – Improvements – Phone booths, Fellow Program
SYNC Gorham (Gorham) – Improvements to the site – 3D Printer, signage, bike rack,
phone booths
The Third Place (Portland) – Improvements to the suite, kitchenette upgrade,
conferencing technology
Four Directions Development Corporation (Orono) – New Location
Sunrise County Economic Council (Machias) – New Location
Ancient York Lodge (Lisbon Falls) – New Location
Main Street Skowhegan (Skowhegan) – New Location

The remaining statutory metrics are too early to report, as funded projects just received their first payments at the end of FY22. Items D-G will be reported out in February 2023 after first year annual reports are received from participating collaborative spaces and data compiled.

- D. The numbers of tenants and participants engaged in each collaborative workspace**
- E. The number of jobs provided by each collaborative workspace**
- F. The occupancy rate of each collaborative workspace**
- G. The number of tenants that have left collaborative workspace and that are operating in the State and the number of jobs they have provided.**

Please contact Jake Daniele, DECD's Small Business Development Manager if you have any questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,

Heather Johnson
Commissioner

cc: Jake Daniele, Small Business Development Manager, DECD