



**10 Year Statewide Strategic Plan
Steering Committee
May 12, 2021, 2:30 PM - 4 PM
Via Zoom Meeting**

Meeting Objectives:

- **Gain Familiarity with Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan and Process via a vis Strategic Plan**
- **Connect Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan to work group priorities**

Meeting Attendees:

- Martha Bentley
- Amy Landry
- Carlos Mello
- Charlene Virgilio
- David Daigler
- Laura Fortman
- Jeannette Andre
- Heather Johnson
- Kimberly Hamilton
- Ryan Neale
- Christopher Quint
- Peggy Schaffer
- Brian Whitney
- Yellow Breen
- Bill Longfellow on behalf of Melanie Loyzim
- Carol Woodcock, Sen. Collins' Office
- Katherine Cloutier, Congressman Golden's Office
- Adam Lachman, Sen. King's Office
- Kelsey MacKinnon, DECD Staff

Notes:

Item 1: The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan overview with Commissioner Johnson

Overview:

- There are four major financial buckets for the state:
 - a. \$1.1B in unallocated funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, for the state to allocate (Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan)
 - b. \$3.5B in earmarked funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, for things like childcare, COVID prevention, public health, K-12 education, etc.
 - Some normal big priority items aren't included in the Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan because they fall into this earmarked bucket
 - c. Governor's supplemental budget
 - d. Governor's bond package

The Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan (\$1.1B in unallocated funding):

- **Immediate Economic Recovery (\$260M)**
 - **Recovery Grants and Loan Guarantees (\$80M).** FAME has been working with Maine banks and lenders over the last 6 months to think about how we ensure businesses continue to have access to capital. Groups have also been looking at recovery grants in the past year and how to set the right metrics around those.
 - **Invest in Heritage Industries (\$50M).** Agriculture, Forest Products, and Seafood – looking at strengthening infrastructure.
 - **Lower Health Care Costs for Small Businesses (\$39M).** More details to come. Health insurance premiums for small businesses will be offset, intended to give more flexibility to businesses so they can continue with their health care programs and keep people working.
 - **Replenish the Unemployment Trust Fund (\$80M)**
 - **Sustain New Businesses and Entrepreneurs (\$8M).** Many new businesses and entrepreneurs have been left out of federal funding opportunities because they don't have the historical records needed to demonstrate loss. Hoping to provide support to those businesses.
 - **Encourage Business Diversity (\$3M).** There will be an equity lens across all the programs, but this bucket of funding is specifically around building business diversity, making sure we can support technical assistance and access to capital/programs for underserved groups.
- **Long-Term Economic Growth (\$305M)**
 - **Jumpstart Innovation (\$80M).** Will look like past MTAF projects. MTI is thinking through this piece. How do we improve investment in R&D to drive innovation, and then how do we commercialize those opportunities that come out of the R&D?
 - **Health Workforce Initiative (\$15M).** Work is underway, led by Commissioner Fortman and Commissioner Lambrew and their teams.
 - **Clean Energy Partnerships (\$8M).** Clean energy is the fastest growing job sector right now. How do we create the workforce pathways and fund/incubate businesses to ensure they are geographically diverse, innovation-driven, and that the renewable energy sectors are supporting each other? The innovation challenge for this partnership has already launched – one of the initiatives that's further along.
 - **Domestic Trade Program (\$15M).** Underway, led by Charlotte at DECD and others. How do we help with data/infrastructure for businesses to be able to export their products throughout the US? And how do we help market that brand?
 - **Attract and Retain Workers (\$18M).** The Opportunity Maine Tax Credit is one of the better tools in the country for attracting young people out of college, but it's currently very complicated. One step is to simplify that tool so businesses can use it as a workforce attraction tool.
 - **Maine Career Exploration Program (\$28M).** Direct output from the Strategic Plan – a lot of these pieces are already happening in different places. From kindergarten and up, how do we have age appropriate opportunities for students to figure out their place in the work continuum? A big component is figuring out how to get paid work opportunities for everyone to ensure we're inclusive and reaching students who can't afford to take an unpaid job – important way to get work experience for all students while also having some structure to help them with critical thinking and other skills we want to develop.
 - **Remote Worker Welcome Program (\$5M).** How do we attract remote workers? What do communities need in order to absorb and retain them?
 - **CTE's & Higher Education Systems (\$105M).** How do we make sure we have a dynamic higher education system that can really work to support these workforce development needs?
 - **Advance Equity (\$8M).** Again, there will be an equity lens across all the proposals, but here there's dedicated funding to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in Maine's workforce.
 - **Connect Workers to Job Opportunities (\$15M).** MDOL has done a good job starting to create this bridge to connect unemployed workers or those about to enter the workforce to job opportunities.
 - **Regulatory Reform (\$8M).** Not changing any regulatory standards, but streamlining the licensing process so it's more efficient. If we're going to invest in innovation, we also have to consider that new sectors will be created, which could lead to new regulatory challenges – how do we prepare for that?

- **Infrastructure Revitalization (\$547M)**
 - **Broadband (\$150M).** \$129M of the \$150 is earmarked funds, the remaining \$21M is unallocated (they're only combined for this item in the plan). How do we make sure connectivity is accessible to all?
 - **Workforce Housing (\$50M).** There is great need around this area, but the details aren't worked out yet. Need to outline what workforce housing means, what are our goals, and how we track them. Is it a way to help workers build wealth, is it a mobility issue, etc.? What does that look like and who owns it? A lot of work to be done in this area.
 - **Energy Efficiency (\$50M).** A lot of work has already been done for this piece, will just be funding the need.
 - **Child Care & Early Childhood Infrastructure (\$20M).** Hundreds of millions are coming in earmarked money, but this \$20M will fill the gap for things we can't do with the earmarked funds, like renovating old childcare facility buildings, etc.
 - **Fix Roads and Bridges through the 2021 Capital Work Plan (\$50M)**
 - **Protect Infrastructure from Climate Change (\$20M)**
 - **Workforce Transportation Pilot (\$5M).** Fairly blank slate for this item. Children's Cabinet discussed how we could use some of this funding to help students get drivers licenses. Would be a small portion of the funds, but goal would be to help homeless youth, etc. get drivers licenses, have a safe adult to do the practice hours with, etc.
 - **Municipal and Public EV Charging (\$8M)**
 - **Upgrade Maine State Parks (\$50M).** Parks had their highest visitation ever last year – want to invest in infrastructure to make sure they're clean and safe.
 - **Fisheries and Wildlife Infrastructure (\$20M)**
 - **Improve Fishing Industry Infrastructure & Monitoring (\$16M)**
 - **Safety of Drinking Water (\$25M)**
 - **Wastewater Infrastructure (\$25M)**
 - **Interconnection Grants (\$8M).** We have a lot of large industrial projects we're working on, and many can't connect to the power system they need – want to help with that issue.
 - **Modernize State Technology (\$50M).** A lot about cybersecurity, but also about modernizing so our business processes are more efficient.
 - **Administration and Deployment of Funds (\$20M)**

Discussion:

- When we talk about recovery, it's not back to where we were, but to where we were going. This funding gives us a springboard we didn't expect to have.
- Strategic Plan and ERC work outlined many of these projects – a few ideas are new, but most came out of lots of vetting and validation through the work on those reports.
- Ongoing work to figure out the legislature's role. Working to figure out where we already have statutory authority to execute the funding, and where we'll need legislative approval.
- Received the rules from Treasury in the past day or so. Project we'll start spending in July.
- Nonstate programs doing work that ties into these proposals can connect in through the Strategic Plan work groups.
- Around the workforce housing piece, we've met with Maine Housing and will likely hire experts to lead the discussion on what workforce housing means, how you create standards around it, etc.
- Around the recovery grants and loan guarantee piece, technical assistance support isn't called out directly but there's enough flexibility that we could include it if needed.

Item 2: Alignment between Work Group Priorities and Maine Jobs & Recovery Plan

Grow Local Talent:

- Work group has broken into subgroups based on each action item in the strategy area; now they're starting to mix and match around those groups.

- Work groups priorities are:
 - Coordinated workforce system
 - Elevating three core workforce areas – health care, clean energy, and education. The education piece is less in the Maine Jobs plan because there is earmarked funding for it, but the health care and clean energy workforce pieces are there.
 - Expanding extended learning opportunities for communities. Included in the Jobs plan in the Maine Career Exploration bucket.
 - Rebranding the public workforce system, including helping market the system to users. Included in the Jobs plan to an extent, but also currently funded through the NGA workforce innovation network cohort that Maine is in. The NGA grant’s workplan is included at the bottom of the Work Group Priority Projects document for reference.
 - Credentialing pathways for new Mainers. Part of the advancing equity for the workforce bucket of the Jobs plan.
 - Compensation for teachers falls under some of the earmarked money, not included in the Jobs plan.
 - Increasing accessibility and quality of childcare is part of the Expanding Child Care & Early Childhood Infrastructure bucket. Although not directly within the Grow Local Talent strategy area, the group still felt focusing funds on childcare is a critical priority in order to get people into the workforce.

Attract New Talent:

- Work group’s priorities align with the Jobs plan’s understanding that we need to build out the talent attraction and retention system in a similar way to the workforce development system – making sure there is a streamlined way that people come to Maine and then get referred into opportunities, communities, and things that are happening.
- Some of this work is around recognizing that we need to broaden the demographic markets that we’re reaching and not necessarily using the traditional narrative, and the other is creating roadmaps to understand who’s here, how they got here, how they connected in, and trying to scale things that have worked.
- Part of that effort is also connecting with the Welcoming America Program – a national program around making communities ready to welcome immigrants. They’ve expanded to a more rural network, so there’s an opportunity to take advantage of that.
- Also an opportunity to expand the Working Communities Challenge to other communities.
- We also recognize that we need to understand a little more about who’s coming to Maine, whether they are staying, etc. – building out a metrics system and scaling that from organizations like Boots2Roots that do a great job with metrics and tracking the people they bring into Maine to ensure their success here.

Provide Supporting Infrastructure:

- Housing: Group recommended an innovation challenge to make sure we’re building out a bigger system and pulling in good ideas from the private sector.
 - e.g., We could have a Starter Home Innovation Challenge, recognizing that it’s a market need not currently being met. Need to determine how we might do the challenge, and incorporate the importance of connection and proximity to childcare and transportation into those challenge components.
- GO MAINE connects directly into the Jobs plan’s Workforce Transportation Pilot. GO MAINE already exists, led by the Maine Turnpike Authority in partnership with MDOT. This summer, MDOT is taking on the lead agency role and is looking to expand the program in 2022. GO MAINE is a clearinghouse for anyone looking to get anywhere in the state by any means other than a single occupancy vehicle. We’re looking at the best use of that \$5M Jobs plan funding – some may support GO MAINE, and some might be used for an initiative on top of that to increase connectivity around the state.

Promote Innovation:

- Some of this group’s priorities are already achieved or underway – Maine Seed Capital Tax Credit program’s cap was already increased, and the Domestic Trade program is in the works.
- Hoping to bring MIEAB’s reinvigoration to a close soon; meeting with the Governor’s team tomorrow to discuss that.

- Substantial sustained commitment to R&D is well jumpstarted with the innovation and heritage industry funding in the Jobs plan.
- Work group is breaking out into small groups over the next couple of weeks to nail down the key priorities we want to focus on in the near term.

Discussion:

- Potentially a 2- to 3-year window to spend the resources for some of the pieces. Idea is that we build out the systems and infrastructures with this money, but part of the work this group will do is determining what it looks like after those funds are no longer there.
- Some of the earmarked funding goes directly to municipalities. Several work groups are trying to figure out how we can help communities think strategically around that funding, especially in small communities without full-time professional staff. Could potentially bundle projects or provide some technical assistance support.
- Increases to various federal discretionary and competitive programs are a fifth funding source we should consider. Can help by supporting competitive projects' applications for some of those funds.
- The FEMA long-term recovery taskforce structure can also help identify federal resources.
- In addition to metrics, we should consider having a heat map or coverage map by region or industry to be sure we're making progress in the right areas for the right groups.

Item 3: Request for Collaboration Updates

- We've started to send out memoranda of understanding so we can onboard the various collaborative efforts.
- Received two submissions for May – one fits within the innovation and growing talent space, the other in innovation and hubs of excellence.

Discussion:

- MOUs for functional collaborators are still to come. DECD staff will circulate those back to this group for feedback and then out to collaborators in the next two weeks or so.
- We should work to drive sector-based partnerships that are trying to integrate innovation, workforce, and infrastructure needs, etc. (e.g., FOR/Maine, SEAMaine)
- Charlene will send Martha a one-page summary of the Plan as a possible template for others to use

Item 4: Next Steps

- In addition to the work groups, there are two key functional groups around:
 - Metrics and tracking
 - Finance mapping/innovative financing approaches
- Want to be sure everyone on the Steering Committee has the opportunity to engage in one of the work groups and/or the functional groups as needed.
- As things are starting to operationalize at the work group level, does it make sense to divide and conquer on those pieces over the next couple of months rather than meeting as a larger Steering Committee?
 - If you have thoughts, please send to Martha and Kelsey via email in the next week or so. They will compile feedback and work out a short-term plan to share with the group.
 - Best role of the group might be one that seeks strategic integration of the various plan elements.
 - Group will also play an important role in terms of transparency for how this funding gets rolled out.