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January 11, 2021

Senator Matthea Daughtry
Representative Michael Brennan
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333

Commissioner Pender Makin
Maine Department of Education Maine DOE
23 State House Station Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and Commissioner Makin:

On behalf of the New Mainer Resource Center (NMRC) and Portland Adult Education (PAE), we are pleased to submit NMRC's 2019-2020 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 Teller Training Program and Education Academy which meet both the needs of workers as well as employers; and, with our extensive research into the licensing challenges of foreign trained health professionals and recommendations to stakeholders on how to remove barriers. We look forward to not only continuing but building on this work in the coming years.

In addition to our annual report, we are also sending to you another report on recently completed research we have done on the licensing barriers faced by foreign trained health professionals. *Report of the Foreign Trained Health Professional Licensing Pilot Project*. While the focus of this work was on healthcare professionals, many of the recommendations are applicable across the board to other foreign trained professionals.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like more information about any of this work or our program. We would very much appreciate an opportunity to come before your committee and present our work.

Sincerely,

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New Mainers Resource Center Portland Adult Education 2019 - 2020 Annual Report





New Mainers Resource Center 2019/20 Annual Report EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 3,084 students in 2019-2020, 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 13 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 is on the 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. Due to their prior education, these students need a different type of support 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. The lack of adequate English competency, as well as basic information about career pathways, transferring credentials or professional licenses, US standards for resumes, interviews, and American workplace culture are barriers to entering or advancing in the workforce.

NMRC 2019/20 Program Data and Impact

- 306 people received advising as part of NMRC services
 - o 183 people were new in 2019/20
 - o 123 were returning NMRC program participants
- 280 people participated in NMRC programmatic offerings designed to help overcome barriers and engage with employers (workshops, classes, presentations, etc.)

COVID-19 Impact

In mid-March 2020, in the middle of the winter semester, all PAE programming went remote in response to the pandemic. The pandemic not only changed the way that PAE had to deliver its services, going from an all in person model to one that was totally remote, but it meant big changes for all PAE staff and students. Just dealing with health and safety issues, childcare and home schooling, loss of employment, and surviving in a shutdown environment created a very stressful time for everyone. For many students, continuing with classes was not a top priority and for some, because of lack of technology, internet or technology skills, or because a

person's English level was lower, continuing to take classes remotely was not possible. By spring semester PAE had a better understanding of what it would take to provide remote services, but also recognized that for both staff and students, functioning remotely was a challenge and adjustments needed to be made in expectations about what could be accomplished. Understanding how to use technology could not be just an add on to all classes but needed to be a major focus of all classes. For many students who were searching for employment, a very low unemployment rate changed overnight to a situation where many people were losing their jobs and/or employers were not hiring, or the openings that did exist were for essential service positions.

Conclusion 2019-2020

Because of COVID-19, the year 2019-2020 was certainly not a typical year and the challenges of functioning remotely will continue into the coming year. However, whenever PAE is ready to return to in-person classes and programs, this years' experience with remote learning has opened up greater possibilities for how PAE will offer classes and services in the future and will remain a part of PAE's overall programming as a way to expand access to its services to those for whom physically being at PAE is a challenge. The move to remote learning also highlighted the digital barriers new Mainers face and the need to ensure that there is access to digital devices and internet and that teaching technology skills, whatever format PAE courses will take in the future, should be a core component of every class.

NMRC's attention to systemic issues around licensing for foreign trained professionals, now with a major focus on health professionals, seems to be quite timely as Maine struggles to address the health disparities for immigrant communities, made all the more apparent by COVID-19 and the need for a more culturally and ethnically diverse workforce. The move toward sector based programs such as the Education Academy and Teller Training programs, appear to be effective models that can be repeated and applicable to other sectors. They meet the needs of new Mainers entering a career path in their chosen fields as well as meeting the needs of employers by creating a pipeline for addressing workforce shortages in specific fields.

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January 11, 2021

**New Mainers Resource Center
2019-2020 Annual Report**

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New Mainers Resource Center 2019-20 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 13 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. 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. This population needs a different type of support due to their prior education and training. For many, however, such as those in the healthcare field, where most professions are licensed, being re-licensed in their profession in the US is almost impossible to achieve without profession specific strategies and support to overcome barriers imbedded in the licensing process.

Demographic Information

Southern Maine is home to nearly 20,000 refugees and immigrants, with Portland, in previous years, being a major resettlement city for primary and secondary refugees. Students at PAE come from all over Maine and more than 83 different countries and range in age from 18 – 80+. PAE's total immigrant enrollment for the 2019-20 school year was 1,830 students. This is roughly a 24% decrease from the previous school year and may reflect several different factors. Changes in federal immigration policy during the past 1-2 years placed limits on the numbers and ability of people to enter the US as either a refugee through Catholic Charities Refugee and Immigration Services or as asylum seekers. The

most significant factor leading to the reduction, however, is the impact of the pandemic on the lives of PAE students and also for some, their ability to access PAE remote classes. In 2019-20 PAE saw a decline in ESOL students, new students and returning students.

The demographics of the City of Portland, and subsequently PAE, have changed with the shifting immigrant populations. In 2019/20 asylum seekers made up roughly 65% 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. Changes in federal immigration rules during the past year as well as the closures of federal immigration offices and courts due to COVID-19 have greatly impacted the processing of

PAE Key Data	2019/20	2018/19
Total Students	3084	3712
New Students	1215	1709
Returning Students	1869	2003
ESOL Students	1618	1747

asylum applications, making the process more complicated and contributing to the delay in an asylum seeker's ability to obtain a work permit, stretching a process that used to take about 6- 7 months now to a year or longer for many people. Being unable to work, asylum seekers remain on General Assistance until they are able to obtain employment. 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 2019- 2020 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 complicated vocational licensing systems 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 2019-20 NMRC undertook several major initiatives.

1. **Sector Specific Strategies** - One initiative involved a continued focus on workforce training strategies geared toward specific sectors. This included the introduction of a Teller Training Program to assist those new Mainers with backgrounds in the financial sector to start a career path with a financial institution. It also included the second offering of the Education Academy, a program developed to assist the entry of foreign trained teachers into teaching and other educator positions in Maine.
2. **Health Professional Licensing** - The second initiative, funded with support from the Maine Health Access Foundation, was to research ways to increase diversity and cultural competence of the health workforce by identifying strategies to reduce barriers that foreign trained health professionals face in accessing training, licensing and obtaining employment in the healthcare field at the fullest scope of the experience and training as possible. This work built on NMRC's earlier work to develop several professional licensing guides and conduct a broader review of professional licensing in Maine generally and the challenges faced by foreign trained professionals seeking to be licensed in their profession.
3. **Workforce Programming** - A third initiative involved the first steps toward restructuring NMRC and workforce programming within PAE to provide a better coordinated effort in meeting both the needs of new Mainers attempting to move forward with their careers and addressing the workforce needs of employers.

NMRC 2019/2020 Programs, 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
- sector specific training connected with employers.

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.

COVID-19 Impact

In mid-March 2020, in the middle of the winter semester, all PAE programming went remote in response to the pandemic. The pandemic changed the way that PAE had to deliver its services, going from an all in person model to one that was totally remote, and meant big changes for all PAE staff and students. Just dealing with health and safety issues, childcare and home schooling, loss of employment, and surviving in a shutdown environment created a very stressful time for everyone. For many students, continuing with classes was not a top priority and for some, because of lack of technology, internet or technological skills, or because a person's English level was at a lower level, continuing to take classes remotely was not possible. By spring semester PAE had a better understanding of what it would take to provide remote services, but also recognized that for both staff and students, functioning remotely was a challenge and adjustments needed to be made in expectations about what could and should be accomplished. For many students who were searching for employment, a very low unemployment rate changed overnight to a situation where many people were losing their jobs and/or employers were not hiring, or the openings that did exist were for essential service positions.

For NMRC this meant the classes that were in progress or had planned for the upcoming semester were switched to virtual classes and systems were set up to do student advising by phone or through zoom meetings with NMRC staff who were working remotely from home. Unfortunately, with the shutdown of in-person offerings at PAE, NMRC workshops, trainings, networking sessions, meetings with employers, etc. that are traditionally held throughout the year could not be offered. Provided below is data, descriptions and student success stories for the classes that were held in 2019/2020. For additional information see *Appendix B. NMRC Programmatic Offerings 2019-2020*.

NMRC 2019/2020 PROGRAM DATA

- 306 people received career advising as part of NMRC services
 - o 183 people were new in 2019/20
 - o 123 were returning NMRC program participants
- 280 people participated in NMRC programmatic offerings designed to help overcome barriers and engage with employers (workshops, classes, presentations, etc.)
- 76% of new Mainers served by NMRC have a bachelor's degree or higher (2018/19)

Job Classes

Job Classes are foundational programs of NMRC. These are classes offered at 2 different English proficiency levels 3 times each year. For each of these classes switching to remote sessions mid-semester in the winter

and then being offered fully remote for the spring semester presented challenges to both teachers and students who all had to learn how to function in a virtual classroom. Teachers report that students are very busy with other classes, keeping their jobs to pay bills and caring for their families. Technology issues were a major problem with going remote – either problems with internet connection or no devices. New teaching methods had to be learned to keep students engaged. Losing direct in person contact with students and communication is a big challenge with the class being remote, especially when advising students. Employers who are typically very eager to participate with interviews with students had their own pandemic challenges to address and were not available to the extent that they had been previously.

Job Class A is a 150-hour intensive course designed for immigrants with intermediate English language skills who are searching for their first job in the US. Students 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 also learn financial literacy skills. Area employers were actively engaged in the program (until the pandemic), visiting the classroom to share information about their companies, providing mock interview practice as well as hiring students. Students in the class also receive one-on-one job search support from their teachers and job developers from participating service agencies. 45 students initially signed up and 37 completed the courses with 66.67% employed.

Job Class A Student Success Story

Leticia M. - Job Class had numerous students who were busy with other responsibilities including families, work, appointments and more but they showed a commitment and pushed till the end. Leticia is an excellent example. She became a citizen and 2 weeks later voted in the 2020 election. She has had experience working as a hotel housekeeper but after completing Job Class A and despite her limited education in her home country of Mexico she is currently employed at Abbott assembling kits. She happily reports that because of this new job, it is no longer imperative for her to work a second job to support her family.

Job Class B is a 70-hour 8-week course designed for new Americans with a higher level of English. Students learn to apply their professional, transferable skills to the US workforce. Students work on their English through an emphasis on writing etiquette for the workplace and also take financial literacy. Area employers are brought into the class. Students also receive advising and case management services and, for those students who need it, translations and evaluations of college transcripts are obtained. Employers involved in this course included Hannaford, Allagash Brewing Company and MaineMed. 42 students initially signed up and 31 completed the courses with 73.33% finding employment.

Job Class B – Student Success Stories

Eugenie M. - “So, I am working at Casco Bay High School as a full time Special Ed Tech III. I started October 1, 2020. Though there is this pandemic that is not making it easy for in-person learning, I am really liking it here at CBHS. I am so grateful for PAE who prepared me and equipped me with skills and readiness to work in the US and to join my dream career. At PAE, I benefited from the Education Academy and the Job Class. The New Mainers Resource Center was very resourceful too. They provided me with all the resources and updates I needed to take my career: translating my transcripts, evaluating my credentials, certification process...

Oh... I almost forgot that I also got opportunities to volunteer with the Language Lab and the Writing Center. So proud to get connected to very insightful people and learn from them along the way.

I cannot thank PAE enough, but I am always willing to give back to the community as a way of gratitude.”

Clet R. - "... Now, I am working at Abbott during the night. I can't forget the way you helped me to find different jobs, where I started at First Atlantic Healthcare as a housekeeper with \$12.50 per hour and now my salary has changed to \$21 per hour. I can say my life has changed because of you, and in a few months I plan to buy a car. In brief, PAE has transformed my life. Thank you Kathleen for your support."

Vanusa C. - Vanusa took many classes at PAE and volunteered in our [computer learning] lab. She took Job Class B in the winter of 2020, plus earned a high school diploma from PAE. She has a background in engineering and sales application, but she realizes now she really wants to become a sales manager. She is currently working full-time at Abbott Labs as a Production Team Leader and attending SMCC for Business Administration. She hopes to continue on for a Bachelor and a Master's Degree in Business Administration at the University of Southern Maine. Vanusa is a hard-working, focused individual who will reach her goals.

ELL Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Test Prep Course

In response to the high demand from employers as well as from individuals interested in being licensed, a CDL Test Prep course was offered to 18 students in the fall of 2019 and winter of 2020. These study groups prepared people to take the CDL permit test. Once people pass the test, they can take a CDL course or, be hired by an employer who is willing to train them.

Advising and Support for Credential Evaluations, Certification and Licensing

In 2019-2020 NMRC was able to make progress on expanding the resources available to assist new Mainers with costs related to certifications, credential evaluations and licensing. In addition to grant funding that is dedicated specifically for this purpose, resources to cover these expenses have been built into other programming, such as teacher certification expenses included in the funding proposals that cover the classes that are part of the Education Academy. In 2019-2020 NMRC was able to utilize \$30,716 from 10 different funding sources (Fedcap, FPAE, Betterment, SMI, CDBG, CIM, MeHAF, TIF, CSSP and WIOA) to help support these expenses for 70 people who received career advising and employment case management from NMRC.

2019-2020 MAJOR INITIATIVES

1. Sector Specific Strategies

New Mainer Teller Training Program

The New Mainer Teller Training Program is designed to help foreign-trained professionals gain entry into the financial services industry. Launched in January of 2020 with 15 students this intensive program ran through April 3rd, when it was forced to shift to a virtual platform when the Covid-19 pandemic caused school-wide closures in March. The partnership behind this initiative included six banks and credit unions, as well as ProsperityME, the Center for Financial Training & Education Alliance, and the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. The participating financial institutions included: Bank of America (BOA), Bangor Savings Bank, cPort Credit Union, Gorham Savings Bank, Infinity Federal Credit Union and Norway Savings Bank.

Over 30 students applied for the initial program, and the teachers struggled to narrow the class to 15 students who were from nine countries: China, Iraq, Jamaica, Zambia, Namibia, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda. All have financial or customer service backgrounds and many have bachelor's and graduate degrees.

Representatives from area financial institutions helped build the curriculum and lent their expertise as team-teachers with PAE instructors. The 12-week, 165-hour program consisted of six courses: Today's Teller (an American Banking Association designed curriculum), Customer Service, Computer Skills and Business Writing, Basic Math and Cash Handling, Personal Finance and Job Search Strategies.

Mohammed B., one of the students in the course, has a bachelor's degree in physics and used to work on the Iraq Stock Exchange. When he started the program, he had been working as a cashier at Nordstrom Rack. He was the first of the group to be hired into a Teller position at Infinity Credit Union. Following the class, 6 out of the 14 graduates received positions in banks and credit unions and 2 more are using the skills they developed in the program in new customer service positions. 13 out 14 graduates are currently employed.

The Teller Training 2.0 is launching in January 2021 with four new employers and a new group of 15 students. This training will be held virtually.

Education Academy

2019-2020 saw the 2nd offering of this program designed for foreign trained educators who what to get back into the educational field in Maine. The original intensive 3 month daytime program required all students to take the four classes (Education in the US, Teaching that Promotes Student Learning, Classroom Management, Teaching Exceptional Students) as well as complete a practicum experience in a local school. Recognizing that for many people who might be interested in the program, family or job commitments may make it difficult for them to commit to the intensive time requirement, the program was adapted to build in flexibility so that students could take the courses that fit their schedules. All students also received career advising on the Maine teacher certification and Educational Technician 3 process and assistance with their job searches. 2019/2020 classes started out as in-person then switched to remote halfway through the 2nd set of courses. Financial support for the classes and certification related expenses came from CSSP, WIOA and Portland TIF (Tax Increment Financing funding). 11 students took the original program in Winter 2019 and 100% are employed in education related positions. 11 students completed their chosen Education Academy courses in 2019/2020 and of those 11, 6 are employed in education related positions and 5 are employed in non-education related jobs and not looking for other work at this time.

The pandemic has had a major impact on new Mainers seeking jobs in the education sector. For some positions, there are more opportunities, such as substitutes, but starting out as a new teacher or Ed Tech 3 in a remote or hybrid classroom setting, with only virtual opportunities to connect to your fellow teachers or students, will be a challenge they will need to meet.

Education Academy classes will be offered again starting in January 2021. This year's classes will be remote and have been adapted in other ways to help prepare students to be flexible and for working in virtual learning or hybrid settings.

2. Health Professional Licensing

Certification and Licensure Issues of Foreign Trained Health Professionals

Licensing and credential evaluation are some of the most challenging aspects of a foreign trained professional's entry into the US workforce. This is particularly true for those health professionals who have come to Maine as refugees or asylum seekers. This factor must be taken into consideration as it impacts the options people have available to them. People who come as a result of forced migration have not been planning for careers in the US, and consequently face a different set of issues with licensing. For this group of immigrants, there is also a need to prioritize meeting the basic needs of their families over the investment of time and money it would take to move ahead with their professional careers. This factor keeps many people stuck in positions far below their previous training and experience. For health professionals, being re-licensed

in their profession is almost impossible to achieve. There are also no quick or cost-effective alternative paths that would get someone close to their former career.

As a way to better understand how to address these challenges one of the major initiatives undertaken by NMRC in 2019-2020 was a project to research ways to identifying strategies to reduce the barriers that foreign trained health professionals face in accessing training, licensing, and obtaining employment in the healthcare field at the fullest scope of their experience and training as possible. This research was funded with a grant from the Maine Health Access Foundation.

This work comes at a critical time and is especially true now as Maine's healthcare systems struggle with COVID-19. Disparity in health continues among minority populations. This could not be clearer in the numbers regarding the Corona infection rates compared to the rest of the population of COVID-19 among the minority population in Maine.

The diversity that these professionals bring will allow healthcare programs and systems to provide services in a more culturally competent manner to the population groups that these health care providers come from. These populations generally have more limited access to health care services for a range of reasons, including their minority status and cultural backgrounds.

Implementation of the recommendations from this research will:

- Help foreign trained healthcare workers work toward reaching their highest potential
- Address the state's goal of a diversified and culturally competent workforce
- Meet the needs of health employers, and address the state's health workforce shortage
- Attract highly skilled healthcare workers to Maine.

Common Themes

- There is a lack of information and in many cases misinformation available to new Mainers about their career options, particularly when it pertains to health professionals and licensing.
- The range of individual factors that must be taken into consideration means that there is not a one size fits all approach and that any programs or services offered need to be tailored to the individual.
- It is important that, as Maine considers different options, we assess how those options will work with the populations we are trying to serve.
- Many of the findings and recommendations from this report will also apply to other professions and the challenges new Mainers face generally.
- As Maine moves forward with this work it is critical that the voices and experiences of the new Mainers are informing and guiding the direction of the initiatives that are developed so that the solutions that are being proposed actually solve the problems that people are encountering.
- Poverty, lack of access to financial resources for licensing-related expenses or schooling and working to meet basic needs keep people from moving forward with their careers.
- Many people continue to be challenged by the need for a high level of technical English, verbal fluency, and reading comprehension that demonstrates a competency level high enough to meet entrance requirements for specific health profession educational programs, graduate level programs, professional licensing, working at a professional level and passing timed licensing tests.

Highlights of Recommendations

- Immigrant experience and voices should inform the process around recommended strategies and evaluation of programs and initiatives.
- Public officials and private funders must address the lack of access to financial resources that are needed for any real advancement on a career path, whether through licensing or returning to school.

- Regarding licensing: 1. The Maine Legislature should pass the statutory language and appropriations necessary to implement the recommendations in the *Report of the Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation* regarding barriers faced by foreign trained professionals seeking licensure. 2. Other professional boards not under OPOR should do a similar analysis of their procedures.
- Adult education programs are a place for most new Mainers to learn English, prepare and plan for college, gain training, and find their first job. These programs are grossly underfunded and need more support if they are to help new Mainers into a job or on a career path that gets them out of poverty.
- Employers are key partners for new Mainers wishing to move up a career path to their previous professional career. They can work with employees on career plans, provide resources toward licensing or school, open up their businesses for the range of clinical experiences that people need to move forward with licensing or qualify for educational programs, offer internships to new Mainers, and work with their diversity officers or departments on new strategies to hire, support and retrain new Mainer health professionals as they work to regain their careers.
- Higher education and state officials should work on increasing access to financial aid; provide credit or advanced standing, and design programs built around previous degrees and experience.
- Consider specific recommendations for MDs, RNs and pharmacists. For those for whom licensing, or an advanced degree are not viable options, mid-level positions need more of a focus from employers, licensing bodies, and schools. Maine should explore the introduction of a new health profession – Assistant or Associate Physician for foreign trained doctors for whom licensing is not an option.
- Building on the current work and expertise of NMRC/PAE, expanded support and investment in this program provides Maine a more coordinated and better funded health sector workforce program to better serve new Mainer health professionals and employers and will allow the program to work with stakeholders and continue to advocate for change. Expanded programming should include a range of higher level and technical English classes to assist health professionals with career advancement.

Implementation of the recommendations of this report will help to guide the future direction of Portland Adult Education and the New Mainers Resource Center as it seeks to build on its current work, expertise, and role as Maine's Welcome Back Center. It will also build on the health professional training and workforce partnerships and initiatives that already exist at Portland Adult Education. Expanded support and investment in this program will provide Maine with a more coordinated and better-funded healthcare sector workforce approach to better serve Maine people who experience health disparities, new Mainer healthcare professionals and healthcare employers.

For copies of the report go to: [Foreign Trained Health Professional Licensing Pilot Project](#)

3. Workforce Programming

In 2019-2020 PAE began to work to incorporate NMRC programming into its overall workforce programming. This move took advantage of a natural evolution of programming with much of PAE's overall workforce programming overlapping with NMRC's efforts in terms of students served, development of training programs, employer partnerships and funding sources. *Appendix C. PAE Winter 2021 Workforce Training Program Overview* provides a listing of those workforce training programs.

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 Refugee and Immigration Services, the City of Portland Office of Economic Opportunity, Goodwill Workforce Solutions, ILAP, Fedcap, Southern Maine Community College (including Bridging the Pipeline), 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 across the country 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 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 works to provide individualized services and build long lasting partnerships with local companies who want to hire talented, internationally trained professionals. Below are highlights of the services that have previously been provided to employers:

- Recruitment Events – Prior to the pandemic, PAE had close to 1,000 students come to its building each day. By partnering with NMRC, employers had access to a wide range of candidates. Types of events included:
 - 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 who are prepared for the jobs for which they are applying.
- Sector focused programming initiatives like the Education Academy and Teller Training Program are designed and implemented with employers playing a significant role. For example, the Teller Training Program involved 6 banks and credit unions and 3 community organizations including the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. 4 more banks will be partnering with the program in 2020-21. Education Academy students are involved in 5 local public school districts and 2 private schools at all different levels.

Covid-19 Impact - Given that PAE programming has been offered remotely and PAE is in the process of developing new approaches to communication with PAE students, NMRC has to approach its partnerships with

employers differently. As employers are trying to re-build their workforces and recognize their need for a diversified and inclusive employment setting, NMRC needs to systematize and strengthen its communication with students who could be potential applicants, and also make sure they are good candidates and prepared to apply for positions for which employers are recruiting.

FUNDING AND COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

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 partnership with SMCC is an enhanced 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 was to increase the number of students entering SMCC workforce programs that 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 implemented targeted programming to help the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) eligible individuals advance their careers and improve their self-sufficiency. The focus was on ORR eligible individuals within 3-5 years after their arrival to the United States or after they have received asylum status. Some specific courses that were developed included an ELL CDL Test Prep course and ELL Certified Residential Medication Aide (CRMA).

Scholarships for Maine Immigrants (SMI)- SMI 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 formed a partnership in which SMI provided 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 were used to assist students entering the workforce for the first time and match student interest/experience and local labor market demand to design short-term training for specific sectors, in such programs as the Teller Training Program and Education Academy that included contextualized support addressing potential employment barriers.

CONCLUSION – 2020-2021 Goals and Future Direction

Remote Programming - Because of COVID-19, the year 2019-2020 was certainly not a typical year and the challenges of functioning remotely will continue into the coming year. However, whenever PAE is ready to return to in-person classes and programs, this year's experience with remote learning has opened up greater possibilities for how PAE and NMRC will offer classes and services in the future. Remote programs will likely remain a part of PAE's overall programming as a way to expand access to its services to those for whom physically being at PAE is a challenge. The move to remote learning also highlighted the digital barriers new Mainers face and the need to ensure that there is access to digital devices and internet and students are taught how to use technology, and support is provided for students involved in remote learning.

Employer Partnerships and Communication with Students - Given that PAE programming is offered remotely and PAE is in the process of developing new approaches to communication with PAE students, NMRC has to approach its partnerships with employers differently. As employers are trying to re-build their workforces and recognize their need for a diversified and inclusive employment setting, NMRC needs to systematize and

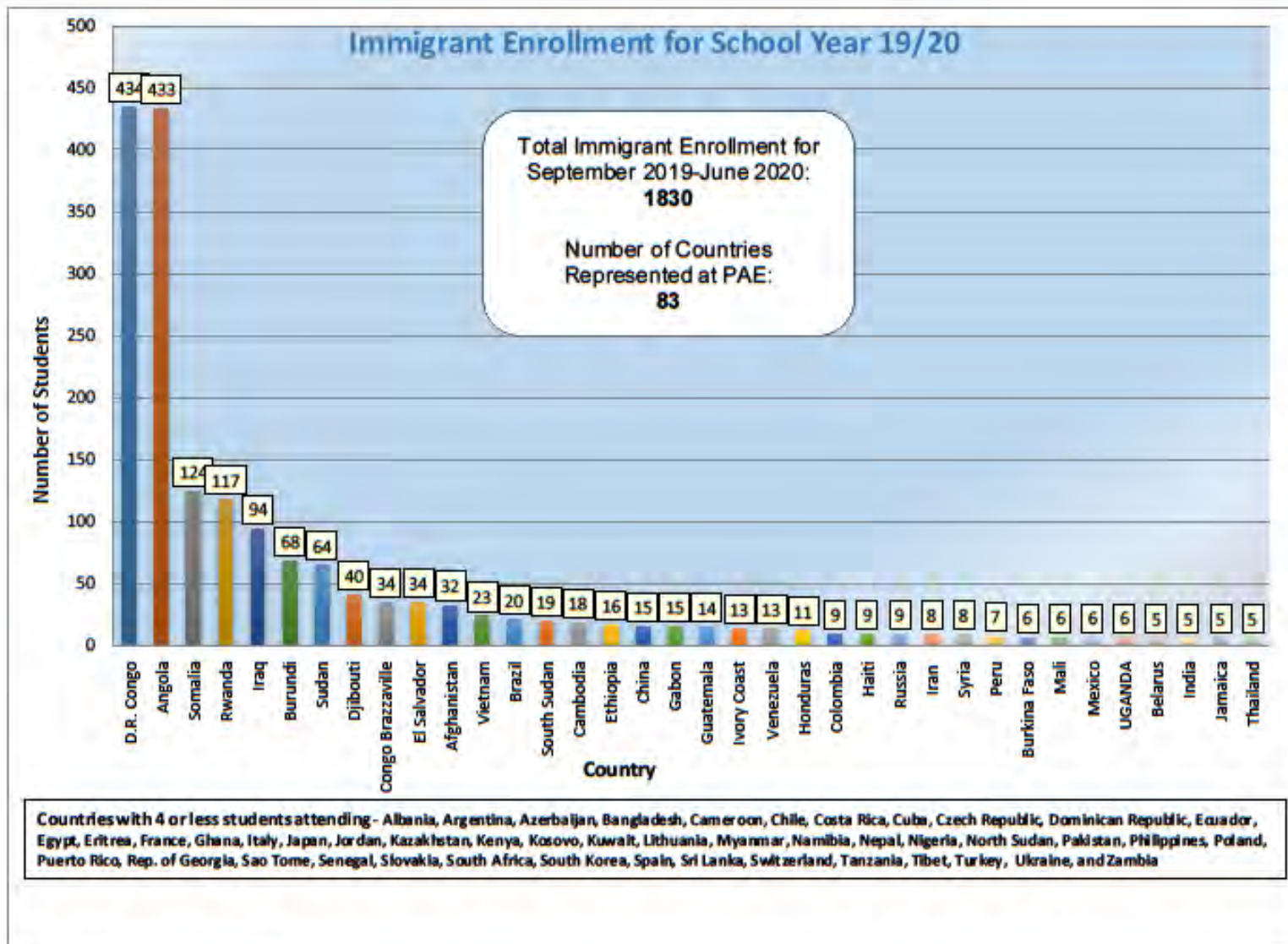
strengthen its communication with students who could be potential applicants, and also make sure they are good candidates and prepared to apply for positions for which employers are recruiting. New strategies for connecting to employers will need to be explored as many of Maine's employers will continue to work remotely during the coming year.

Health Professional Licensing - NMRC's attention to systemic issues around licensing for foreign trained professionals, now with a major focus on health professionals, seems to be quite timely as Maine struggles to address the health disparities for immigrant communities, made all the more apparent by COVID-19 and the need for a more culturally and ethnically diverse workforce. A major effort in the coming year will be dissemination of the information in the Foreign Trained Health Professional Licensing Pilot Project Report and working with interested stakeholders on the implementation of the report's recommendations. Particular attention will be paid to building up the health professional training and workforce partnerships and initiatives that already exist at PAE. Expanded support and investment in this program will provide Maine with a more coordinated and better-funded healthcare sector workforce approach to better serve Maine people, new Mainer healthcare professionals and healthcare employers.

Sector Strategies - The move toward sector based programs such as the Education Academy and Teller Training programs, appear to be effective models that can be repeated and applicable to other sectors. They meet the needs of both new Mainers entering a career path in their chosen fields as well as creating a pipeline for addressing workforce shortages in specific fields. Sector based initiatives that involve employer partnerships will continue to be the strategy for PAE's workforce development initiatives.

Structural and Administrative Components – These efforts have been more challenging during 2019-20 because of COVID-19 and PAE staff adjusting to working remotely with more limited access to data systems and communication with other PAE staff and PAE students. As part of the coordination of NMRC services with PAE's overall workforce programming, and PAE's consideration of a new data system, data collection and analysis will be a focus of both of these efforts.

Appendix A. PAE Immigrant Enrollment Chart 2019-2020 School Year



Appendix B. NMRC Programmatic Offerings - 2019-2020 School Year (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020)

Course Name	Description	Date	# of Attendees
Workshops and presentations offered throughout the year on topics related to the job search process and career planning	2019/2020 workshop topics included: (Number of offerings reduced due to pandemic and switch to remote learning) • Work permit • Working with Foreign Trained Skilled Professionals • Hannaford Onsite Job Interviews • Presentations to PAE ESOL Level 4 and 5 classes	Throughout the year: 10/30/19 10/12/19 Winter 2020 March, May 2020	6 9 24 45
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.	Fall- 9/23/19-11/15/19 Winter 2020 (switched to remote mid-semester) Spring 2020 (fully remote)	13 18 14
Job Class B plus Credential Evaluation	A 70-hour 8-week course designed for ESOL 5 and above new Americans. Students learn to apply their professional, transferable skills to the US workforce. Students will work on their English through an emphasis on writing etiquette for the workplace and will also work on their financial literacy skills. Students will prepare a professional portfolio including a resume, cover letter, etc. Area employers will be brought into the class. Students will also use the computer lab to focus on job search skills. Students will receive advising and case management services and for those students who may need it, translations and evaluations of college transcripts.	Fall- 9/23/19-11/15/19 Winter 2020 (switched to remote mid-semester) Spring 2020 (fully remote)	18 12 12
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.	Fall 2019 Winter 2020 Spring 2020	11

Education in the US	This course covers the role of government in education in the US school systems, laws that make public school free and accessible to all, the role of parents, special education, discipline, best practices and the different roles of Education Technicians. Lessons will include guest speakers, presentations, discussions, and writing. This course is part of the Education Academy Certificate program.	9/23/19-12-11-19	7
Classroom Management	For those who want to be an Education Technician or pursue teaching. Course content covers classroom behavior management and methods for creating a safe learning environment through case study analysis, writing, discussion, and role-plays. Students will learn about how Education Technicians work with teachers. This course is part of the Education Academy Certificate Program	Fall- 9/24/19-12-10-19	11
Math Review for the Praxis Exam	Prep course for students planning to take the math Praxis test needed for Maine teacher certification.	Fall 2020	9
Teaching That Promotes Student Learning	Students will identify and use teaching theories and methods that promote student engagement, inclusivity and outcomes-based learning. Amongst other topics, students will learn lesson planning and identify specific ways they can support learning objectives as Educational Technicians.	Winter 2020	13
Educating Exceptional Students	Students are taught the cognitive, social, and physical needs of their students and become familiar with diverse learners including those with moderate to severe learning and behavioral disabilities and the legal issues associated with these disabilities, and English Language Learners.	Winter 2020	13
English Reading and Writing for Praxis	Prep course for students planning to take the English reading and writing Praxis tests needed for Maine teacher certification.	Winter 2020	6
Education Academy Practicum	A 90-hour placement in a local school over a 10-week period, gives students the opportunity to see and experience teaching methods and approaches in action, with time to observe and question the culture and structure of education in the U.S.	Winter 2020	6
Today's Teller	Intensive program of 5 courses - Today's Teller, Basic Computer and Writing for the Workplace; Customer Service and Workplace Communication; Job Search Strategies and Cash Handling	Winter 2020	15
ELL CDL Prep Permit	This test prep course is for ELL students to help them prepare for the Commercial Driver's License permit test.	Fall 2019, Winter 2020	18
TOTAL NMRC PROGRAMMATIC OFFERING PARTICIPANTS 2019/2020			280

Appendix C. Overview of PAE Workforce Training Programs Winter 2021

 Winter 2021 Workforce Training Programs Complete this form for more information and to apply										
Sector/Industry	Class/Program (flyer linked)	Description	Start	End	Days	Time	English Level (CASAS score)	Info Sessions (with link)	Contact	Other requirements
Accounting/Finance	Accounting Clerk Certificate	Combination of 13 classes to develop skills needed in today's book keeping world.	1/11/21	Self-paced	M-F	Day and evening classes	230R	12/3 at 11:30 Zoom Link	Geneva Meserve	
Accounting/Finance	ELL Teller Training Program	Combination of five courses and Today's Teller Certification team taught with banking professionals along with the guidance of an ESOL teacher.	1/11/21	04/09/21	M-F	9:00 am - 11:30 am	225R; or LA 100	11/19/2020 at 9:30 am; Zoom Link	Bridget Kahn: kahn@portlandschools.org	Preference given to those with a banking/finance background and who are eligible to work. Complete an online application by 12/3/20.
Administration	Office Skills Certificate	Combination of 13 classes to develop skills needed for an Office Assistant or Secretarial position.	1/11/21	Self-paced	M-F	Day and evening classes	230R	12/3 at 11:30 Zoom Link	Geneva Meserve	
Business	Job Skills 6 week classes, January term	Individual classes to improve business skills: Microsoft Office, Accounting, Workplace Communication, Medical classes and more.	1/11/21	3/5/21	M-F	Day and evening classes	LA 100 or 230R	N/A	Geneva Meserve	Classes available to ESOL 5 students with teacher recommendation
Business	Job Skills 6 week classes, March term	Individual classes to improve business skills: Microsoft Office, Accounting, Workplace Communication, Medical classes and more.	3/8/21	4/16/21	M-F	Day and evening classes	LA 100 or 230R	N/A	Geneva Meserve	Classes available to ESOL 5 students with teacher recommendation
Computers/IT	CompTIA (TechHIRE)	Certification preparation for WorkReady and CompTIA® A+: Skill development in customer service and IT support.	1/11/21	4/26/21	M	8:00 pm - 10:00 pm	241R; 236M	N/A	Erin Krivicky: krivie@portlandschools.org	ME res; age 17-29; un/underemployed; work authorization; Prereq: IC3
Computers/IT	ELL Basic Computer Class, January Session	6 week class to develop basic computer skills for remote learning and work.	01/12/21	02/25/21	T/TH	12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	ESOL 4+	N/A	Geneva Meserve	
Computers/IT	ELL Basic Computer Class, March Session	6 week class to develop basic computer skills for remote learning and work.	3/9/21	04/15/21	T/TH	12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	ESOL 4+	N/A	Geneva Meserve	
Education	Education Academy	Education Academy Program Information Combination of courses, practicum and advising designed for foreign trained educators or others who are looking to work in public schools in Maine.	1/11/21	4/8/21	M, T, TH	6:00 pm - 8:00 pm	225R or LA 100	11/19 at 6:00 pm, Zoom Link	Bridget Kahn: kahn@portlandschools.org	Background in education. Complete an online application.

Education	ELL Child Development Associate (CDA)	Training for CDA certification with extra English, writing, and digital support. This course will also include a practicum in a child care setting.	2/22/21	7/7/2020	M-F	9:00 am - 12:00 pm	TBD	TBD	Bridget Kahn; kahn@portlandschools.org	TBD
Healthcare	Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) - Maine Medical Center Training Program	In person CNA class with one of Maine's largest employers.	3/15/21	5/6/21	M-TH	7:00 am - 2:30 pm	247R	MMC CNA Info	cnaprogram@mmc.org or 662-2483.	
Healthcare	Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) - First Atlantic Healthcare	CNA class offered online. Must become employed with First Atlantic in order to take class.	1/25/21	4/12/21	Self paced	Self paced	240R	N/A	Geneva Meserve and Jobs at FAH	Must become employed with First Atlantic Healthcare to enter class.
Healthcare	ELL CNA Program	Certification course to become a CNA for English Language Learners. Course includes Medical Terminology class, English and academic support.	2/26/21	06/01/21	M-F	8:30 am - 12:00 pm	230R; 225R w/ med background	1/13, 1/20 and 1/27	Geneva Meserve	
Healthcare	Healthcare Office and Patient Service Certificate Program	Endorsed by MaineHealth, this certificate includes 10 classes to develop skills for an entry level position within a healthcare office or PSR role.	1/11/21	4/16/21	M-F	8:30 am - 3:30 pm	230R	12/3 @ 10:30 link	Geneva Meserve	Please complete online application by Dec. 11
Work Readiness	ELL Job Readiness Class	This course is designed for ELL students preparing for their first job or advancement in the US.	1/11/21	3/19/21	M-TH	10:00 am - 11:30 am	ESOL Level 3 and 4	NA	Jean Pierre Akayezu	Preference given to those who have applied for or have work authorization.
Work Readiness	Understanding and Using the American System of Measurement	Overview of weight, volume, length and temperature in the American measurement system to prepare for jobs in manufacturing	3/22/21	3/25/21	M,T,TH	10:00 am - 11:30 am	ESOL Level 3+	NA	Jean Pierre Akayezu	A basic understanding of fractions, a G-mail account, and the technology to join via Zoom
Work Readiness	New Mainers Resource Center Skilled Professional Program	Designed to help new Mainers enter the US workforce includes; career advising, assistance with credential evaluations and licensing, job search and more.	Ongoing	Ongoing			ESOL Level 5+	NA	Sally Sutton	Foreign trained professionals with college degrees and/or experience from their home country

NEXT STEPS: [Complete this form](#) for more information and to apply

