

MAINE
ANNUAL WIOA REPORT
Program Year 2024



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maine's workforce and employment services system delivered strong results in Program Year 2024, advancing statewide economic priorities while improving service quality for employers and job seekers. Performance remained high across all Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) indicators, complemented by enhanced data systems and analytics that supported more effective decision-making and performance management.

Program Year 2024 also aligned closely with the State's updated 10-Year Economic Development Strategy ("2024 Reset"), which emphasizes talent development, innovation, and inclusive economic growth. Maine has already achieved key statewide goals in wage growth and productivity and continues to focus on expanding its labor force. Workforce investments supported this direction by advancing a statewide career portal, launching a virtual CareerCenter, and strengthening career pathway development. CareerCenters broadened their reach through expanded community-based service delivery, strengthened employer engagement, and improved hiring events informed by direct employer input. Customer feedback continued to be overwhelmingly positive.

Sector-based partnerships grew substantially under the leadership of the State Workforce Board, extending across forestry, oral healthcare, hospitality and tourism, retail, healthcare, social services, clean energy, the creative economy, and outdoor recreation. These partnerships produced notable results, including new career pathways and training pipelines in high-need sectors; expanded access to workforce programs in rural regions; media-driven strategies to attract workers to tourism careers; large-scale credentialing and youth engagement in retail; employer-driven pilots addressing healthcare shortages; and supports for immigrants entering health and social services roles.

The State also experienced significant growth in Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and pre-apprenticeships, with 894 new registered apprentices, 1,386 pre-apprentices trained, and 170 new sponsors. Pre-apprenticeship programs were especially effective in reaching underrepresented populations, including at-risk youth, women, and individuals with disabilities.

Participant demographics continued to reflect strong engagement with low-income individuals, English language learners, justice-involved individuals, immigrants, and youth. Lessons learned through the QUEST grant further strengthened Maine's approach, including the adoption of restorative practices training for staff to enhance communication between employers and justice-involved workers and support improved retention.

Collectively, these accomplishments demonstrate a workforce system that is responsive to employer needs, focused on ensuring customer access, and aligned with Maine's long-term economic objectives.

WAIVERS

Maine anxiously awaits a response to the waiver request submitted on August 11, 2025. The request was for a waiver of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) requiring state and local areas to spend not less than 75 percent of youth funds on out-of-school youth. Maine had received this waiver for program year 2023 so requested this waiver to be approved for two consecutive program years PY2024 and PY2025 to ensure local area ability to continue to support the goals outlined below and give service providers a greater level of comfort and continuity in budgeting in-school youth service implementation plans. Goals of this waiver include:

- a.** An increase in Maine’s labor force by engaging youth in career exploration and paid work experience that will lead to unsubsidized employment
- b.** Increased entry into employment, registered apprenticeship, or post-secondary education
- c.** Increase in the overall number of WIOA youth served per program year
- d.** Increase of Maine High Schools’ awareness of WIOA services available to eligible students
- e.** Decrease in the number of disconnected youths through connection with paid work experience, pre-apprenticeship, and extended learning opportunities before they drop out or leave school.
- f.** Increased involvement of Maine employers, apprenticeship sponsors, schools, and workforce system partners in activities that ensure high school youth successfully transition to employment and/or advanced training.

Approval of this waiver will help meet the following USDOL priorities: increased labor force participation and enhanced worker productivity, increase in the number of paid work experience opportunities for in-school youth, increased access to pre- and registered apprenticeship opportunities for young workers, and an improved response to employer workforce needs.

The PY23 waiver promoted an increase in the overall number of youths served, going from 367 in PY22 to 533 in PY24. Over 177 in-school youth participated in paid work experiences and 70 completed a pre-apprenticeship program during the last program year. Employers offering pre-and registered apprenticeships, on-the-job training, paid work experience, internships, and job shadows benefited from expanded access to young workers. Maine monitors waiver outcomes by reviewing youth program statistics on a quarterly basis, to ensure planned enrollment numbers and negotiated performance measures are being met or are on track to being met. Similarly, Maine reviews quarterly financial reports to ensure spending thresholds are met and spending caps are not exceeded.

EVALUATIONS

During the 2024 Program Year, the Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) continued to advance WIOA evaluation efforts. WIOA evaluation efforts are conducted primarily

using the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) longitudinal data warehouse. The data warehouse combines information collected and stored in various data systems administered by MDOL as well as data-sharing partners that include public post-secondary institutions, other state agencies, and training providers. Records pertaining to WIOA participants collected via the Maine Job Link are combined with employment and earnings records from the ReEmployMe unemployment compensation database.

The WIOA evaluation provides information about the outcomes of participants by assessing employment and earnings before enrollment and after program completion. During the 2024 program year, CWRI further developed and updated information from a [2023 evaluation report](#) that focused on WIOA Adult participants specifically by expanding the scope to include Dislocated Worker and Youth participants, with new participant and outcomes data, and more detailed employment and earnings measures. The updated [WIOA evaluation](#) was largely completed during the 2024 program year and was published on October 31, 2025.

The report measures outcome quarters for each WIOA participant, representing time periods before and after enrollment (e.g., outcome quarter -2 is two quarters before enrollment; outcome quarter 2 is two quarters after service completion). Later outcome quarters contain fewer participants because not enough time has elapsed to collect the data for participants that have completed services more recently. Wage and employment data from Maine's unemployment insurance system includes a large majority of jobs in the state but does not include employment in other states, unincorporated self-employment, or independent contracting. Wages are adjusted to 2024 dollars using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U) to allow for comparison of earnings in different time periods. To ensure the protection of individual participant information, any data-point breaking down program, employment or wage data into subgroups that contain fewer than 10 participants is not included in this report.

Expanded employment definitions were developed for this report as follows:

Employment: A participant is classified as employed if they have a matching state wage record of any amount during the quarter (before or after WIOA enrollment).

Full Quarter Employment: A job holder that is employed by that employer in the quarter before and the quarter after that observation, is counted as employed for the full quarter. This measure excludes quarters that may have partial earnings for jobs that began or ended during the quarter. The measure replicates the [methodology used by the Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics](#) data programs.

Full-Time Employment: A job holder is determined to be working a full-time equivalent schedule if their quarterly earnings exceed the equivalent to working 32 hours per week at the state minimum wage for the entire 13 weeks in a quarter.

Expanded earnings measures include earnings for those with full quarter employment at the 25th percentile, 50th percentile (median) and 75th percentile.

Future WIOA evaluation efforts include taking measures and information developed for the 2025 evaluation report and providing that information in the form of an interactive data dashboard similar to existing data products like the [Maine Post-Secondary Outcomes Report](#) and [Apprenticeship Outcomes](#).

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Methods for Evaluating the Satisfaction of Employment Services Customers

Employer Services CareerCenter Consultants are encouraged to develop relationships with customers that extend beyond one visit or service point which sets the stage for follow-up contacts. Offering continued CareerCenter support throughout their service term promotes informal feedback through which staff can gain insight into the effectiveness of services provided. The Bureau of Employment Services (BES) receives feedback from job seekers and employers in multiple ways.

BES surveyed 3,219 employers regarding their satisfaction with services and 1,247 responded, a 39% response rate. Feedback indicated an overall satisfaction with services; however, many comments regarding recruitment events indicated disappointment in the number of job seekers responding/attending.

BES surveyed 21,458 job seeker visitors netting 2,637 returned, a rate of 15 percent. An overwhelming number of job seekers rated their overall experience as good or excellent. Of note are the consistent comments regarding friendliness, helpfulness of staff, and the value of the services they received. There were few negative comments and those that were offered centered around their frustrations with being unemployed and the process of filing for unemployment.

3,045 Live Chat customers were presented with a satisfaction survey at the end of their chat session. 450 customers completed the survey, a 15% completion rate showing an average rating of 4.6 on a 5-point scale. The Maine CareerCenter has been awarded 56 consecutive monthly Best Customer Service Awards and Best Customer Service of the Year awards for 2021-2024.

Employer Feedback and Event Accessibility

BES continues to respond to employer feedback by increasing the accessibility of hiring events through varied scheduling and by offering both targeted and general recruitment activities. Employers consistently praised the responsiveness and professionalism of BES staff, as well as the overall value of hiring events and recruitment support.

Job Seeker Attendance and Event Improvements

Although feedback was largely positive, employers noted continued concerns about low job seeker turnout, despite a recent modest increase. In response, BES has refined event logistics—including

venue selection, room configuration, and table placement—to better accommodate attendee preferences. These adjustments have made broader efforts to strengthen event planning and enhance employer engagement.

Outreach to Job Seekers

To expand the pool of job seeker participants, the Bureau continues to refine outreach strategies and remains committed to meeting individuals in accessible, trusted community settings. CareerCenter Consultants maintain office hours across a diverse range of locations, including recovery residences, correctional facilities, probation and parole offices, immigrant and refugee service centers, libraries, town halls, community colleges, high schools, DHHS offices, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, veteran resource centers, and other community- and faith-based organizations.

Partner Program Access

A small number of respondents expressed concerns about limited walk-in availability for certain partner programs or onsite service providers. This feedback provides useful direction for improving internal coordination and expanding access to partner services.

Overall Customer Experience

Survey results strongly reaffirm the CareerCenters' customer-service culture. Most respondents rated their experience as excellent, frequently citing “great staff,” an “amazing center,” and “above and beyond service.” These insights highlight the effectiveness of the CareerCenters' customer-centered approach while pointing to opportunities for continued service enhancement.

STATE STRATEGIES

The Governor's 10-year economic development strategy, launched in 2019, aims to grow and diversify Maine's economy. It was created with input from over 1,500 people through public meetings and working groups. In 2024, a refreshed version called “The 2024 Reset” was introduced to adapt to economic changes and progress. The plan, led by the Department of Economic and Community Development and the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) promotes collaboration across public, private, non-profit, and educational sectors. The Economic Development Strategy is a dynamic roadmap with a key core message: there is a place for everyone in advancing Maine's prosperity.

By 2023, Maine had already met two of the three ten-year goals in the 2020-2029 Strategy. Growth in real wages and growth in productivity have both exceeded 10% in the last five years. On the third goal of labor force growth, when the original Economic Development Strategy was being developed in 2019, it was projected that Maine could lose 65,000 people from our workforce by 2030 if nothing changed, primarily due to not having enough young people to enter the workforce as people retired. The Strategy set the goal that not only should we stem that decline but aim to add another 10,000

people to our workforce. We have managed to avoid that steep decline so far but still have more to do to reach our goal.

The vision of the Maine 2020-2029 Economic Development Strategy – and Maine’s Unified Plan – is: *By 2030, Maine will be an international leader with a vibrant, sustainable, environmentally responsible economy. All across the state, the people of Maine will have access to an unmatched quality of life and good paying jobs.*

To achieve our goals, Maine’s economic development plan is centered on seven strategies

- Strategy A: Grow Local Talent
- Strategy B: Attract New Talent
- Strategy C: Promote Innovation
- Strategy D: Build Connections (Broadband Expansion)
- Strategy E: Provide Supporting Infrastructure
- Strategy F: Maintain Stable and Predictable Business Rules
- Strategy G: Promote Hubs of Excellence

Maine’s WIOA State Plan focuses on Strategies A, B, and C, with workforce being a critical consideration in all 7 strategies.

Strategy A: Grow Local Talent

Action A2: Develop a Statewide Career Portal

As reported in Maine’s PY ’23 annual report, the State Workforce Development Board worked with the Maine Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Economic and Community Development, Education/Maine Adult Education, as well as the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System, and Maine’s local workforce development boards to develop a new unified brand for Maine’s workforce system called Work Source Maine. The goal of this new unified brand is to build awareness and understanding of the resources available to residents and Maine businesses.

The SWDB ended PY 24 by embarking on a groundbreaking multi-agency project that will build on the Work Source Maine brand by consolidating existing tools and resources to make it easier for Maine workers and employers to connect to existing workforce programs, resources, and supports within Maine’s workforce system.

WorkSourceMaine.com, launching on December 15, 2025, will integrate with Maine’s new virtual American Job Center at MyWorkSourceMaine.gov and will act as Maine’s one-stop online destination for job seekers, employers, students, parents, educators, and career counselors looking to explore, plan, and achieve their career goals. Designed to be interactive, engaging, and easy to navigate, WorkSourceMaine.com helps users:

- Explore career options that match users’ skills, interests, and ambitions
- Find education and training programs that open doors to next opportunities

- Plan users' futures with personalized tools for career exploration, job planning, and academic pathways
- Connect with Maine employers and discover current job openings and work-based learning opportunities, and
- Access workforce resources from multiple agencies, all in one convenient place.

Action A4: Strengthen Career Pathways

The 10-year plan seeks to establish clear career pathways through partnerships between schools, technical centers, and employers to help students and workers navigate toward high-demand sectors. WorkSourceMaine.com will provide users with a career pathways and training tool which will guide users in career exploration, job planning, work-based learning opportunities, postsecondary pathway selection, and academic planning based on user characteristics, needs, and profile. The statewide training aggregator provides users with a consolidated statewide training calendar that is accessible by zip-code, pulling available course offerings from the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System, Adult Education, and other public training providers into one easy-to-navigate training hub for users to access.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES

Maine Industry Partnership Program

The Maine Industry Partnership Program is focused on creating infrastructure and resources to support the success of sector partnerships across the state with special attention to the sectors that align with the Governor's 10-year- plan. The State Workforce Board hired a full-time Industry Partnerships Program Manager in July 2024 to lead the program, build out initial resources, and launch a Collaborative to act as a brain trust and mentor community for sector partnerships.

The Industry Partnerships Program Manager designed a set of training documents to help partnerships stand up, structure their work, launch meaningful projects, and properly evaluate their work. In addition, the Industry Partnerships Program Manager built a year-long webinar series to support sector partnerships, which saw significant attendance, and offered a two-day design thinking workshop to support partnerships in high-level decision making and long-term planning strategies. This training took place in September of 2025. Representatives from all sector partnerships described below attended the training, and three partnerships made significant strategic gains during the training.

The Collaborative, which began in the fall of 2024, meets bi-monthly and includes representatives of all organizations noted in statue, as well as leadership from some of the state's sector partnerships. Early meetings were used to hone the training documents that the Industry Partnerships Program Manager designed. Since those resources were completed, the Collaborative has turned its attention to its primary goal of mentoring partnerships themselves. It has actively supported an existing partnership in the dental sector, three new sector partnerships in

construction, the creative economy, and the outdoor industry, and is working deliberately to encourage the creation of a broad sector partnership in healthcare.

A few of the programs funded in previous years found sustainability funding that has allowed them to continue and even expand their work. Notes on those funds and their impact are included below.

The Maine Development Foundation (MDF) (**Forestry Products Sector**) builds a resilient and diverse forest products sector (FPS) workforce by creating workforce and education pathways, mitigating obstacles and misperceptions, expanding education and training programs, and creating recruitment and retention strategies for future workforce development. MDF addressed workforce shortages in areas like logging equipment operation, trucking requiring commercial driver's licenses (CDL), millwrighting, and forest product innovation. With educational partners, the program developed structured career and education pathways for the seven most highly needed careers across the FPS and training programs that connect students and job seekers with experienced professionals to guide them into long-term careers. A major emphasis is marketing forestry careers to high school students and job seekers, dispelling misconceptions about the field and ensuring a well-trained workforce for future industry needs. MDF and the Forest Opportunity Roadmap/Maine program have submitted multiple requests for sustainability funding in the past year and are under consideration still for two of them, including being invited to the Semifinal Round in NSF Regional Innovation Engines Competition. Their in-person site visit from NSF is in mid-November 2025.

Children's Oral Health Network (COHN), (**Oral Healthcare Sector**) developed an innovative approach to supporting the growth of the oral health workforce in Maine. The initiative brings together non-profit, community-based, and employer partners with an aim of increasing access to oral health careers and services for populations historically underserved by the oral health system. Through the Oral Health Industry Partnership, COHN and partners successfully developed and launched the Oral Health Navigation (OHN) Learning Series, an online, self-paced, low-barrier training that enabled staff, working in a wide variety of roles that support children and families, in gaining access to the oral health information and services they need. It was also an introduction to dental careers for people who might be interested in additional education and career exploration. The initiative developed a course and self-guided toolkit for Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH) seeking to become Independent Practice Dental Hygienists (IPDH), enabling them to expand the availability of services reaching rural and underserved communities. This marks a significant step in expanding access to oral health services and addressing workforce shortages in Maine. COHN recently received \$500,000 in sustainability to build new or expand existing workforce programs in rural counties in Maine and is taking a lead in standing up a new, comprehensive sector partnership in healthcare.

Maine Tourism Association (MTA), (**Hospitality & Tourism Sector**) connects Maine youth, educators, and job seekers to career exploration opportunities in tourism and hospitality. The initiative develops trainings for current and future employees focused on soft and transferable skills

and tourism & hospitality career exposure and exploration throughout Maine. MTA embraced a media-driven strategy to promote the industry as a whole and attract workers to Maine's tourism and hospitality sector. Through social media campaigns, YouTube content, and the MaineLife TV series, it showcased diverse career opportunities in the industry, with the goal of shifting the public perception of tourism jobs from seasonal work to potential career paths. MTA also hosted large-scale workforce summits, bringing together business leaders, educators, and policymakers to address hiring and retention challenges. In addition, MTA visited school classrooms, brought youth, age 16-24, on career exploration field trips and trainings, and connected youth with career exploration internships in the tourism industry.

The Maine Business Education Partnership (MBEP) (Retail Sector) offers recruitment and training that explores best practices to enhance the professional development of new hires and upgrade the skills of incumbent retail workers. It also introduces retail career pathways to students and the new Mainer population. MBEP's retail career pathways partnership transformed retail workforce development through large-scale training and credentialing. Over 200 individuals enrolled in RISE Up, a nationally recognized retail training certification that equipped workers with essential skills for career advancement. The initiative also engaged middle and high school students through career events, field trips, internships, and job shadowing, promoting retail as a viable, long-term career with diverse pathways.

The Roux Institute of Northeastern University (Healthcare Sector) addresses both the short-term and long-term needs of Maine's health care sector by developing a pilot program to connect pre-clinical, post-baccalaureate students with front-end healthcare opportunities in Maine, and convening healthcare providers in the state to identify critical job openings. The Roux Institute launched a pioneering pilot program connecting pre-clinical, post-baccalaureate students with frontline healthcare jobs in Maine to address immediate workforce shortages and build long-term talent pipelines. The first cohort placed individuals across five employers, creating a surge in interest, including a growing number of new applicants from outside Maine, demonstrating the initiative's broad appeal and sustainability.

Maine Labor Resource Center (MLRC) (Healthcare & Social Services Sector) brings together health and welfare-related community-based nonprofit organizations and small businesses to elevate jobs within the sectors, build career pathways, recruit and support immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in these roles, and provide ESL classes. MLRC was a critical force in successfully filling gaps in Maine's health and social service sectors by recruiting, training, and placing immigrant, refugee and asylum seekers in Maine's healthcare and social service sectors. It provided numerous ESL trainings and created clear career pathways tailored to New Mainers, supporting their transition into stable, in-demand jobs. This comprehensive approach strengthened both the industry and the economic integration of Maine's growing immigrant population.

The Clean Energy Partnership (CEP) (Clean Energy Sector) was established to advance Maine’s clean energy, climate, economic development, and workforce goals – including Governor Janet Mills' goal of more than doubling Maine’s clean energy and energy efficiency jobs by 2030. On July 30, 2024, the Governor’s Energy Office announced \$2 million in grant awards to expand or establish six clean energy workforce training programs in Biddeford, Portland, Freeport, Augusta, Orono, and Oxford Hills. Learn more about the awarded programs below:

- [Biddeford Adult Education: Clean Energy Job Placement](#)
- [Maine Math & Science Alliance: High School Rural Energy Futures](#)
- [Oxford Hills and Nezinscot Adult Education: Solar and Heat Pump Technician Training](#)
- [PassivhausMAINE: Energy Code Training](#)
- [Portland Adult Education: Renewable Energy Pre-Apprenticeship](#)
- [University of Maine: Education in Building Analysis and Design](#)

The Cultural Association of Maine Partnership (CAM) (Creative Economy Sector) is the first coordinated, statewide industry alliance advancing the visibility and capacity of our diverse statewide cultural sector via collective learning, research, communications, and advocacy. CAM serves the entire cultural network in Maine including, but not limited to, libraries, historical societies, arts organizations, creative industries, artists and other cultural workers. The Cultural Alliance of Maine was launched in the spring of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for culture to have a voice in recovery funding and policy. In April 2020, 16 representatives from cultural institutions around the state began weekly conversations on ways to unite, support each other, strengthen the sector’s position, and impact funding, health, and safety policies. Soon thereafter, a Pilot Project was formulated and launched, centered around CAM Convenings (their monthly virtual public programming), field work, focus groups, national research, and outreach. In 2024, CAM was formally recognized as a sector partnership. With this recognition came a dramatic expansion of engagement from industry and academic partners and the launch of new initiatives in workforce development, development of career pathways, and economic recovery and resiliency for the sector, as it faces funding losses.

Maine Outdoor Brands (MOB) (Outdoor Recreation Economy Partnership) was founded in 2018 to fill the need for a coordinated effort to address the needs of the outdoor industry in the state. The organization, which launched with 22 members but quickly climbed to more than 50, initially coordinated networking and educational sessions across the state, advocated for the creation of Maine’s Office of Outdoor Recreation (launched in 2018) and secured a booth space at Outdoor Retailer, providing smaller brands access to the national spotlight. MOB was initially created as a trade association and will continue to fulfill that role. In 2024, having recognized the need for a coordinated effort to address workforce needs for the sector, formally took on the role of an industry partnership. Their initial project focus will be on defining career pathways in the sector, creating a training in product design, and other initial sector needs. MOB received \$500,000 in funding to build new workforce initiatives in rural counties in Maine, which they intend to use to

build apprenticeships, a product testing lab in conjunction with University of Maine Orono, and support manufacturing training for outdoor brands.

The **Maine Healthcare Sector Partnership** is a new initiative in the state and is the first full-sector, statewide initiative to address workforce needs in healthcare. This initiative is being led by the Maine Department of Labor, Maine Health Access Fund (MeHAF), Maine Community College System, Children’s Oral Health Network (COHN), and the Roux Institute. MeHAF has committed \$200,000 to stand up a partnership and \$200,000 to address the gaps in the data we have on sector needs. In addition, MeHAF has taken the administrative lead, for now, by organizing committees, setting meetings, and putting together a proposal for structuring the partnership. In Addition, the Maine Community College System Alford Center received a \$500,000 grant to build healthcare trainings in rural counties in Maine and plans to do that as one initiative of the sector partnership.

EXPANDED REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

In 2022, the Maine Apprenticeship Program began expanding registered apprenticeships (RAs) and pre-apprenticeships with funds from the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan and federal apprenticeship grants resulting in 894 new registered apprentices, 1,386 pre-apprentices trained, 104 new RA sponsors and an addition 66 new occupations approved. Over 1,000 pre-apprentices completed a program since pre-apprenticeships were first certified in 2023. To date, 379 of them have entered a registered apprenticeship program with many more in the application process.

Pre-apprenticeships have been particularly effective in engaging youth, women, and other under-represented populations. Nationally, about 12% of RAs are women¹. Meanwhile, 38% of participants in Maine’s grant-funded programs identify as female. Additionally, over 7% of participants identified as having a disability. In comparison, in 2021, less than 1% of apprentices in Maine identified as having a disability. These programs have helped diversify the workforce within these organizations to better reflect the demographics of Maine

Certified Pre-Apprenticeship

Maine established Certified Pre-Apprenticeship programs under Maine State Title 26 §3213.

Through contracted sub-recipients, these programs are available in the following sectors - healthcare, construction, automotive technology, manufacturing, aquaculture, and hospitality. Pre-apprenticeships have played a crucial role in advancing RA programs. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) service providers assess pre-apprentices for co-enrollment eligibility to ensure they receive necessary support services.

To achieve certification in Maine, pre-apprenticeship programs must include the following:

- A formal agreement with an RA sponsor that supports those successfully completing a pre-apprenticeship program to transition directly into RA, including articulation agreements that recognize prior skills and competencies.

- A documented outreach strategy aimed at increasing apprenticeship opportunities for individuals from underrepresented, disadvantaged, or low-skilled backgrounds, as well as those from historically marginalized communities.
- The incorporation of standards set by the USDOL for high-quality pre-apprenticeships
- Full adherence to state and federal equal employment opportunity laws in apprenticeship and training practices.
- A training program and curriculum, aligned with industry standards and approved by the Maine Apprenticeship Program, which prepares individuals with the necessary skills and competencies to successfully enter a registered apprenticeship program, following recommendations from the Maine Apprenticeship Council.
- Hands-on, supervised training along with workplace safety education to ensure comprehensive learning and skill development.

Apprenticeship Summit

The Maine Apprenticeship Program hosted an Inaugural Maine Apprenticeship Summit in Augusta on November 18, 2024, attended by over 250 members of businesses, unions, and workforce partners. Opening remarks and a proclamation recognizing Maine's role in National Apprenticeship Week were given by Governor Janet Mills.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

The State continues to meet or exceed negotiated measures; the only measure concerning at the end of the program year was the youth median earnings. On-going enhancements to Tableau reports expand our ability to research performance issues, conduct outreach, and track performance over time. New expanded connections between systems result in more accurate data collection such recent APIs with RAPIDS for Registered Apprenticeship in Maine JobLink. Ongoing challenges include the need for continuous training of new staff due to high staff turnover at both the state and local levels and the need to reprogram the Maine JobLink system to meet ongoing changes to the Participation Individual Record Layout (PIRL).

Reportable Individuals

During the program year 42,083 reportable individuals accessed services, down 453 from the prior year.

PY24 negotiated vs. actual performance outcomes

MEASURE	Adult Neg.	Adult Actual	DW Neg.	DW Actual	Youth Neg.	Youth Actual	WP Neg.	WP Actual
Employed 2 nd Qtr. after Exit*	71.0%	68.5%	75.0%	72.6%	68.5%	66.8%	65.0%	62.2%
Employed 4 th Qtr. after Exit*	69.0%	65.1%	76.0%	81.8%	70.0%	70.8%	61.0%	60.5%
Median \$\$ 2 nd Qtr. after Exit	\$7,300	\$8,347	\$8,500	\$11,346	\$4,800	\$3,902	\$8,000	\$8,397
Credential Attainment	64.0%	59.9%	68.0%	75.9%	57.0%	58.7%	N/A	N/A
Measurable Skills Gain	51.0%	55.8%	57.5	51.5%	48.0%	51.5%	N/A	N/A

Key: DW= Dislocated Worker, WP= Wagner-Peyser, Neg.= Negotiated, * includes Youth placement in postsecondary education.

Employment Services Program: In PY24, 10,087 ES participants received one or more basic career services of the 9,047 who exited between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24, 5,625 (62.2%) were employed in the second quarter after exit with median earnings of \$8,397 per quarter. Of the 7,461 who exited the between 1/1/23 and 12/31/23, 4,511 (60.5%) were employed in the fourth quarter after exit.

Adult Program: During PY24, 752 individuals participated in training and/or career services, of the 321 who exited between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24, 220 (68.5%) were employed in the second quarter after exit with median earnings of \$8,347 per quarter.

Dislocated Worker Program: During PY24, 157 individuals actively participated in training and/or career services of the 95 who exited between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24, 69 (72.6%) were employed in the second quarter after exit, with median quarterly earnings of \$11,346.

Youth Program: A total of 533 participated in youth services in PY24, of the 220 who left the program between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24, 147 (66.8%) were employed in the second quarter after exit with median quarterly earnings of \$3,902.

PY24 Participant Demographics

Demographics	Adult	DW	Youth	WP
Total Served	752	157	533	10,087
Female	57.0%	49.7%	48.8%	44.4%
Male	43.0%	48.4%	46.5%	55.0%
Aged 16-18	2.1%	0%	48.4%	1.2%
Aged 19-24	9.4%	5.1%	47.8%	6.4%
Aged 25-44	65.3%	41.4%	0%	43.0%
Aged 45-54	15.6%	29.0%	0%	21.0%
Aged 55-59	4.4%	12.1%	0%	10.3%
Aged 60+	3.2%	12.7%	0%	19.0%
Caucasian	62.0%	87.3%	72.0%	75.0%
Black/African American	30.5%	3.2%	20.0%	16.2%
Native American	2.0%	1.3%	1.7%	1.3%
Hispanic/Latino	2.9%	1.3%	5.6%	2.1%
Asian	2.1%	3.2%	2.1%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.3%	0.64%	0%	0.25%
Low Income	64.0%	34.4%	89.0%	26.5%
English Language Learners	36.3%	8.9%	30.0%	13.4%
Single Parents	22.1%	15.9%	6.9%	11.9%
Individuals with Disabilities	15.0%	14.0%	69.8%	9.3%
Ex-Offenders	14.1%	9.6%	8.8%	2.9%
Long Term Unemployed	21.0%	15%	38.5%	13.3%
Homeless Individuals/Runaway Youth	3.5%	2.5%	8.3%	1.7%
Youth in Foster Care or Aged Out of System	0%	0%	4.7%	.06%

Local Area Negotiated Performance Measures PY24

Central Western Maine WDB	PY 2024 Negotiated	PY24 Actual
ADULT		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	71.0%	78.7%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	69.0%	75.3%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$7,300	\$8,619
Credential Attainment Rate	64.0%	64.5%
Measurable Skills Gain	52.0%	50.8%
DISLOCATED WORKER		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	75.0%	65.7%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	76.0%	82.8%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$8,420	\$13,264
Credential Attainment Rate	67.0%	81.8%
Measurable Skills Gain	57.0%	54.3%
YOUTH		
Employment or Education 2 nd Qtr. after exit	68.0%	68.0%
Employment or Education 4 th Qtr. after exit	71.0%	67.7%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$4,600	\$3,727
Credential Attainment Rate	57.0%	63.9%
Measurable Skills Gain	45.0%	43.9%

Coastal Counties WDB	PY 2024 Negotiated	PY24 Actual
ADULT		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	72.0%	68.5%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	69.0%	65.1%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$7,500	\$9,405
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0%	64.6%
Measurable Skills Gain	51.0%	64.4%
DISLOCATED WORKER		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	75.0%	83.3%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	77.0%	85.7%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$9,000	\$19,749
Credential Attainment Rate	64.0%	81.8%
Measurable Skills Gain	57.0%	50.0%
YOUTH		
Employment or Education 2 nd Qtr. after exit	68.5%	66.7%
Employment or Education 4 th Qtr. after exit	68.0%	69.7%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$4,800	\$4,463
Credential Attainment Rate	57.0%	61.3%
Measurable Skills Gain	50.0%	58.4%

Northeastern WDB	PY 2024 Negotiated	PY24 Actual
ADULT		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	70.0%	62.0%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	68.0%	57.8%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$7,300	\$5,849
Credential Attainment Rate	64.0%	45.0%
Measurable Skills Gain	51.5%	51.7%
DISLOCATED WORKER		
Employment 2 nd Qtr. after exit	75.0%	75.9%
Employment 4 th Qtr. after exit	68.0%	80.0%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. after exit	\$8,500	\$10,702
Credential Attainment Rate	67.0%	66.7%
Measurable Skills Gain	54.0%	47.6%
YOUTH		
Employment or Education 2 nd Qtr. after exit	69.0%	66.1%
Employment or Education 4 th Qtr. after exit	70.0%	77.8%
Median Earnings 2 nd Qtr. After exit	\$4,800	\$3,456
Credential Attainment Rate	53.0%	40.9%
Measurable Skills Gain	48.0%	40.0%

Common Exit Policy

Maine’s common exit policy pertains to the following programs: Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Jobs for Veteran’s State Grant, Trade Adjustment Act, and National Dislocated Worker Grants ensuring the participant remains active in co-enrolled programs until 90 days has passed during which the participant receive no additional services.

Data Validation

The Maine Department of Labor conducts data element validation on a quarterly basis and updates the Data Element Validation (DEV) manual as new guidance and requirements come into place. The DEV manual outlines policy and instructions for completing work sheets on randomly selected program files. Program staff members complete the DEV Quarterly Report File to identify whether all required data elements are documented in each selected file. Once completed the report identifying whether the files passed or failed is submitted to the Bureau of Employment Services for review and record keeping. Data validation is conducted on the following programs: Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Trade Adjustment Act, and the Maine Apprenticeship Program.

STATEWIDE GOVERNOR’S RESERVE FUNDS

The Governor’s Reserve funds are used to support part of the costs of Maine’s WIOA performance reporting and case management system – Maine JobLink, the upkeep of the Eligible Training Provider List, staff to the State Workforce Development Board, coordination of industry

partnerships and virtual workshops and virtual job fairs through the new Virtual American Job Center. The State did not use set-aside funds for special statewide initiatives this year.

RAPID RESPONSE

The Rapid Response team provided Rapid Response services and information to 408 companies and WorkShare information to over 50 companies during program year 2024. Of the companies contacted, 62 employers laid off 1,335 employees who received rapid response services.

During program year 2024, Maine's rapid response team expanded use of the initial Unemployment Insurance claims list changing it from alerting us of five (5) employee claims to three (3+) or more claims per week. The Rapid Response team reached out individually to new claimants from certain companies/ industries to provide additional Rapid Response assistance. Rapid response services were offered both virtually and in person throughout the year to ensure laid off workers were made aware of available resources and assistance. The team also initiated a new weekly virtual Rapid Response session open to all customers and staff which provides an explanation of all Rapid Response information at which 70 people have attended so far.

Rapid response events include local staff from the American Job Centers, Consumers for Affordable Health Care, Unemployment Insurance, and Title IB WIOA service providers. All Rapid Response staff either work in a local American Job Center or provide staff coverage to connect with local workers. Rapid Response team members also actively engage with local Town Offices, Chambers of Commerce, community groups, business associations and Emergency Management to provide Rapid Response/Workshare information as a layoff aversion strategy. Team members also coordinated with Federal agencies to provide resource materials in the event of federal employee layoffs.

Maine has continued weekly rapid response check-ins with Title IB WIOA providers, CareerCenter staff, rapid response representatives, peer navigators and unemployment insurance staff to ensure preparedness for layoff events. These meetings provide a quick summary of current layoffs/ closures and any additional information provided by the group. Trade coordination occurs at the first notification of a layoff, rapid response staff research when a layoff is trade related, if trade adjustment assistance is determined to be a possibility the company is encouraged to submit a trade petition or the Rapid Response team will complete the petition process for them. During program year 2024, the Rapid Response team continued to inquire about trade related layoffs and encourage workers with prior unused Trade benefits to access the program.

The Maine JobLink system collects data from affected workers and rapid response staff identify and track layoff events through data entry of plant briefs captured through tableau reports. Rapid response staff also use the employer contact tracking system in Maine JobLink to document rapid

response and WorkShare information provided to employers. The tracking system has been expanded to allow for Limited Access Employer Accounts so we can track outreach to employers that may not have an active Maine JobLink account.

WAGNER-PEYSER ACTIVITIES

Wagner-Peyser ten percent funds continue to support CareerCenter access for speakers of languages other than English and staff development. The New Mainer population who are English language learners continues to grow, the ten-percent funds are used to hire bi/multi-lingual staff, provide outreach activities to immigrant centers and other ECBO's, and provide translation and interpretation services for the growing number of diverse languages spoken by Maine's customer base.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS

Maine QUEST Grant

The Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) grant awarded \$7,023,439 to the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) in September 2022, with a one-year no-cost extension through September 30, 2025. The grant was designed to address significant labor market disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and advance both economic recovery and long-term workforce resilience. Service delivery was implemented through a collaboration among MDOL, the Local Workforce Boards, and WIOA Title 1B service providers. Each local area collaborated with community-based organizations to identify and serve dislocated workers who had yet to return to a job equal to their pre-pandemic employment, with a focus on historically marginalized populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and its lingering effects.

The primary goal was to help participants secure good jobs with upward mobility, in high-demand sectors including Infrastructure, Construction, Manufacturing, Clean Energy, and the Care Economy with a key focus on healthcare occupations. The grant served 1,083 participants, including 621 long-term unemployed, 278 individuals with low literacy levels including English language learners, 368 justice-involved, and 385 racial or ethnic minorities. Over nine percent of participants were homeless at the time of enrollment. Participants receive tailored employment, occupational training, and wraparound supports for addressing barriers that may impede progress toward their career goals.

A recent outcome evaluation completed by the Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) showed that 604 individuals who exited the QUEST program before January 1, 2025, saw significant wage increases from the quarter before enrollment to the second quarter after exit, documenting median earnings increase from \$4,419 to \$8,764. The number of people earning over \$7,400 in a quarter increased from 71 to 222. Total wages of QUEST exiters increased by \$2.1 million dollars. The number of QUEST participants working in Healthcare or a Goods-Producing industry,

such as Manufacturing, Construction or Natural Resources, more than doubled after exiting the program. These findings demonstrate that QUEST not only met but exceeded goals, helping Maine workers reconnect to quality jobs while strengthening the state's long-term economic resilience.

Key insights from QUEST:

- Relationships drive results. Building personal trust, especially among individuals affected by trauma, incarceration, or long-term unemployment, was essential for engagement and follow-through.
- Flexibility fosters inclusion. Programs that adapted quickly to local needs—such as providing transportation funds, e-bikes, or digital access for virtual meetings—proved far more effective than rigid service models.
- Cross-system coordination reduces duplication. Shared case management and referral tracking with partners like Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Adult Education, and mental health and substance use treatment providers allowed participants to move seamlessly between services.
- Partnerships with community-based organizations require ongoing investment and clear expectations. The most successful collaborations were those where communication was frequent and responsibilities were explicit. Joint presentations, shared client updates, and coordinated case conferences to discuss wraparound services were the most effective. Where coordination was less structured or capacity for follow-through was less clear, duplication of effort or misaligned timelines sometimes created frustration for both staff and participants.
- Embedded support strengthens retention. Integrating mental health and recovery services into workforce planning improved participant persistence and overall well-being.
- Wraparound support provision is also a key engagement strategy. Transportation, childcare, tools, and wraparound support were not add-ons but essential elements that determined whether participants could engage and persist. By offering transportation assistance, childcare referrals, tuition coverage, connections to housing, and financial coaching, QUEST made training and employment possible for participants who otherwise would have been excluded. These supports proved especially critical in rural areas, where access to training and employment opportunities is often limited.
- Consistency matters more than complexity. Weekly jail visits, standing meetings, and predictable presence at partner sites built far more trust than large, one-time outreach events.
- Shared communication tools reduce duplication. Establishing direct liaisons and cross-program check-ins improved case coordination and prevented clients from being “passed around” between agencies.

- Formal agreements sustain informal trust. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the CareerCenter and other partners proved critical to maintaining collaboration when staff turnover occurs.
- Capacity limits are real. Some smaller CBOs lacked staff to maintain ongoing referral tracking. In response, QUEST providers created a simplified referral form and designated a single coach liaison per organization—an adjustment that will continue beyond the grant.
- Culturally responsive outreach matters. By leveraging trusted community organizations and offering trauma-informed, client-centered advising, the program built credibility with populations historically disconnected from workforce services.
- Cultural norms influence how employment is pursued, and social connections often take precedence over formal systems
- Early, consistent, and positive engagement after a referral is made by a community-based organization is critical to maintaining client interest and trust, especially with QUEST focal populations
- Mentorship-partnership with the community-based organization which already has an established relationship with a jobseeker is essential for successful referrals, especially for potential participants who are building basic digital literacy such as utilizing email.
- Retention requires restorative coaching. Participants stay employed longer when both they and the employer have structured communication tools to address challenges before termination.
- Flexibility fuels access. Bringing services to participants—via mobile delivery, virtual, or cross-program referrals—removes the friction that keeps rural residents from accessing opportunities.
- Employer partnership must be reciprocal. By incorporating “reverse referrals,” employers identified candidates they believed in, and coaches provided the structured supports needed for success—bridging trust gaps between businesses and the workforce system.
- Employer partnerships are most effective when coupled with training investments. By aligning employer needs with training curricula, participants moved directly into good jobs upon completion.
- Work-based learning is a powerful entry point. Pre-apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training placements, and paid work experiences helped participants build confidence, gain industry credibility, and transition smoothly into long-term careers.
- Trust precedes training. Engagement must begin with relationship-building—often through partners like recovery centers, schools, or shelters—before participants are ready for job placement or credentialing.

Coastal Counties Employment Recovery Grant

This focus of this \$2.3 million National Emergency Grant awarded to the Coastal Counties Workforce Board was promotion of rapid reemployment services for recently laid off clients and structure employment and training services for the long-term unemployed in their acquisition of employment. A total of 344 participants were served exceeding the grant goal of 315.

Throughout the grant, 301 supportive services were provided to support clients to overcome barriers and successfully complete activities identified in their employment plans.

The partnership with the MDOL Rapid Response team was key to success. Despite low unemployment in Maine, layoffs persisted. Service provider staff coordinated and participated in Rapid Response activities, ensuring laid-off workers were informed about and enrolled in services. This collaboration enabled timely support and steady program enrollment.

In the final months, participants benefited from referrals to Business Service Coordinators and Life Navigators, and co-enrollments with ARPA Worker, WIOA 1B Adult Services, and QUEST DWG. Many accessed work experiences, barrier-reduction support, and financial aid for training. Paid work experiences or on-the-job training were provided to 18 participants and 155 participants received formal occupational training.

BEST PRACTICES

Employment Services Engaging Youth

Over a year ago Employment Services (ES) staff of the Augusta and Hinckley CareerCenters were invited to partner with the South End Teen Center (SETC) (*a division of the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) and a subsidiary of the Alford Youth and Community Center Boys & Girls Club*) to offer workforce services to their club members. Staff provided several complementary sessions of the trademarked **Career Launch** program, tailored to the high-school academic calendar and student needs.

The initiative served youth ages 14–19 from the towns of Oakland, Waterville, Winslow, Fairfield, and Benton. The program builds career awareness and readiness through weekly workshops and monthly worksite field trips where youth are exposed to a broad range of career exploration and planning tools, they also receive instruction in workplace skills including communication and job readiness skills. Job search skills focused on resumes, job applications, job interviews and related tools. Field trips included visits to:

- **Ware-Butler Building Supply (11/12/24):** Teens learned about retail, logistics, and construction careers with insights on entry-level roles and internal advancement.
- **Northern Light Inland Hospital (12/17/24):** Participants explored healthcare roles and used medical simulation tools, with a focus on CNA and volunteer opportunities.

- **Waterville City Hall (1/22/25):** Teens toured government offices, learned about municipal careers, and were invited to apply for Youth Council positions.
- **Techy Electronics Repair (2/25/25):** Highlighted tech entrepreneurship through a local teen's business success story.
- **Thompson's Mazda (3/18/25):** Teens explored automotive sales, service, and detailing, with options for youth employment and apprenticeships.
- **Cianbro Corporation (4/22/25):** A hands-on introduction to construction careers, including apprenticeships and skilled trades pathways.
- **Cappza's Pizza (5/27/25):** Youth saw behind-the-scenes operations in food service and bakery roles, emphasizing soft skills and first job readiness.

Over 40 youth engaged in the program and completed post-program assessments showing measurable growth in career awareness, work readiness, and job search competencies. Several youths expressed interest in employment or volunteering with the businesses visited. Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation and the Title B service provider offered individual support and follow-up to WIOA eligible youth. One youth was placed in employment with Techy Electronic Repair.

Restorative Practices

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board served significant numbers of justice involved individuals over the past two years, to ensure successful service delivery the board provided training to IB service provider staff on restorative practices that staff use to better communicate with this population and with employers who hire them. The staff, with the help of a subject matter expert engage with employers and hired participants to discuss issues and perceptions that may affect retention of the employee – this intervention has resulted in the employee better understanding the employer's needs and the employer better understanding the employee's perception of the situation. The primary goal of staff development in restorative practices is to support retention of employee/participants placed with employers through paid work experience and/or on-the-job training.