



**STATE OF MAINE**

**WIOA Annual Performance Report**

**Program Year 2018**

**December 2019**

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## Introduction

Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, over 42,700 job seekers accessed labor exchange services through the Maine JobLink system and Maine's CareerCenters. Of those, 4,819 participated in career services funded through title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Under title IB of WIOA, 540 adults, 264 dislocated workers and 402 youth participated in career and training activities.

Throughout this period, Maine's unemployment rate dropped from 3.4% in July 2018 to 2.8% in October 2019. While this resulted in expanded employment opportunities for job seekers, employers found it increasingly difficult to fill critical vacancies and WIOA service providers found recruitment of youth participants challenging.

Low unemployment reinforced the need to accelerate deployment of workforce strategies identified in the State plan; specifically, to increase employer access to untapped labor pools and to deepen collaboration and alignment between workforce partners to serve those most in need.

## Maine's One-Stop System

### State Workforce Board

Maine's new Governor, Janet Mills, appointed new members to the State Workforce Board (SWB), including a new Chair and Director. A full list of current board members can be found at: <https://www.maine.gov/swb/board/index.shtml>. Board membership is codified in Maine statute, SWB by-laws are being reviewed and revised and additional seats were added to ensure chief elected officials from each local area are represented. The SWB kept several standing committees and intends to appoint a board member to each. The standing committees work to address issues affecting specific labor pools, they are the Older Workers Committee, the Women's Employment Committee, the Younger Workers Committee and the Veterans Employment Committee. In addition, the Commission on Disability and Employment, the Maine Apprenticeship Council and the Program Policy Committee advise the SWB.

### Local Areas

Maine is comprised of three local areas (aka regions), Northeastern, Central Western and Coastal Counties. The Northeastern region serves Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Washington Counties. It makes up over half of the state geographically and represents the portion of Maine with the highest level of outmigration of residents. Bangor, the largest city in the region, houses the local area's comprehensive one-stop. Access to services is also available through nine additional affiliate sites throughout the region. The Aroostook County Action

Program is the title IB service provider for Aroostook and Eastern Maine Development Corporation provides title IB services in the four remaining counties.

The Central Western region serves Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford and Somerset Counties. Lewiston is the largest city in the region and the location of the comprehensive one-stop. Five additional affiliate sites ensure access to workforce services across the local area. Western Maine Community Action is the title 1B service provider for the region. This region continues to see an increased population of immigrants, a great boon to the area which has had more deaths than births and in which over half the labor force is over age 45.

Coastal Counties makes up the remainder of the state and serves Cumberland, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo and York Counties. The comprehensive one-stop is in the downtown area of Maine's largest city, Portland. A second site in Portland is located near the International Jet Port. Four additional affiliate sites are located throughout the remaining counties. The title IB service provider for the region is Workforce Solutions, a subsidiary of Goodwill Industries of Northern New England. Although the smallest region geographically, it is the home to the greatest number of Maine residents and businesses. This region has also seen significant growth of immigrant populations with an influx of over 400 asylum seekers arriving this past summer.

For detailed information, visit the websites of Maine's local workforce development boards:

- **Northeastern Workforce Development Board** - Joanna Russell, Executive Director  
<http://www.northeasternwdb.org>
- **Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board** – Stacy Kilroy, Executive Director  
<http://www.cwmwdb.org>
- **Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.** – Antoinette Mancusi, Executive Director  
<http://www.coastalcounties.org>

## State Plan Implementation

Governor, Janet Mills, hosted a series of regional forums to get direct input from Maine residents on how to address challenges and achieve economic prosperity. In preparation, participants were provided with a tool-kit containing data about Maine's current economy and demographics. State departments are using the information collected to craft the State Economic Development plan.

The State Workforce Board (SWB) initiated a similar approach for developing the State Workforce Development Plan also referred to as the Unified Plan. Planning work is being facilitated by Workforce Development Consultant, Sarah Griffen, whose efforts in this process

are supported by the John T. Gorman Foundation. Four plan development sessions have been held so far, three with workforce stakeholders from each of Maine's local areas, one involving SWB members and another involving the leads from state agencies. The sessions provide attendees with information about Maine's labor force trends and issues and an overview of Maine's workforce development system and resources. Attendees discuss workforce assets and challenges and work in break out groups to determine mission priorities. Three additional sessions will take place, one with agencies that advocate for workers, another with business and industry members and a final session with students and younger workers.

### Accessing Untapped Labor Pools

A key strategy identified in Maine's Unified Plan is to increase employer access to Maine's untapped labor force, specifically: individuals with disabilities, English language learners, ex-offenders, veterans, older and younger workers and individuals in recovery from opioid use disorder. Maine's extremely low unemployment rate propelled greater employer engagement with the workforce development system. Workforce system partners collaborated to educate employers on how to recruit and access resources that will support the employment and training of these populations.

### Ex-Offenders

The Maine Department of Labor partnered with the Maine Department of Corrections to host several informational seminars encouraging the hire of ex-offenders. The seminars, titled H.I.R.E. ME (*Helping Inmates Reenter Employment*), were held at the Maine State Prison in Warren, the Southern Maine Women's Reentry Center and the Maine Correctional Center in Windham. The last session, attended by 60 employers, included a panel of businesses communicating positive experiences with employing this population. Corrections staff showcased training programs offered to inmates while incarcerated and ways business can provide input to ensure participants are properly skilled upon release. Employers were encouraged to recruit pre-release candidates transitioning out of the system and learned how to access resources such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the Federal Bonding program and employment and training services.

In a similar vein, the Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB) invited James Woodside, from the Maine State Police -State Bureau of Identification and Amy Sneirson, Executive Director of the Maine Human Rights Commission, to discuss how businesses and job seekers can address the "rap sheet" and how to protect the businesses and job seekers throughout the job application and interviewing process. The information generated healthy conversation around planning for future job hires and/or job interviews.

### Individuals with Disabilities

Ensuring accessibility to programs and employment has been a key theme of focus during the program year. Employment Services staff have provided training to core partners across the state on WIOA Sec. 188 nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements, as codified in 29 CFR

38 and State policy PY17-Nondiscrimination and Accessibility. Staff provided technical assistance to local board directors on processes and tools they may use to evaluate accessibility of CareerCenters and offered a list of recommended staff development training sources for one-stop partner staff.

Employer outreach staff from each core partner program promotes the hire of individuals with disabilities through direct outreach to employers and participants. Employers can use [www.EmploymentforME.org](http://www.EmploymentforME.org) to access information and resources for regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities.

### Veterans

The Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign, a critical veteran placement strategy, kicked off in September 2018. This year's 100-day initiative involved 191 employers hiring 286 veterans at an average wage of \$23.05/hour (up almost \$6.00/hour from the first campaign in 2015). Thirty-six female veterans were hired, representing over 12% of all hires. As in past years, the heart of this campaign are the partners, which include: Maine CareerCenters, the National Guard Employment Support Program, Boot2Roots, Easterseals Maine, the Maine Bureau of Veterans Services, the Veterans Administration Togus, Transition Assistance Advisors and the State of Maine Bureau of Human Resources – many of whom are also members of the State Veterans Employment Committee.

In addition to the hiring initiative, seventy-five employers participated in Military Culture courses that provide employers with an understanding of this population. Military Culture 101 and 102, address misconceptions and provide insight into the military culture veterans are leaving. The classes explain the importance of structure, mission and purpose to veterans and promote the benefits of hiring veterans, many of whom have outstanding leadership and communication skills, significant experience and educational advantages. Attendees also hear from a panel of employers attesting to the advantages of hiring veterans.

In 2018, LD 1917 – An Act to Employ Veterans in Health Care to Meet Workforce Needs was introduced and became Law on September 12, 2018. The goal of the statute is to expedite civilian employment of veterans who have military medical experience. The legislation provides former medics and corpsman with credit of at least 12 months of military bedside patient care to qualify to take the LPN exam. This legislation has the potential to save veterans hundreds of hours of duplicative education and training and allows them to earn wages commensurate with civilian credentials. Veteran representatives funded by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) educate veterans and workforce partners about this new law to ensure former medics and corpsman are made aware.

### English Language Learners

According to the United States Census Bureau's 2018 Quick Facts Sheet, 3.6% of Maine residents are foreign born. The exact percentage of those that are currently English language learners is unknown. During program year 2018, 41% of Youth, 20% of Adult and 5.3% of

Dislocated Worker participants were English language learners, many of whom are asylees and refugees. Maine's immigrant population has increased steadily with over 400 asylum seekers arriving in Portland in recent months.

Service provider staff and employers are keen to understand these new Mainers. Agencies such as Catholic Charities, the Immigrant Welcome Center and Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services in Portland help to educate employers and workforce system partners by providing cultural awareness training about varied immigrant populations. Employer outreach staff tout the qualities of this population, many of whom possess necessary occupational skills, lengthy work experience, formal education, multilingual ability, a strong work ethic, entrepreneurial skills and civic responsibility.

State set-aside funds continue to support the accelerated English language pilot for a second year. The pilot, being implemented by Workforce Solutions with in-kind support from Catholic Charities and the City of Portland, is an accelerated English language emersion course delivered by Portland adult education. Lessons learned with each training cohort have resulted in adjustments over time; for example, many in the first cohort had jobs which made scheduling twenty of them into multi-hour classes at the same time impossible. In order to accommodate this, classroom hours were adjusted, and participants were given resources and access to the online Burlington English program to practice 10 hours a week on their own schedule.

### Older Workers

Thousands of unfilled job vacancies have employers scrambling to attract and retain good workers. Retirees have valuable skills and experience attractive to most businesses. In the mid-coast region, there is a need to fill jobs in the local tourism economy. The Maine Department of Labor hosted an event at a regional retirement community center in Rockland to encourage retirees to engage in part-time work. The session explained how to present oneself to the business, how to negotiate part-time work schedules and how to identify which employers are hiring. Information on employment and training services was also imparted.

### Younger Workers

High demand for workers means those aged 16 to 24 with the ability and desire to work can easily find employment. This has presented title IB youth service providers with a participant recruitment and retention challenge that can only be resolved through collaboration with employers and community partners.

The difficulty WIOA service providers are having finding youth participants is relatively new, compelling youth stakeholders to rely on each other to recruit, refer, jointly serve and retain participants. Title IB youth providers in two local areas (Eastern Maine Development Corp. and Workforce Solutions) have embedded youth outreach staff at housing authorities, homeless

shelters, Job Corps, adult education locations and recovery centers to name a few. Staff are available at these outreach sites on regular days and times to ensure direct access to prospective participants.

Representatives from all WIOA required partner programs, Juvenile Justice, Jobs for Maine Graduates (JMG), secondary Career and Technical education centers and the Muskie School of Public Service make up the Younger Workers Committee. The Committee shares information, promotes collaboration and works to address critical issues facing Maine youth. To enhance skills of front-line youth workers and promote deeper partnership, the Youth and Community Engagement division of the Cutler Institute of the University of Southern Maine hosts a quarterly learning exchange that brings together frontline staff of youth service agencies from across the state. The sessions include information exchange and professional development; the most recent session was a workshop on “Trauma Informed Case Management.” Participants of the learning exchange include staff of: title IB providers, youth homeless shelters, JMG, rehabilitation services, YouthBuild and foster youth transition workers from the Office of Child and Family Services.

Retaining youth in employment and training programs has been a long-standing challenge; partners collaborate on behalf of participants both during and long after they exit the program. The number of title IB youth participants exiting the program before they complete their education and training objectives is growing. Most recently, case managers report that many are leaving for part- or full-time employment. This trend has prompted providers to think differently about how to package youth services in a way that will ensure program completion. Approaches being discussed include, offering more opportunities for youth to participate as part of a cohort allowing peers to support each other throughout, or engaging youth in multiple activities, such as work experience, occupational training and academic learning, simultaneously. One recommended action is to appeal to the employers who have hired these participants to stress the importance of education and credentials and coordinating opportunity to work together to support the youth in completing their training objectives.

### **Individuals in Recovery**

Job fairs promoting the hire of individuals in recovery have been hosted by the Southern Maine Recovery Network and ENSO Recovery to name a few. Maine media has played a significant role in educating employers and showcasing best practices for a recovery-friendly workplace. The most recent media coverage featured Joanna Russell, Executive Director of the Northeastern Workforce Development Board. The two-part program presented by WAGM TV, featured Ms. Russell discussing facts and myths about individuals in recovery, explaining that people in recovery come from all walks of life and have a broad range of skills and professional credentials.

The Bangor Daily News and Maine Biz published articles showcasing positive employer practices from encouraging open discussion of addiction in the workplace to reduce stigma, to dealing with substance abuse issues as they would medical issues like surgery or maternity. The unemployment rate among individuals in recovery is around 9.2%, individuals in recovery who attain employment tend to succeed as work provides stability and increases self-esteem.

Individuals affected by substance use disorder are more likely to have interacted with the justice system and/or had significant gaps in employment. Helping individuals in recovery explain gaps in employment and/or less than favorable background checks is being addressed via free public seminars sponsored by Eastern Maine Development Corp., the Aroostook County Action Program and the Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB). The sessions titled “Breaking Barriers to Employment” provide guidance to individuals affected by substance use or justice involvement on how to approach employers, present themselves in the best light and address potential employer concerns. Service providers are on hand to orient the attendees about resources available through the one-stop system, local recovery centers and other community providers. NWDB promotes the practice of all service provider staff receiving recovery coach training to better serve job seekers and employers.

## Service Alignment and Integration

### Maine-At-Work

Employers continue to access the Maine-at-Work Initiative, an online portal that directly connects employers and job seekers to specific workforce services.

### State Workforce Action Team (SWAT)

Workforce partners across Maine are collaborating on behalf of Maine businesses to assist them to fill positions and train workers. Referred to as the Statewide Workforce Action Team (SWAT), the partners meet on a quarterly basis to identify projects, share successes and bundle resources. Partners include the Maine Community College System, the University of Maine System, numerous private colleges, Adult Education, local workforce boards, local title IB service providers, and others such as Coastal Enterprises, Inc. and Job Corps.

### Central Western Maine Employer-Driven Partnership

The SWAT team concept occurs on the local level too. Partners in the Central Western Maine region have instituted an inclusive business response process that is greatly appreciated by employers in the region. The title IB provider, Western Maine Community Action (WMCA) has made the term “employer-driven” their new mantra. About 80% of employment and training programs funded with title IB in this region are for specific job opportunities into which trainee

participants are recruited on behalf of the employer. This is a win-win for the employer, the participants and the service agencies that partner to make it all happen.

WMCA, along with other workforce partners in the region, are members of economic development boards, Chambers of Commerce, rotary clubs and more. They work as a team to identify and address employer needs. The agency that first identifies an employer need, invites the other partners (as appropriate) to be part of the solution promoting a real “no wrong door” system. The team of partners review the need, discuss available resources, determine roles and present a response back to the employer. Training provider partners work swiftly to accommodate, or custom develop training that will address the employer’s need; service providers work simultaneously to recruit workers into the training and the lead agency negotiates cost-sharing with the employer.

Testimonials from satisfied employers:

Alternative Manufacturing, Inc. “*Aligning our training with assistance from partners at the CareerCenter was extremely beneficial. AMI is appreciative of the support provided and the assistance in helping us to recruit and successfully bring on additional staff to meet our growing customer demand.*”  
*Greg Boyd, President & CEO*

H.E. Callahan Construction “*This program has a healthy balance of classroom work as well as hands on experience. This is critical for the successful transition of the student into a new trade. The program was assembled with a great support staff; we appreciate the hard work that has gone into the program*”  
*Brian Demshar, Vice President of Operations*

Rogue Wear “*We were searching for a new employee to join our team, we had advertised through traditional methods with no success. Hearing and reading about other companies having success with referrals from the Maine JobLink and the CareerCenter we reached out for help. CareerCenter staff were very supportive and assisted us with hiring and training a qualified candidate.*”  
*Mark Rodrigue, Owner*

#### Northeastern Employer Response Team

In the Northeastern region, a *rapid response* approach to employer engagement has been implemented and a newly formed *Employer Response Team* comprised of staff of Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), the Maine Department of Labor, the Maine Community College, local Adult Education programs, local economic development partners, the Penobscot Job Corps Center and others. The “Team,” coordinated by EMDC, responds quickly to employer workforce needs. They refer participants to new positions, work to develop training for new and existing employees and offer information and technical assistance related to the local labor force to regional employers.

#### Apprenticeship for Individuals with Disabilities:

A pilot to increase the participation of people with disabilities in Registered Apprenticeship has been launched. With assistance from the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center, staff from the Maine Apprenticeship Program, the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and

Hospitality Maine developed a food service and hospitality apprenticeship program for individuals with disabilities. Partners are in the process of clarifying agency roles and responsibilities, determining anticipated timelines and reporting expectations and developing procedural policy that will result in a streamlined process for connecting prospective apprentices to the program.

### **High School to College Apprenticeship Pathway**

In another innovation, the Maine Apprenticeship Program is working with Career and Technical Education (CTE) High-Schools to ensure a direct pathway to registered apprenticeship for Automotive Technician students. The CTE has become the sponsor of apprenticeship and works with employers to provide work-based learning. Many of the automotive students can earn up to one year of college level credit while still in high school. The project will identify students eligible for co-enrollment into workforce training programs. Upon graduation, they will continue their second year of apprenticeship, comprising on-the-job learning and college courses leading to an associate degree in automotive technology *and* a certificate of apprenticeship.

### **Apprenticeship Feeder Collaborative**

Another unique collaboration involves Southern Maine Community College (SMCC), which recently became an intermediary sponsor of apprenticeship for the occupation of Manufacturing Technician. The first employer signed up under the SMCC program is Bath Iron Works (BIW). Trainees chosen for the program attend a three-week, hands-on, classroom training during which participants are paid a \$500 per week stipend by BIW. Trainees learn basic blueprint reading; OSHA 10; safe operation of hand, air and power tools; fabrication, plumbing, pipefitting and construction skills as well as the basics of tack and plasma welding. Successful completers of the 3-week course are interviewed by BIW for a position as a manufacturing production technician apprentice and earn a starting hourly wage of \$15.97. In addition to the 120 hours of up-front classroom training provided through SMCC, individuals hired as apprentices receive an additional 80 hours of classroom training. Once they have completed the 2000-hour apprenticeship program, manufacturing technician journey workers earn a wage of \$18.36 and are able to advance their careers at BIW through a variety of programs, including eleven high-wage, high-skill, registered apprenticeship programs.

### **Integrated Training Orientation**

Six partners of the Tri-County CareerCenter in Bangor have worked diligently over the past few months to produce a customer training orientation that provides essential information on programs and services provided throughout the one-stop system. These partners are adept at delivering information on each other's services allowing staff trained to provide the orientations to be interchanged as need arises. Partners involved are: the Bureau of Employment Services that provides basic career services, labor exchange, veterans programs, and trade adjustment assistance; Eastern Maine Development Corp. that provides Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth career and training services; Job Corps; Associates for Training

and Development (A4TD) that provides training services of the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP); Adult Education that provides literacy and education services; and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

**New Tool for Service Integration: Reemployment System Integration - Dislocated Worker Grant**  
Maine appreciates approval of the no-cost extension to complete the objectives of this grant. Maine received \$1,100,000 to research, identify and implement a common portal for individuals to access core partner programs (Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment Services, and Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services). The new system referred to as W.O.R.K. Services (Work, Opportunities, Resources, Knowledge), allows a participant to access information and services from the core workforce system programs and to approve sharing of his/her data across agencies. Depending on customer permissions, necessary data from each of the four core MIS systems can be shared on behalf of the customer, eliminating the need for the customer to provide duplicate applications, undergo duplicate assessments and more.

The system, developed by Literacy Pro, allows sharing of information from the MIS systems of the core partner programs. The W.O.R.K Services portal connects the Bureau of Rehabilitation's AWARE program and Adult Education's MaineSTARS program with the Maine JobLink system. Maine JobLink is the labor exchange and case management system for Federal and State workforce programs, used by the following: title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Employment Services, Labor Exchange, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veteran's State Grant, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Competitive Skills Scholarship Program, Reemployment Assistance, National Dislocated Worker Grants, H1B-funded programs and more.

The new product is being piloted in the Bangor and Machias CareerCenters. Literacy Pro and leads from each of the core partner agencies are in the process of conducting train-the-trainer and staff training sessions. It is hoped the system will be ready for statewide use in the spring of 2020, at which time additional workforce system partners may be included in the system.

## Performance and Accountability

The State met or exceeded the 90% threshold for negotiated performance measures. Despite significant job opportunities, Maine residents with barriers continue to have difficulty attaining employment and retaining employment.

Negotiated and actual performance levels for program year 2018:

| MEASURE                                     | Adult Neg. | Adult Actual | DW Neg. | DW Actual | Youth Neg. | Youth Actual | WP Neg. | WP Actual |
|---|------------|--------------|---------|-----------|------------|--------------|---------|-----------|
| Employed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after Exit*   | 72.6%      | 70.7%        | 78.0%   | 75.0%     | 69.0%      | 66.4%        | 65.0    | 68.2      |
| Employed 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. after Exit*   | 70.0%      | 72.7%        | 75.0%   | 78.2%     | 69.0%      | 72.2%        | 63.0    | 67.0      |
| Median \$\$ 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after Exit | \$4,900    | \$5,007      | \$6,500 | \$6,657   | N/A        | \$3,681      | \$5,000 | \$5,609   |
| Credential Attainment                       | 60.0%      | 64.4%        | 55.0%   | 66.7%     | 50.0%      | 56.9%        | N/A     | N/A       |

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

Participants served reflect those most in need:

| BARRIER                     | ADULT | DW    | YOUTH | WP    |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Low Income                  | 93.7% | 32.2% | 93.0% | 46.2% |
| Long Term Unemployed        | 35.0% | 14.0% | 39.3% | 3.1%  |
| English Language Learner    | 21.0% | 5.3%  | 43.1% | 3.6%  |
| Individuals w/ Disabilities | 12.6% | 8.3%  | 46.3% | 10.5% |
| Ex-Offenders                | 14.4% | 7.6%  | 13.4% | 0.8%  |
| Homeless                    | 3.9%  | 0.8%  | 11.0% | 1.2%  |
| Single Parents              | 38.0% | 16.0% | 17.0% | 6.0%  |

The Maine Department of Labor has instituted a new process for quarterly reporting, designed to ensure that service providers from each local area are reviewing progress toward implementation plans and negotiated measures in a standardized way. Although long term staff have a clear understanding of how performance is measured, new staff may not. Efforts are underway to provide training to local area and service provider staff about how measures are negotiated and how data from the statistical adjustment model will be used to determine whether measures have met established goals.

One issue identified with the process of negotiating performance pertains to the amount of time that passes between when the performance goal is negotiated and when it is accounted for. Wage levels negotiated in 2016 were not adjusted until 2019; during that period, Maine's minimum wage increased by \$1.00/hour annually and Maine's unemployment rate dropped to 2.8%. The effect these unknowns had upon final performance measures for program year 2017 was negative, because actual wages were adjusted up based on the above factors and it is the adjusted level that must be met or exceeded. It is impossible to account for unknowns such as legislation to increase minimum wage levels or accelerated rebounds in the economy. States should not be held accountable for these unknowns.

Keeping up with this measurement scheme means negotiated measures have little value if the economy is changing significantly in one direction or the other. This is something we hope the U.S. Department of Labor will take into consideration during the next round of negotiations.

### **Effectiveness Serving Employers**

Core partners continue to use Maine JobLink to record services to employers; the system was recently updated to ensure more accurate data and cull duplicate service information. Maine reports on two measures, “Employer Penetration” and “Repeat Business.” The number of establishments in Maine increased this year from 49,618 to 54,115 which had some effect on the employer penetration rate, which came in at 5.4%. Of the 4,542 businesses that received services previously, 1,219 continued to utilize services during this program year resulting in a repeat business rate of 26.8%. To reinforce the value of recording employer services, a refresher training was provided to system partners and the Employer Services Tracking Guide on how to enter services has been updated.

Employer Services Logged in Maine JobLink during program year 2018:

| EMPLOYER SERVICE CATEGORY                             | ESTABLISHMENT COUNT |
|---|---------------------|
| Employer Information and Support Services             | 1,158               |
| Workforce Recruitment Assistance                      | 2,585               |
| Engaged in Strategic Planning or Economic Development | 1                   |
| Accessing Untapped Labor Pools                        | 28                  |
| Training Services                                     | 55                  |
| Incumbent Worker Training Services                    | 0                   |
| Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance         | 73                  |
| Planning Layoff Response                              | 67                  |

### **Waivers and Common Exit Programs**

Maine has no waivers currently and no immediate plans to request any.

While the Maine JobLink system sets common exits, the system does not integrate program data universally for common exit programs. This makes co-enrollment a laborious process that requires staff to enroll individuals’ multiple times into the same service for each program, making promotion of co-enrollment between programs a hard sell. Maine will continue to work with America’s Job Link Alliance (developer of Maine JobLink) to identify how this can be alleviated. The following programs are currently set as common exit programs for the purpose of continuity of participant services:

- Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Title III Employment Services (aka Wagner-Peyser)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- WANTO Grant

- Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Maine conducted customer satisfaction surveys using Survey Monkey last year and the response rate was extremely low, with less than 1% of employers responding and less than 10% of participants responding. Maine continues to identify customer satisfaction using visitor satisfaction cards visitors are asked to complete when they visit comprehensive and affiliate one-stops. Although Maine's MIS system, Maine JobLink, has the capacity to conduct surveys directly with Maine job seekers, that portion of the system is not built out to survey other constituencies such as title IB participants or employers partnering to provide work-based training activities.

The takeaway from conducting annual surveys is that many of the customers have long since moved on. Once Maine JobLink survey capacity is expanded it is hoped that satisfaction of specific constituencies will be captured in real time directly after a service has been rendered or on a quarterly basis for participants in employment and training programs.

### **Program Evaluation**

Maine is in the process of working with the new administration to determine what to evaluate and how. Discussions are scheduled to take place that will identify how to encourage spending on longer-term training that will result in credentials that realize greater earnings. Wage parity between genders deserves examination. Except for youth participants, a gap between median earning levels achieved by each gender continues (see chart below). A formal evaluation may help to determine why traditional earnings gaps persist and how this can be addressed.

In addition to examination of wage parity, an overall review of wages by occupation may also be valuable. Service providers strive to ensure participants are trained for in-demand occupations; however, many in-demand occupations require shorter training periods and fall on the low end of the pay scale. A study examining how best to support individuals to take steps to attainment of higher-level credentials in in-demand sectors may also be of value. Information about career pathways is readily available, but less is known about how participants navigate steps to higher credentials once they are placed in careers.

| Program           | Male Participants | Male Median Earnings | Female Participants | Female Median Earnings | Wage Gap |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|----------|
| Adult             | 182               | \$6,079              | 358                 | \$4,471                | 26.5%    |
| Dislocated Worker | 137               | \$7,571              | 125                 | \$6,468                | 14.6%    |
| Youth             | 171               | \$3,681              | 230                 | \$3,689                | n/a      |
| Wagner-Peyser     | 2,948             | \$4,605              | 1,858               | \$6,431                | 28.4%    |
|                   |                   |                      |                     |                        |          |

## Data Element Validation

The Maine Department of Labor has implemented a new process for validating data elements on programs funded through the U. S. Department of Labor. A Data Element Validation (DEV) guide has been drafted and is currently being evaluated by field users. The new DEV process requires service provider program managers to validate eligibility documentation at the time they approve each title IB enrollment. Additionally, each service provider will conduct data element validation on a small sample of files each quarter and will submit a report identifying validation failures and explaining how these will be addressed going forward. The Bureau of Employment Services (BES) will also conduct validation on a sample of files each quarter and on all files selected for annual monitoring.

Local board directors and lead managers from each of the service provider agencies have participated in an information session regarding the new process. Ongoing staff training will include an annual module on DEV requirements with a focus on areas that have failed during file validation.

Bureau staff look forward to the additional guidance promised by the U.S. Department of Labor detailing DEV requirements for Trade Adjustment Assistance and Title IB programs so that the process and guide can be adjusted accordingly.

## Rapid Response and Layoff Aversion

Between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019, a total of 64 layoff events took place affecting 1,544 workers. One out-of-state event occurred affecting an additional 50 workers. The chart below identifies the number of events that took place and workers affected in each local area.

| <b>COASTAL COUNTIES</b> |               |                |
|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Counties</b>         | <b>Events</b> | <b>Workers</b> |
| Cumberland              | 10            | 408            |
| Knox                    | 1             | 20             |
| Lincoln                 | 0             | 0              |
| Sagadahoc               | 1             | 4              |
| Waldo                   | 3             | 154            |
| York                    | 3             | 34             |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>18</b>     | <b>620</b>     |

  

| <b>CENTRAL WESTERN MAINE</b> |           |            |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                              |           |            |
| Androscoggin                 | 11        | 102        |
| Franklin                     | 4         | 253        |
| Kennebec                     | 9         | 64         |
| Oxford                       | 3         | 140        |
| Somerset                     | 2         | 16         |
| <b>Totals</b>                | <b>29</b> | <b>575</b> |

  

| <b>NORTHEASTERN</b> |           |            |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
|                     |           |            |
| Aroostook           | 8         | 162        |
| Hancock             | 2         | 53         |
| Penobscot           | 7         | 134        |
| Piscataquis         | 0         | 0          |
| Washington          | 0         | 0          |
| <b>Totals</b>       | <b>17</b> | <b>349</b> |

## EVENTS BY INDUSTRY SECTOR

15 = Health Care/Social Services/Education

16 = Manufacturing & Distribution

10 = Retail

6 = Hospitality

4 = Financial

4 = Telecommunications

3 = Call Centers

6 = Other

Sixty nine percent of these events were company closures the remaining were small to medium sized layoffs.

Maine is facing a drastic shortage of direct care workers. Lack of workers has forced some nursing homes to close entire wings or shut down altogether. This specific worker shortage also affects providers of in-home care services. A task force has been appointed to study this issue.

Over years of working together, workforce system and community partners have a coordinated and well-established response to large layoffs or closures. Community teams made up of rapid response leads, employment and training providers, unemployment compensation,

community action programs, adult education, rehabilitation services, town managers, and various public and private organizations come together immediately to coordinate informational sessions and resources on behalf of affected workers.

Unemployment Insurance claims information is used as an early warning system; claims of five or more from a single employer trigger a contact with the company. Staff work with the company to assess the issue and, as appropriate, offer layoff aversion assistance which may include offering work search waivers for very short-term layoffs or WorkShare, an unemployment program option that helps businesses retain their workforce during a temporary slowdown in work. WorkShare permits employers to voluntarily reduce the hours of staff in lieu of layoffs and provides employees partial unemployment benefits to help offset loss of income. Most importantly, WorkShare helps businesses keep trained workers connected to their jobs. Employers may need resources from business assistance programs that can assist with product or service diversification, restructuring, contract management or strategic marketing. Information about employment and training programs, such as customized or incumbent worker training, that can provide new skills to existing employees enabling the company to avert layoffs are also offered.

Close partnerships with business assistance and economic development partners also support rapid response. By keeping business service agencies apprised of the types of resources and services available from the workforce development system, they know who to contact and the type of help that can be provided if they are the first to hear of a company in difficulty.

If layoffs are unavoidable, a key strategy in Maine is to transition workers to employment before the layoff date. This strategy requires working closely with the affected employer to schedule appointments with workers that won't affect active shifts and to assess the range of occupations, skills, and commuting patterns of its workforce that can be used to identify prospective hiring companies.

The following example illustrates how this type of response is orchestrated. Barclays credit card processing center issued a WARN notice on January 8, 2019 citing an impact date of March 31, 2019 and identifying the closure of the Wilton site affecting 227 workers. The rapid response team immediately started assessing the employer's and affected employee's needs. Shortly after initial rapid response sessions were completed, two staff of the Bureau of Employment Services worked at the company site two days a week to conduct worker needs assessments and assist employees with job getting services, such as resume development, job bank registration, understanding local employment opportunities, filing unemployment compensation claims and accessing alternative health insurance resources and more.

Behind the scenes, staff were busy coordinating a training and resource fair (which was held on site at Barclays) and coordinating efforts for local employers to recruit the affected workers. As a result of worker needs assessment, it was determined many of the workers could benefit from additional digital literacy training. Several affected workers were connected to the AmeriCorps Digital Literacy project which provided the training.

In addition to inviting outside employers into the company to meet and hire affected workers, other coordination efforts were taking place; it was known the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) needed to open a temporary call center and in need of workers. Rapid response staff were able to promote the Barclay workers which resulted in DHHS opening the call center in Wilton and DHHS and Manpower offering employment to 36 Barclay employees at the temporary call center, allowing them to gain additional experience and extra time to research career prospects.

These efforts resulted in 78% of the affected workforce being employed or having confirmed offers of employment to start the day after layoff. A peer support worker was hired by Western Maine Community Action to provide continued support and connect remaining workers to training services.

The State and region benefit significantly when the affected company works in close partnership to promote immediate reemployment efforts. The local economy continues to hum and savings in unemployment compensation indicate a significant return on investment for this type of coordinated response.

