

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**New Mainers Resource Center  
Portland Adult Education  
2018 - 2019  
Annual Report**





Senator Rebecca Millett  
Representative Victoria Kornfield  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

Commissioner Pender Maker  
Maine Department of Education  
23 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0023

January 24, 2020

Dear Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield and Commissioner Maker:

On behalf of the New Mainer Resource Center (NMRC) and Portland Adult Education (PAE), we are pleased to submit NMRC's 2018-2019 Annual Report. As you will see, the State's \$75,000 annual investment has been effectively leveraged to provide services to more than 300 foreign born professionals; develop sector specific programming, such as our Education Academy which is replicable to school districts around the state; and, with our review of credentialing and licensing issues, have begun to identify the systemic barriers faced by these professionals as they strive to put their skills to work in Maine.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information about our program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anita St. Onge".

Anita St. Onge  
Executive Director  
Portland Adult Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Sutton".

Sally Sutton  
Program Coordinator  
New Mainers Resource Center



### **New Mainers Resource Center Mission**

The mission of the New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) is to support Maine's economic development by meeting employers' demands for a skilled and culturally diverse workforce.

Serving over 4,400 students in 2018-2019, Portland Adult Education (PAE) has been supporting members of Maine's immigrant communities to find success and build financial stability through workforce development programs designed for new Mainers for over 12 years. NMRC allows PAE to develop targeted programs focused on the unique needs of those who come to the U.S. with an advanced degree and experience in a professional field as well as support workforce initiatives that are integrated throughout PAE's programs.

### **Need**

Maine's population has begun to decline. This has a direct link to labor shortages and the ability for economic growth in the state. Natural population growth (births) and in-migration from other states will not provide enough people to meet the current labor demands, let alone address the need for economic growth. New Americans in Portland may help the state address its workforce shortages but tend to be unemployed or underemployed at a higher rate than the mainstream population even though they may be highly educated and have extensive experience. These students need a different type of support due to their prior education and training if they are to reach their full potential.

### **Barriers to Employment**

Foreign trained skilled professionals face many barriers as they seek to enter the Maine workforce. An adequate level of English competency, as well as lack of information about career pathways, transferring credentials or professional licenses, US standards for resumes, interviews, and American workplace culture are all barriers to entering the workforce.

### **NMRC 2018/19 Program Data and Impact\***

- 331 people contacted NMRC for services
  - 181 people were new in 2018/19
  - 150 were returning NMRC program participants
- 76% of new Mainers served by NMRC have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 252 people received case management/career advising
- 262 people participated in NMRC programmatic offerings designed to help overcome barriers and engage with employers (workshops, classes, presentations, etc.)

\*Previous NMRC annual reports were done on a calendar year basis. PAE overall programming, budgeting and funding is done on a fiscal year basis July 1 – June 30. To be consistent with PAE this and future NMRC reports will be prepared on a fiscal year basis. 2018-19 figures also represent a reduction in staff that resulted in fewer job classes, workshops and individual case management and advising.

### **Conclusion 2018-2019**

A reduction in staffing in 2018-19 limited some of the programming provided by NMRC. However, the attention paid to systemic issues around licensing for foreign trained professionals and the move toward sector based programs with a variety of funding options, such as the Education Academy and Teller Training programs, appear to be effective models from two perspectives. They meet the needs of both new Mainers entering a career path in their chosen fields as well as create a pipeline for addressing workforce shortages in specific sectors. A focus on increased funding has allowed NMRC to be back at full strength in 2019-2020.

**New Mainers Resource Center  
2018-2019 Annual Report**

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January 23, 2020

## New Mainers Resource Center 2018-19 Annual Report

### OVERVIEW

#### NMRC's Mission

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) was created in 2013 by the Maine State Legislature to develop and execute a strategy to integrate and better utilize the skills of foreign trained immigrants living in Maine. Established as a pilot project at Portland Adult Education (PAE), **NMRC's mission is to support Maine's economic development by meeting employers' demands for a skilled and culturally diverse workforce.**

PAE has been supporting members of Maine's immigrant communities to find success and build financial stability through workforce development programs designed specifically for new Mainers, for over 12 years. The inclusion of NMRC at PAE allows for the development of both targeted programming focused on the unique needs of those who come to the U.S. with an advanced degree and experience in a professional field as well as support for workforce initiatives that are integrated throughout PAE's programs.

#### Need

Maine's population has begun to decline. This has a direct link to labor shortages and the ability for economic growth in the state. Natural population growth (births) and in-migration from other states will not provide enough people to meet the current labor demands, let alone address the need for economic growth in the state. Initiatives like the City of Portland's establishment of an Office of Economic Opportunity recognize that Maine needs to attract more foreign born workers as well as retain and support the current immigrant population in order to meet the area's workforce needs.

New Americans in Portland tend to be unemployed or underemployed at a higher rate than the mainstream population even though they may be highly educated and have extensive experience in high-demand fields including, engineering, teaching, healthcare and finance. These students need a different type of support due to their prior education and training. For many, however, such as engineers, employers are very interested in having verification of their schooling and how it relates to a US degree before they will consider hiring them. Without verification of a degree, someone trained as an engineer would likely get a manufacturing job. With the determination of the US equivalency of their degree, a person could be considered for higher level professional positions in their field and could begin the process necessary to being licensed as an engineer. The higher salary paid to someone in an engineering position will better support a family and also allow someone to contribute to the community through higher tax payments.

#### Demographic Information

Southern Maine is home to nearly 20,000 refugees and immigrants, with Portland being a major resettlement city for primary and secondary refugees. Students at PAE come from all over Maine and more than 90 different countries and range in age from 18 – 80+. PAE taught 2,420 students during the 2018-2019 school year.

The demographics of the City of Portland, and subsequently PAE, have changed with the changing immigrant populations. In 2018/19 asylum seekers made up almost 1/3 of the student immigrant population at PAE. These students, largely from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola, fled political persecution and life threatening situations, but their challenges do not end upon arrival in Portland. Due to federal law, asylum seekers are not allowed to work for at least 6 months after they have filed for their asylum. Many wait for longer than that. From 2014 to 2019, the number of immigrant students on public assistance more than doubled from 671 to 1704. Consistently, 90% of the students who receive services from NMRC are Portland residents who are on General Assistance (GA) at the time of intake. See *Appendix A. PAE Immigrant Enrollment Chart 2018- 2019 School Year* for more specific PAE demographic data.

## Barriers to Employment

Foreign trained skilled professionals face many barriers as they seek to enter the Maine workforce. In addition to requiring an adequate level of English competency, these barriers include lack of information about career pathways, transferring foreign earned credentials, and US standards for resumes, interviews, and American workplace culture. In addition, they must navigate the complicated vocational licensing system and educational systems as well as combat employer misperception, discrimination and the loss of professional networks.

NMRC strives to help remove these barriers for our students through a variety of classes and services. In addition to its ongoing programming, in 2018-19 NMRC undertook two major initiatives. The first initiative was the Education Academy, a program developed to assist the entry of foreign trained teachers into teaching and other positions in Maine. The second initiative included the development of licensing guides for several specific professions as well as a review of professional licensing in Maine and the challenges faced by foreign trained professionals seeking to be licensed in their profession in Maine.

## NMRC 2018/19 Program Data and Impact\*

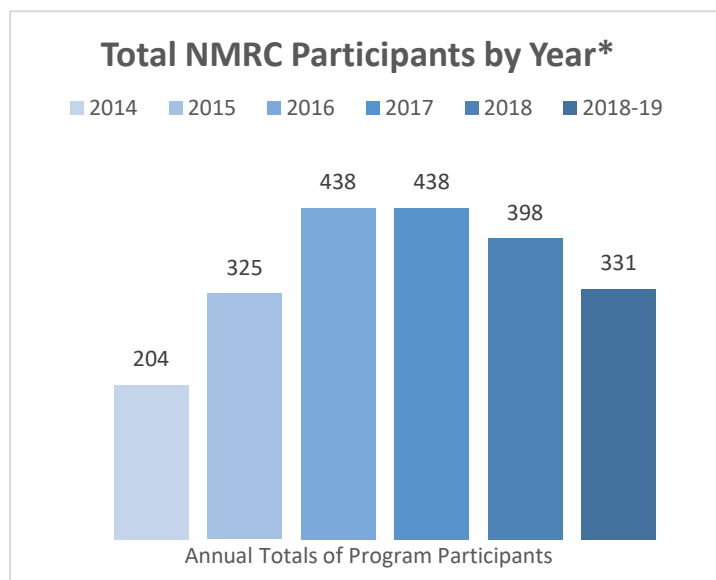
### NMRC PROGRAM OFFERINGS

The New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) is a program within Portland Adult Education serving area immigrants and refugees. These offerings are designed to help new Mainers, of all professions, overcome barriers to entering the US workforce. It includes:

- a skilled professional program
- employment case management and advising
- intensive classes focused on job readiness skills
- professional networking groups and connections to employers
- workshops and other offerings

Career advising and case management and any programming offered by NMRC must take into consideration a number of factors:

- English level
- Previous training and experience, need for additional training or education
- Short and long term career goals
- Availability of training resources or scholarships
- Job search skills and familiarity with US work culture
- Degrees, access to college transcripts and diplomas
- Work authorization and immigration status, i.e., when will they be able to work
- Family commitments both in the US and in country of origin
- Office and computer skills
- Need for specific credential or license in their professional field, an understanding of that process and likelihood of successful completion
- Access to transportation, need for childcare, etc.





## **NMRC 2018/19 PROGRAM DATA**

- 331 people contacted NMRC for services
  - 181 people were new in 2018/19
  - 150 were returning NMRC program participants
- 76% of new Mainers served by NMRC have a bachelor's degree or higher
- 252 people received case management/career advising
- 262 people participated in NMRC programmatic offerings designed to help overcome barriers and engage with employers (workshops, classes, presentations, etc.)

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## **INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS STORY**

This example from one of our former students clearly illustrates the advantage that participating in this program will provide.

"I am from DR Congo. I have been in the United States for one year and two months. I graduated from university in my country and have a Bachelor's Degree in Public Law and a Master's Degree in Social Transformation in Human Right and Disability Studies. I worked as a lawyer, human rights activist especially for people with disabilities ... Advocacy for people is my passion.

I took the Job Class with the intention of learning how to build a new career or continue in my career here in the USA. In this class I learned how to make a resume and to match with the cover letter. My teachers encourage me to do the volunteering in the legal field or advocacy for people.

Today, I am happy and proud to have been able to get a job that fits in my skill set. I am a Housing Support Staff at Preble Street. I do advocacy for people with low income, homeless, and with disabilities. I think it's a perfect way to reach my goal in the USA. I am very grateful to New Mainers Resource Center and Hope House coaches." - Benedicte W.

## **NMRC MAJOR INITIATIVES**

### **A SECTOR CASE STUDY - EDUCATION ACADEMY**

#### **Best Practices to Address Range of Issues/Challenges Faced by Foreign Trained Teachers Obtaining Teacher Certification in Maine**

Many new Mainers have experience as teachers or have an interest in education and are interested in entering the educational field in Maine. There is also a need on the part of many school districts to recruit more teachers, educational technicians and substitute teachers. Many school districts are also striving to diversify their workforce so that it more closely resembles the make-up of the students in their schools, such as the Portland Promise initiative undertaken by Portland Public Schools.

The following chart provides a list of barriers or challenges faced and the approaches or strategies used by the Education Academy to overcome those challenges. While this information is specific to the educational sector, similar challenges and barriers exist for other professions or sectors that will also need to be addressed for foreign trained professionals in that sector to be successfully employed. Highlights of results through January 2020 as well as next steps for the Education Academy are provided below.

<b>Barriers/Challenges for Foreign Trained Teachers to Work in Public Schools</b>	<b>Education Academy Approach to Barrier/Challenge</b>
State certification requirements for teachers	NMRC developed <i>Maine Teacher Certification Guide</i> – spelling out certification process; provided advice and assistance throughout certification process
Foreign trained teachers may be unfamiliar with US school systems and the role of teachers in the classroom	With support from MDOL, NMRC developed a course curriculum based on input from employer partner - Portland Public Schools (Education in US, Teaching Methods, Classroom Management, Teaching Exceptional Students, and a Practicum Experience). This curriculum is available and can be used by other school districts
Limited access to financial resources for certification costs and required coursework	Lined up several funding sources based on different eligibility requirements so wider range of students could be served; program and certification application costs are covered so don't become a barrier
Lack of information about the educational programs available to meet certification requirements	<i>Maine Teacher Certification Guide</i> – Includes information about local educational programs, courses offered, entrance requirements, costs, etc. for most commonly required coursework to meet teacher certification requirements; guidance and advice provided to each student about their specific options for coursework based on MDOE letters stating their certification requirements
Lack of familiarity with US job search strategies	Job search strategies included in coursework; close partnership with Portland Public Schools to recruit students for teacher, Ed Tech and substitute teacher/Ed Tech job openings; continued support from NMRC for students until they obtain employment in a school
English proficiency required for employment, college courses and PRAXIS tests	Education Academy courses include a strong English component; student English level is assessed, and students are provided information about the level of English classes they need to take to continue to improve their English. Developed PRAXIS test prep courses.
Accessing transcripts and evaluation of foreign degrees and US equivalency	Provided advice and financial support to help students obtain a translation and evaluation of their foreign degrees to be submitted as part of the teacher and Ed Tech certification application process
Need for student teaching opportunities for students who are not fully matriculated into a teacher training program	Discussions are underway with Portland Public Schools and local colleges to determine how best to address this issue
Need for student teacher opportunities for those working as Ed Techs who would have to quit their jobs to do student teaching	Discussions are underway with Portland Public Schools to determine how best to address this issue

### **Education Academy Highlights of Results (As of 1/22/2020)**

Eleven students participated in the Education Academy in 2018/2019.

- 11 participants received evaluations of their foreign degrees from a NACES accredited evaluation company accepted by Maine Department of Education (MDOE)
- 11 participants were authorized as Educational Technician 3 with the MDOE
- 9 participants determined by MDOE to be eligible for conditional teacher certification in their endorsement area of choice (2 students lack BS degree required for teacher certification)

- 11 students completed a resume and cover letter to apply to education positions
- 11 participants prepared for and completed a mock interview with hiring personnel from Portland Public Schools and other agencies currently hiring educational positions
- 10 participants completed the Accuplacer reading test to provide direction for English classes
- 11 participants received a summary report of their assessments and MDOE certification requirements and their next steps including English classes, computer and math classes and educational institutions offering required courses needed to meet MDOE requirements
- 11 participants received financial assistance and other support through WIOA - 5 (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) and CSSP-B – 5 (Competitive Skills Scholarship Program) 1 student not yet work authorized received support provided by FPAE (Friends of Portland Adult Education))
- 11 participants applied and interviewed for ED Tech 3 jobs, substitute teachers, and teacher positions
- 4 participants working in teaching positions; 5 participants working as Ed Tech 3s, one person working as an Ed Tech 3 long term substitute, one person working in Ed Tech 3 AmeriCorp position
- Students continue to receive assistance from NMRC

### **Education Academy Next Steps**

- Education Academy courses were offered again in September 2019. Students will receive support and assistance with evaluations and the certification process and applying for Ed Tech 3 and teacher positions
- Funding sources are being expanded and arrangements will be made for financial assistance for costs for those students who are eligible
- PAE is offering English and Math Praxis Prep courses
- Working with Portland Public Schools to systematize student teaching placements both internally within PPS and with educational institutions for those students who need a student teaching placement but are not fully matriculated in an educational program

### **CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE ISSUES FOR FOREIGN TRAINED PROFESSIONALS**

Licensing and credential evaluation are some of the most challenging aspects of a foreign trained professional's entry into the US workforce. A major initiative undertaken by NMRC in 2018 and continuing into 2019, with support from the Betterment Fund, was to look at steps that Maine can take to help facilitate the credential evaluation and re-licensure process. The project sought to identify some of the challenges that exist and provide recommendations for addressing them. The first phase of this project included the development of licensing guides for a number of professions and an analysis and report regarding barriers to licensing. The second phase starting in 2019 focused on sharing the findings and recommendations of the report and distribution and circulation of information about the professional guides.

One of the first meetings held to discuss the findings of the report was with Anne Head, Commissioner, Department of Professional and Financial Regulation and administrators of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation (OPOR). Additionally, the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature passed a resolve to establish LD 1841 To Create a Working Group to Study Barriers to Credentialing which looked at barriers to licensing for skilled individuals with foreign credentials. This resolve formally tasked Commissioner Head with examining this issue and reporting back to the Legislature in 2020 with recommendations and suggestions for legislation. NMRC Program Coordinator Sally Sutton and PAE Executive Director, Anita St. Onge have been members of this working group. The focus on this issue by Commissioner Head, OPOR administrators and the Legislature is important for Maine to move forward in determining how best to overcome the barriers faced by skilled professionals.

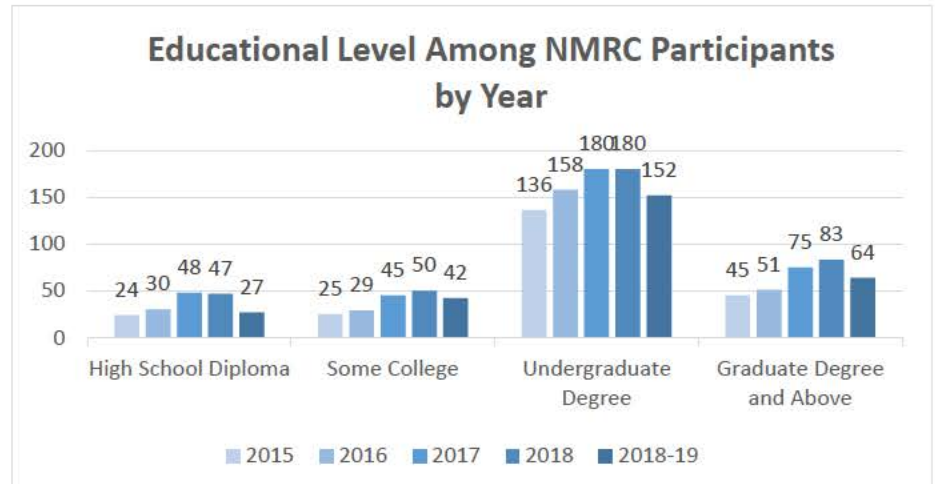
### **Professional Licensing Guides**

As part of this project, NMRC produced a series of licensing guides for some key professions in an effort to provide more information about the licensing process for those professions. A major problem with professional licensing is access to information about the process for each particular profession and knowing whether or not it is possible

to fulfill all of the requirements for licensure. The guides are designed for foreign trained professionals as well as workforce, educational and career advisors who may be providing guidance and advice so that people understand the licensing process and are better able to make informed decisions about their options. The guides cover the following professions: doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, CPAs and teachers and can be found on the NMRC website at: [www.nmrcmaine.org](http://www.nmrcmaine.org).

## Findings and Recommendations Regarding the Licensing Process

In November 2018, NMRC also released a major report: *Foreign Trained Professionals: Maine's Hidden Talent Pool, Findings and Recommendations Regarding Certification and Licensure*, based on an analysis of national and local occupational licensing policies, a review of professional licensing for several key professions in Maine, and NMRC's experience working with hundreds of foreign trained professionals each year and the challenges they face as they seek to re-start their careers in Maine.



This report highlights the level of experience and the high level of education that new Mainers bring with them to the state, a majority having a bachelor's degree or higher and experience in a range of economic sectors. It provided a number of findings and recommendations that cut across the decentralized licensing process with recommendations for a variety of stakeholders, including: employers, licensing boards, educational institutions, policy makers, professional associations, workforce advisors and others so that they can work to address the barriers that are relevant to their work.

## Highlights of Major Findings Regarding Barriers and Recommendations

The major findings and recommendations of the report can be broken down into several areas: licensing information is not accessible; value of foreign degrees is not recognized; accessing transcript is difficult; costs of the licensure process are prohibitive; English proficiency requirements are high; work experience requirements are difficult to meet; and, additional educational requirements can be challenging to obtain. An example of a barrier in each area is provided below as well as a recommendation to address the issues raised by the finding. For a more detailed explanation of the findings and a complete list of the recommendations, go to *Foreign Trained Professionals: Maine's Hidden Talent Pool, Findings and Recommendations Regarding Certification and Licensure*

*Finding 1 – Licensing Information is Not Accessible* - There is a lack of understanding about licensing and limited access to information on how the licensure process works, which is difficult to find and understand.

**Recommendation** - Information about the licensing process in Maine for foreign trained individuals should be transparent and clearly referenced and visible on each professional board's website. It is also recommended that there be consistency across the websites of different professions as another means in facilitating access to licensing information.

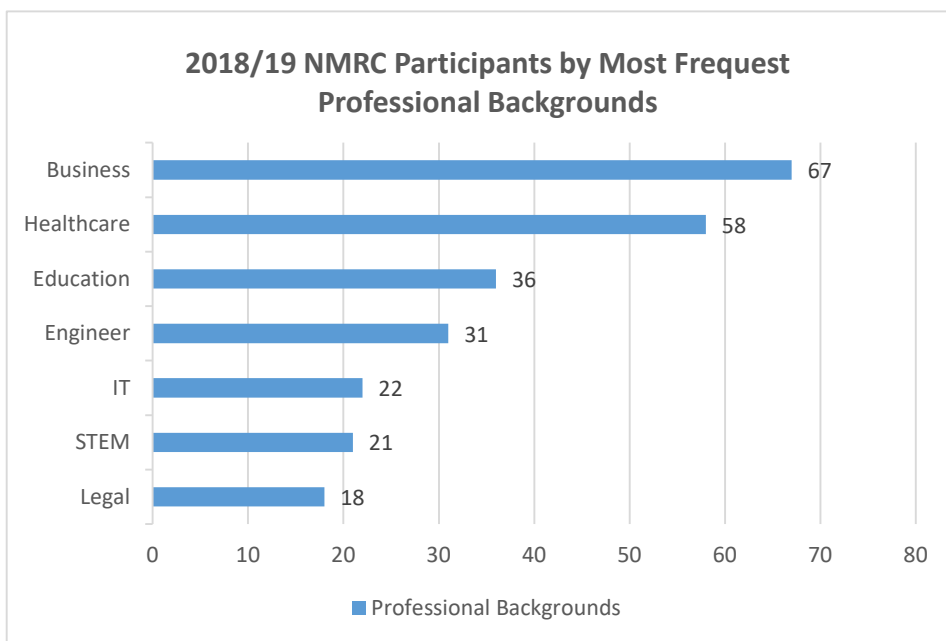
*Finding 2 – Value of Foreign Degrees* - For many highly skilled immigrants the value of their degree is not recognized, with many being under employed and not working in jobs that make appropriate use of their knowledge or skills.

Recommendation – Maine’s policymakers, educational, training and workforce initiatives need to develop specific strategies for new Mainers that recognize the unique resources that foreign trained professionals bring to Maine. Maine officials need to look at existing programs geared toward Maine’s overall population and then consider how those existing programs can meet the needs and special circumstances of Maine’s immigrants. This is of particular concern for those who have degrees and experience that can and should form a foundation for any further training or education.

**Finding 3 – Accessing Transcripts** - *For many foreign trained professionals, accessing their official documents (transcripts, diplomas, in some cases course descriptions, etc.) is the most significant barrier to re-entering their field.*

Recommendation - For those entities that rely on documentation being sent from an individual’s home school, it is recommended that alternative approaches

be considered for the provision of documentation in recognition of the fact that millions people who are fleeing their home countries as refugees or asylum seekers or because of natural disasters may never be able to access their documents through their home schools. Without their documents licensure in their profession will likely not be an option for many people.



**Finding 4 - Costs of the Licensure Process** - *Each step of the licensure process has a significant price tag attached to it, with some professions costing thousands of dollars. In addition to having to undertake a costly process for licensure, many foreign trained professionals do not have access to traditional sources of financial aid.*

Recommendation - Tuition reimbursement provided by employers can be a tremendous resource for a foreign professional trying to move up in their career, unfortunately many employment benefit policies are written too narrowly to meet the expenses related to licensure. If employers want to help support foreign professionals move up in their careers and work their way through their licensing requirements, employers should broaden their tuition reimbursement policies to include expenses related to the licensing and certification costs for this type of career advancement.

**Finding 5 - English Proficiency Requirements** - *English proficiency will be the most important factor for all candidates at some point in their licensure process. While foreign-trained professionals often have extensive knowledge in their respective fields, the format of the licensing and certification tests and the strong emphasis on English mastery presents a challenge to many people being successful in passing the tests.*

Recommendation - Educational institutions and licensing bodies could include more explicit information around the English proficiency levels that will be required, both to take specific course work, or to be able to pass the licensure or certification exams. Regardless of where exams are in the process, licensure candidates should know well in advance what it will take to achieve the required scores. Workforce training, adult education, community colleges and in-person test prep centers can work to create sector-specific English courses and content to help foreign-trained licensure candidates begin their test preparations.



***Finding 6 – Work Experience Requirement** – Difficulty in fulfilling a work requirement or practical experience is a common challenge across most professions. An inability to fulfill these requirements can keep a candidate from moving ahead with the application process, licensure and their career.*

Recommendation - Many employers already have arrangements with local colleges and universities to accept interns or students who need to do some type of practical experience. Employers should develop a systematized approach for providing these types of experiences for foreign trained professionals who may need these opportunities but who are not typically associated with a school program that facilitates making arrangements with employers for meeting these requirements.

***Finding 7 – Additional Educational Requirements – Limited Access to Financial Aid** - Many licensed professions will require some additional coursework as part of the licensing process to make up for any gaps in the applicant's education. Additional needs some foreign trained professionals have may be for courses to meet pre-requisite requirements for applying to other programs; bridge or subject area review courses to help them build up their English proficiency as well as the substantive information they need to learn for the professional licensing test they will be required to take. For many educational programs, it is not always clear what the requirements are for non-matriculated students (English proficiency, pre-requisites) and whether or not they are even eligible to take courses, and in many cases they are not eligible to take classes without fully matriculating into a program.*

Recommendation – Educational programs, particularly those that are required for licensure for a profession should clearly state their policies on accepting students who do not want to fully enroll in a program but are only interested in taking a limited number of courses to meet certification and licensure requirements and what the admission criteria are for those students. Where possible, educational programs are encouraged to consider ways they might be able to accept and support these students.

## COMMUNITY AND EMPLOYER PARTNERS

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

To the greatest extent possible, NMRC and PAE seek to partner with other educational and training providers, employers, and other community agencies to leverage as many resources as possible for our students. NMRC and PAE work in close partnerships with: Catholic Charities, the City of Portland Office of Economic Opportunity, Goodwill Workforce Solutions, ILAP, Fedcap, Southern Maine Community College, Portland Public Schools TeachPortland, Scholarships for Maine Immigrants, City of Portland General Assistance, Coastal Enterprise Inc., CareerCenter, Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, and ProsperityME among others. Nationally, NMRC is part of the Welcome Back Initiative, a network of 10 programs serving foreign trained health professionals.

We also participate in a number of coalitions:

- Greater Portland Workforce Initiative
- Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition
- Asylum Seekers Working Group
- Diversity Hiring Coalition
- Maine Health Workforce Forum
- Maine Adult Education Association
- Portland Minority Health Program Stakeholder Alignment Group
- Cumberland County Adult Education and Career Development Hub

## Employer Partnerships

The New Mainers' Resource Center supports the development of Maine's economy by helping to meet employers' demands for a skilled and diverse workforce. It provides individualized services and builds long lasting partnerships with local companies who want to hire talented, internationally trained professionals. Below are highlights of the services provided to employers:

- Recruitment Events - PAE has close to 1,000 students come to its building each day. By partnering with NMRC, employers can access this wide range of candidates. Types of events include:
  - Company interviews at PAE
  - Industry focused job fairs
  - Employer networking opportunities
  - Reverse job fairs (focus on applicant vs. employer)
  - Company tabling or informational sessions
  - Classroom presentations
  - Referrals for specific job openings
- NMRC works directly with employers to determine the skills and experience needed for positions they are striving to fill and will match those positions with candidates from our qualified and vetted talent pool.
- Tailored training and industry focused classes - Employers play an important role in NMRC programming. Receiving their input about their workforce needs, potential job openings, and job applicant requirements helps us make sure our program participants are qualified candidates and prepared for the jobs for which they are applying.

## PAE WORKFORCE INITIATIVES

Since NMRC was established at Portland Adult Education in 2013, workforce related courses and opportunities have greatly expanded to the extent that job search strategies, career planning, and opportunities to gain or enhance job related skills are more integrated and available to new Mainers across a wider range of PAE offerings, beyond the services provided through NMRC. For example:

- ESOL level 4 and 5 classes have job search strategies incorporated into their curriculum.
- The Computer Learning Lab provided opportunities for people to work on job searches and learn about different careers.
- Through a partnership with Workforce Solutions, PAE offered an intensive English course with a focus on workforce. In 2018-19 18 students participated in this course.
- More and more new Mainers are able to take advantage of PAE job skills offerings, such as computer skills, accounting, and office and medical skills courses and certificate programs with scholarship support from Friends of Portland Adult Education (FPAE). In 2018/19, 109 students taking 351 courses received scholarships totaling \$23,414 to help cover the costs.
- Over the last few years PAE has developed a very effective approach to training people to become CNAs. In addition to offering a traditional CNA course, PAE also offers an English Language Learner (ELL) CNA course for those students who may not have English as their first language. PAE also offers a Bridge to Healthcare or CNA class to help students gain the skills needed to transition to a CNA or other related clinical healthcare training or job. PAE partners with a number of employers for clinical placements and hiring graduates of the CNA classes.

## EVOLVING PROGRAMS - NEW INITIATIVES

### NEW PROGRAM INITIATIVES

During the 2018-19 fiscal year, groundwork was laid for a number of different NMRC and PAE workforce related initiatives that would get underway in the coming year. These initiatives often involved collaboration with other partners, securing funding for training and related costs and new program development. Below are brief descriptions of those initiatives.

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** - NMRC submitted and was awarded a CDBG grant from the City of Portland. The goal of this project is to move new Americans out of poverty and off General Assistance and other supports into livable wage positions. Most of the people served under this project will be foreign trained professionals, who are ESOL 5 and above and are just receiving their work authorization. This means that they are now able to apply for their first job. By combining the provision of credential evaluations with the Job Strategies Class, program participants will be able to apply for positions that can take advantage of their professional training and experience, paying closer to a livable wage and above, rather than a survival wage job.

**TELLER TRAINING** - In partnership with local banks and credit unions, PAE is running its first-ever Teller Training Course in winter 2020. Students in the course have a background in the financial industry and are preparing for Teller positions at local financial institutions. Not only is the Teller position a key customer service role at banks and credit unions, it is also the first step for many people entering and moving forward with a career in the bank and credit union industry.

The 165-hour Teller Training consists of five different courses, including Customer Service, Basic Computer and Writing for the Workplace, Basic Math and Cash Handling, and Job Search Strategies. The central course is Today's Teller, an American Banking Association designed curriculum that utilizes the expertise of banking professionals to team-teach, along with the guidance of an ESOL teacher.

**Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Prep Test Course** - In response to the high demand from employers as well as from individuals interested in being licensed, PAE is in the process of developing study groups to prepare people to take the CDL permit test. Once people pass the test, they could take a CDL course or, be hired by an employer who would be willing to train them.

### FUNDING AND COLLABORATION INITIATIVES

A major goal in 2018-19 was to stabilize funding. During the past year NMRC and PAE undertook a number of initiatives to stabilize funding and develop or adapt programs to qualify for existing or new training resources.

**Building the Pipeline (BTP)** – This is a partnership with SMCC that will enhance collaboration between Portland Adult Education (PAE) and Southern Maine Community College to improve the screening, recruitment, testing, evaluation and prior learning assessment of new Mainer/immigrant populations in southern Maine to align more closely with workforce training and credential-awarding programs at the college. The goal of this partnership is to increase the number of students entering SMCC workforce programs which will lead to job placement or continuation of educational pursuits at the college.

**Careers in Motion (CIM)** – In conjunction with the Office of Maine Refugee Services (OMRS), PAE will implement targeted programming to help Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) eligible individuals advance their careers and improve their self-sufficiency. The focus of the services will support ORR eligible individuals within 3-5 years after their arrival to the United States or after they receive asylum status. Some specific courses that will be developed include: ELL CDL Test Prep course and ELL Certified Residential Medication Aide (CRMA).

**Scholarships for Maine Immigrants (SMI)**- SMI, formerly Portland ESL Scholarship Fund, helps local immigrants and refugees gain the English language and career skills necessary to achieve their educational and professional



goals by providing scholarships. SMI and NMRC have formed a partnership in which SMI will provide support for the costs of translations, evaluations and some related licensing and certification costs for individuals being served by NMRC.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - The City of Portland made available TIF funds to establish a partnership with the Office of Economic Opportunity and local employers. These funds will assist students entering the workforce for the first time, match student interest/experience and local labor market demand to design short-term training for specific sectors that includes contextualized support addressing potential employment barriers such as English, digital literacy, etc. This initiative could build on an expanding relationship with the Greater Portland Chamber of Commerce.

## **CONCLUSION – 2019-2020 Goals and Future Direction**

A reduction in staffing in 2018-19 limited some of the programming provided by NMRC. However, the attention paid to systemic issues around licensing for foreign trained professionals and the move toward sector-based programs with a variety of funding options, such as the Education Academy and Teller Training programs, appear to be effective models from two perspectives. They meet the needs of both new Mainers entering a career path in their chosen fields as well as create a pipeline for addressing workforce shortages in specific sectors.

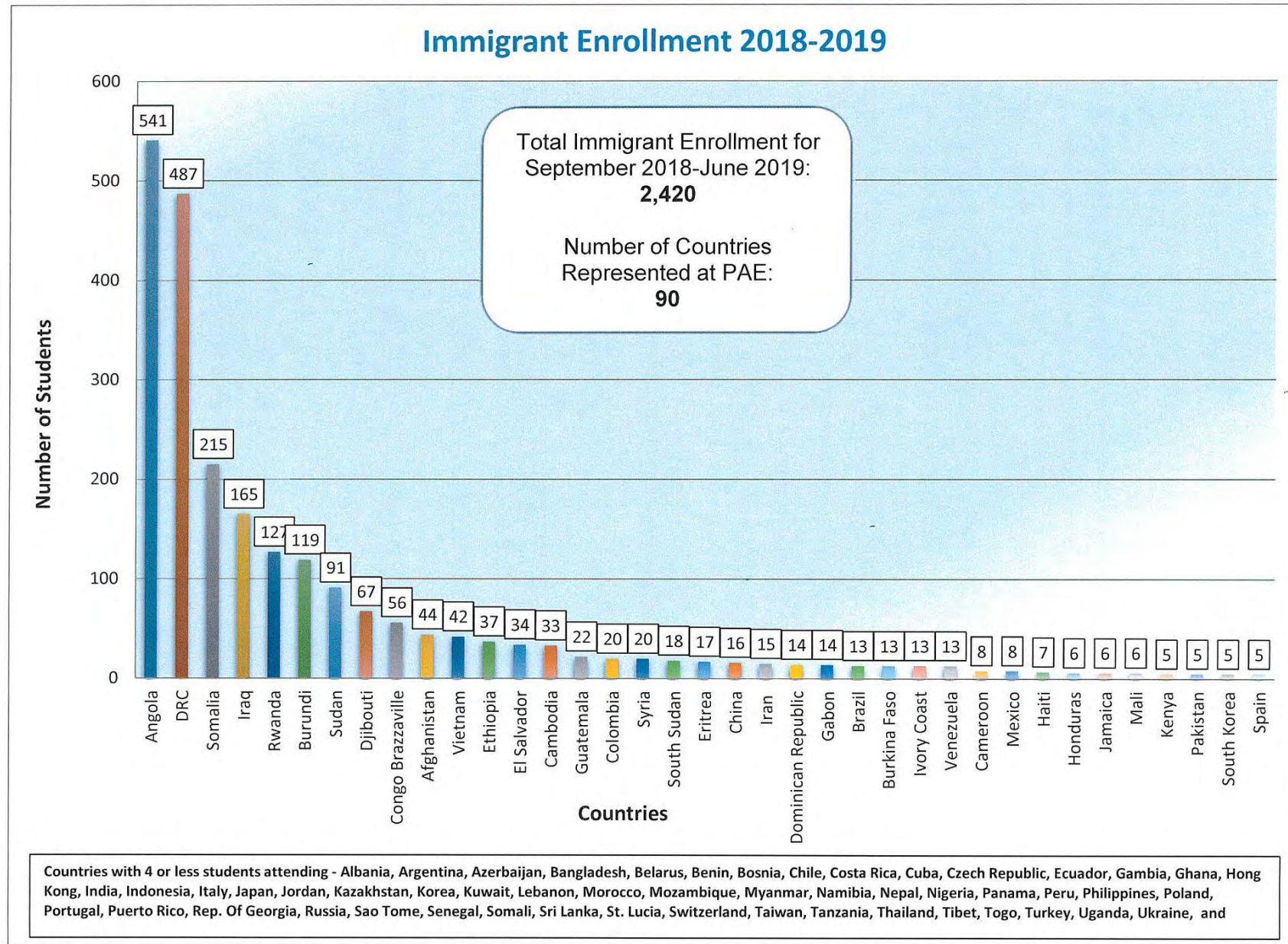
**Stabilized Funding** – 2018-19 experienced a reduction in services because of a cut-back in funding. Efforts throughout the year that focused on program development tied to funding to meet the needs of a range of students, particularly those not yet eligible for work authorization, will allow for the expansion of services again in 2019-2020. This reduction in programming clearly illustrates the precarious nature of the program and the need for a constant focus on developing diversified funding sources.

**Sector Approaches** – The initial offering of the Education Academy in winter 2019 proved to be successful and replicable. With some modifications to make the program more flexible and accessible, it is being offered again in 2019-2020 and has also been offered by Lewiston Adult Education. The sector approach to intensive programming combined with employer involvement serves as a model for the development of the Teller Training course to be offered by PAE in Winter 2020.

**Moving New Mainers Onto a Career Path** – Much of the work done in 2018-19 was focused on helping new Mainers get onto a career path, whether it be working toward becoming a teacher, preparing for a CDL test, networking opportunities with employers, or assistance in pursuing licensing as a pharmacist. NMRC has and very importantly must continue to not only help individuals move ahead with their careers, at whatever step they may be at, but it must continue to develop and advocate for programs and systems that help to support and facilitate that process.

**Professional Licensing** - In 2018, with support from the Betterment Fund, NMRC was able to make a great deal of progress in the area of credential evaluation and professional licensing. Six professional licensing guides and a major report that highlighted many of the challenges people face in this area were produced. The *Hidden Talent* report laid out a number of findings and recommendations that provide a roadmap for where to go next in this area. As a result of this work, there is also greater awareness of the issue statewide which should result in legislative and other initiatives. In 2019-2020 the focus will be to follow through on the recommendations laid out in the report and to continue to advocate for greater understanding of and efforts to address this complex issue.

**Structural and Administrative Components** - NMRC continues to try to refine its data collection methods and move toward more in-depth analysis for measures of success. Given the breadth of programming and data collected, in 2018-19 those efforts began to focus on determining how best to break down that data to evaluate the effectiveness of our different initiatives. These efforts will continue into 2019-2020.



**Appendix B. NMRC Programmatic Offerings July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019**

Offering	Description	Date	# of Attendees
Workshops Offered throughout the year on topics related to the job search process	<p>Workshop topics included, amongst others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Overview of the Job Search Process</li> <li>● Using Online Resources</li> <li>● Matching Your Skills to the Job Description</li> <li>● Resume Writing</li> <li>● Cover Letter</li> <li>● Filling out Application</li> <li>● Interviewing Overview and Practice</li> <li>● Job Fair Preparation</li> <li>● Working with Foreign Skilled workers</li> <li>● Credential Evaluation</li> <li>● Public Health Panel</li> <li>● Eggs and Issues</li> <li>● Job fair workshop-work permit</li> <li>● MTUG Conference</li> </ul>	Throughout the year	173
Job Class A	This intensive 150-hour course is designed for immigrants with intermediate English language skills that are searching for their first job in the US. Students in ESOL levels 3 and 4 will learn how to search for a job and expand their English skills through contextualized English for the workplace with a focus on U.S. Workplace culture and learn financial literacy skills. Area employers are actively engaged in the program, visiting the classroom to share information about their companies, providing mock interview practice as well as hiring students. Graduates of the program receive a certificate detailing their competency achieved for twelve employability skill standards and their attendance hours. They also receive one-on-one job search support from their teachers and job developers from participating in service agencies.	<p>Winter- 1/14/19- 03/14/2019</p> <p>Spring-5/6/19- 6/26/19</p>	<p>13</p> <p>16</p>
TOEFL Preparation	The TOEFL Prep Course is for individuals who are preparing to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language. The ongoing group is open to ESOL 5 or above.	<p>Spring- 3/27/19- 6/26/19</p> <p>Fall- 9/26/18- 12/12/18</p>	20 both classes

Starting a Business in Maine: Immigrant Entrepreneurs	This course is for immigrants who have a business idea, already own their own business or are thinking of becoming self-employed. Learn from experts about the pros and cons of starting a business, your first steps, how to do a business plan and about available resources. Sponsored by New Ventures Maine and the City of Portland Office of Economic Opportunity.	Winter- 2019 2/25/19-3-18-19  10/2/18 – 10/18/18	13  8
Education Academy Certificate Program	This intensive program included 4 courses and a practicum experience in a local school: Education in the US, Classroom Management, Teaching that Promotes Student Learning and Educating All Students: Exceptionalities and English Language Learners. The program also included advising and assisting students with certification to be an Ed Tech 3 and/or teacher.	Winter 2019	11
How to Avoid Cyber Attacks Training	This course provided students with tips and tools on how to protect themselves against hackers and online attacks.	Fall-10/2/18-10/3/18	8
<b>TOTAL NMRC PROGRAMMATIC OFFERING PARTICIPANTS July 2018-June 2019</b>			<b>262</b>





## A snapshot of the 2018-19 school year

### 2,500 STUDENTS

1,737 English Language Learners

599 Job Skills Students

489 Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies Students

400 Foreign-trained professionals served

133 Homeless Youth



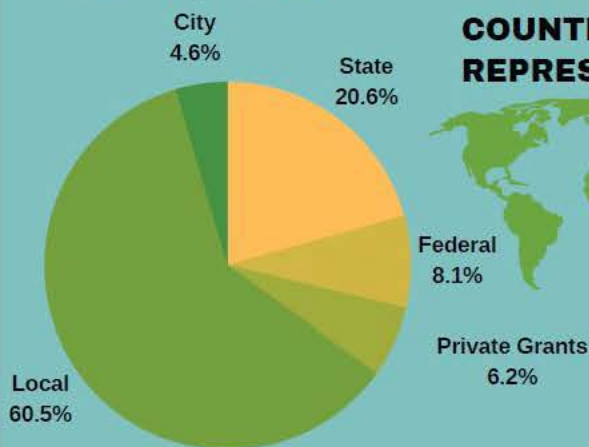
### 200+ VOLUNTEERS

6,481 hours of time

75% of New Mainers served by NMRC have a Bachelors Degree or Higher



#### Funding Sources



### COUNTRIES REPRESENTED 90



### CLASSES OFFERED

347+



214 Academic & High School Diploma Classes  
133 Job Skills & Workforce Development Classes  
+ Citizenship, New Mainers Resource Center (NMRC) Workshops, and TOEFL Prep



### PAE LEARNING LAB

500+ Students served  
134 Intensive online learning participants  
123 for HiSet, Accuplacer & HS diploma prep  
15 Multilingual Volunteers  
2 Full-Time Trained Teachers



101 HiSet and High School Diploma GRADUATES

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?



portlandadulthood.org  
Portland Adult Education @PAELearning



