

**10 Year Statewide Strategic Plan**  
**Grow Local Talent Work Group - Meeting 3**  
**April 13, 2021; 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm**  
**Via Zoom Meeting**

**Meeting Attendees:**

- Christopher Quint
- Kimberley Moore
- Diana Doiron
- Martha Bentley
- Jen Fullmer
- Colleen Quint
- Colleen Hilton
- Dwight Littlefield
- Jason Judd
- Erica Watson
- Janet Sortor
- Jack Lovett
- Kelsey MacKinnon, DECD Staff

**Notes:**

**Item 1: NGA-WIN Grant Overview**

**Overview:**

- A few weeks ago, the State Workforce Board and MDOL received a technical assistance grant from NGA as part of the Workforce Innovation Network (WIN).
  - Maine is one of 10 states to receive this grant and to be part of this cohort.
  - 5-month grant – from now through end of July
- Grant has two focuses:
  1. Implementation of Action Item A4 within the Grow Local Talent Strategy – engaging today’s workers in continuing education to obtain credentials for career advancement
  2. Rebranding/marketing pilot project for Maine’s workforce system – reframing how we talk about our system to make sure people understand the resources and opportunities available to them
- Grant is being overseen by a state team, including Chris Quint, Kim Moore, Martha Bentley, Maria Povec, Mary Anne Turowski, Karen Fraser, Gail Senese, Dan Belyea, and Rosa Redonnett
- State team has met once and has started finetuning what the workstream will look like
- Great opportunity for us to connect all the pieces of the workforce system, as well as to learn of what’s happening with the other states in the cohort
- There will be additional grant rounds under this Workforce Innovation Network that could connect to other strategies for our group.

**Item 2: Report Out from Smaller Groups**

**A1:**

- Looked at initiatives that are achievable in the next 6 months for both the pre-K through 12 bracket and the adult workforce bracket
- **Pre-K through 12:**
  - Identified what exists now that can be built upon/expanded in the near term, any potential challenges around expansion, and next steps
  - Micro level – internships/apprenticeships
    - Extended learning opportunities in 25 high schools can be expanded to more sites
    - Potential challenge for rural communities with fewer opportunities for business connections
    - Next steps are around funding – how potential federal funds will be allocated, as well as opportunities through business/philanthropy/etc.
  - Macro level – aspirational piece
    - Many aspiration efforts in the state, but need better coordination
- **Adult workforce:**
  - Micro level – microcredentials
    - A lot of work going on in this area; need to continue efforts around alignment of microcredentials
  - Macro piece – building aspirations and raising awareness off the opportunities that exist
    - Raising awareness is important theme for both age brackets
    - Navigators and Ambassadors programs to provide support and do outreach/awareness building are critical
    - There’s an opportunity to build on all the initiatives outlined – the challenges are around resources and building better coordination.
- Other items that connect to this strategy include the exploration of work-based learning accounts, exploration of clean energy/innovation workforce training, and bill LD149 before the legislature

#### **A2:**

- Group will meet in coming weeks.

#### **A3:**

- Focused on digital economy skills
- A lot of work happening in this area, but some of it is disconnected depending on the organization, agency, or higher ed institution.
- Focused on coordination and alignment of efforts.
  1. Creating an inventory of the needed digital economy skills to meet industry demand
    - Good work happening here; some are pulling from central data sources, but it’s not happening universally and there’s some disagreement around what digital economy skills mean
    - To efficiently collect this information in the next 6 months, need to do an inventory to avoid replication of work, have it be industry driven, then do labor market analysis
  2. Central database for credentialing options
    - DOE and other are looking at a longitudinal data system
    - Can consider what other states have done around this work – want to be efficient using models to inform approaches
    - Challenges include coordination across multiple agencies/institutions, ensuring everyone is headed in the same direction with the same solutions
  3. Tool that allows some of the current databases to talk to each other instead of pulling from each of them separately.
    - Finding ways for reports and data to connect so we’re all communicating the same language and not disagreeing on datapoints, which can delay action

- Need to take inventory of existing resources to avoid duplication of efforts
- Haven't determined next steps – open to feedback from this group
- A lot of this discussion overlapped with NGA grant conversations around a credential engine, centralized databases, and needing to understand the needs of industry
- **Questions:**
  - What exactly are digital economy skills? Computer science-type skills, basic computer literacy skills, etc.?
    - Digital economy skills are 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – very broad, not just computer skills but also critical thinking skills, any skills that allow someone in the workplace to pivot and adapt quickly
      - Everything from design thinking to engineering skills to computer science skills
      - Not just tech-industry focused – technology will play a huge role in many industries. No matter the job someone has, a certain level of technical competency will be needed.
    - Action step: Clarify this definition so employers who give input all have the same context
    - Need to align training and education to what skills people are going to need in the workforce both now and over the next 10 years
  - Once we have a list of digital economy skills, are we looking at curriculums in Maine to see if these skills are being taught? Is that part of this effort – modifying curriculums to support these skills?
    - Supplementing curriculums in certain disciplines, expanding credentials, etc. will be an important part of this effort. Need to ensure there is alignment with the public education system.
    - Identifying what needs to be taught, what's currently being taught, and what needs to be augmented could be actionable within the next 6 months
    - First, need to define digital economy skills. Then we can test that list's accuracy with sectors/employers to see if they agree the skills are important for their sectors/jobs, or which skills they'd emphasize instead. On other side, we can test with the education system to see if these skills align with curriculums, etc. If we can identify certain common skills across industries, we can prioritize those for focus first.
    - Should also expand the focus beyond Maine – need a sense of what skills are in demand nationally and regionally, as well.

**A4:**

- Group will meet in coming weeks.

**A5 & A6:**

- Group started to build out the Excel template electronically. Will continue to add to and refine it over the next couple of weeks.
- A5 and A6 combined because there is overlap in their focus – education professional development, diversity of the teaching workforce, talent, compensation, and accessibility and quality of childcare
- A lot of work is happening in each area, and several bills are before the legislature that connect to this work

**Funding Discussion:**

- Funding is a critical piece in terms of action steps that can be taken in the next 6 months

- State agencies are having many conversations around the federal ARP funding, but exact guidelines and details aren't yet known, and no decisions have been made (though conversations are moving quickly and decisions are likely to be made in the next 1-2 months)
- If this work group identifies priority projects that could have an impact, Chris, Martha, and Kim can bring them into these ongoing discussions at the agency level
  - What could be put in place in the next 6-8 months that could have a lasting impact?
  - Should consider both the big idea buckets and the things we know need to happen, and the "how" – what are the mechanisms to make that happen and how do we set them up?
- As of now, there is no specific format/language/structure in place that groups should use to submit ideas.
  - Just collecting ideas broadly at this point.
  - Identifying potential barriers to success with any suggestions will be helpful in terms of program design.

### **Item 3: Next Steps**

- Work group will meet again in 2 weeks – **April 28<sup>th</sup> from 3:00 – 4:30PM**
- Before our next meeting on April 28, the smaller groups will meet again to:
  1. Complete or refine their spreadsheets
  2. Review all other spreadsheets completed so far to consider overlapping priorities across the groups
  3. Surface a couple ideas for ARP funding, looking at the same 6-month window
- Chris will share an ARP factsheet with the group that outlines very broad categories and dollar amounts Maine expects to receive
- Groups A1 and A5/A6 will invite Ana Hicks from the Children's Cabinet to participate in their next meetings

### **Item 4: FEMA Update**

- FEMA Long Term Recovery Task force was set up in March 2020 to support the tribes and states in new England through pandemic recovery.
  - FEMA helps identify resources/funding, but the state takes the lead on identifying what's needed
- In Maine, the work has been largely guided by the 10-Year Plan and ERC Report
- Key recovery themes:
  - Equity
  - Manufacturing and supply chain resilience – partnering with MEP
  - Workforce development
  - Food security
  - Climate resilience
  - Broadband improvements and closing the digital divide
  - Create affordable housing strategies
  - Integration of recovery efforts
  - Integration of philanthropy
  - Leveraging opportunity zones
- **Questions?**
  - How should organizations connect with FEMA if they identify ideas/projects? What's the right channel?

- Cassandra or Jack from FEMA sit in on meetings like our group's and the groups surface projects.
  - Submit a one- or two-page overview identifying what the project is, what funding is needed, and where there are gaps (e.g., maybe the project already has some EDA funding but it needs additional funding). Then FEMA brainstorms how the ideas connect to funding opportunities.
- Where does education fall into this recovery framework? So much of economic recovery is dependent on workforce, and as long as there's a disconnect between workforce and education the larger issues won't be addressed.
  - It's been discussed in the childcare group, but hasn't been a major focus with its own team.
  - Jack can take this thought to the FEMA Steering Committee to see if there is interest in integrating this theme into existing groups or if we need to identify a new group to move forward with the education piece.
  - Can likely be integrated into this group and the childcare group.
- Chris will share FEMA emails with funding opportunities pertinent to this work group as he receives them.
- Send any ideas for projects for which FEMA could identify funding to Chris and he will share them with Jack.