

# A Training Fund for Maine's Workforce

*Alleviating worker shortages and raising skill levels that serve Maine firms and clusters will be a crucial errand in the years ahead...*

-2006 Brookings Report

Maine's economy is changing and many in our workforce need new skills in order to get good jobs that are being created. Adult workers face many challenges in getting the training they need to upgrade their skills. Financial resources for higher education and skills training are often geared to individuals advancing to college directly from high school.

Workers, many with families to support and a mortgage to pay, have unique needs that are not met through the current infrastructure of educational grants and loans. The Competitive Skills Scholarship provides workers with support to help bridge the gap between traditional educational programs and the needs of Maine's adult workers in a transitioning economy.

## The Competitive Skills Scholarship

- Open to adult workers with incomes below 200% of the poverty level who seek help from the CareerCenter to upgrade their education.
- Training is for high-demand occupations with good wages and benefits in targeted sectors of the economy where skilled workers are most needed.
- Training assistance is based on need and is intended to supplement other sources of financial aid.
- Support services including, tuition, books, supplies, childcare, transportation, and other essential supports are provided when not reasonably available from other sources.

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Unemployment rates fall as education rises. Maine residents 25+ with no diploma had an unemployment rate 9.5% vs. 2% for those with a bachelor's degree.

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## Skilled Workers for Maine Business...

The economic prosperity of Maine businesses and workers is linked with lifelong learning. In order for Maine businesses to remain competitive in a global economy, they need a skilled workforce.

The Competitive Skills Scholarship addresses skills gaps in our workforce and helps businesses get the trained workers they need.

Workers with higher education levels are less likely to need unemployment. Training participants will be less likely to collect unemployment in the future, and will cost Maine employers less in unemployment taxes.

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According to the Maine Chamber of Commerce, 48% of Maine employers have trouble finding the skilled workers they need.

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