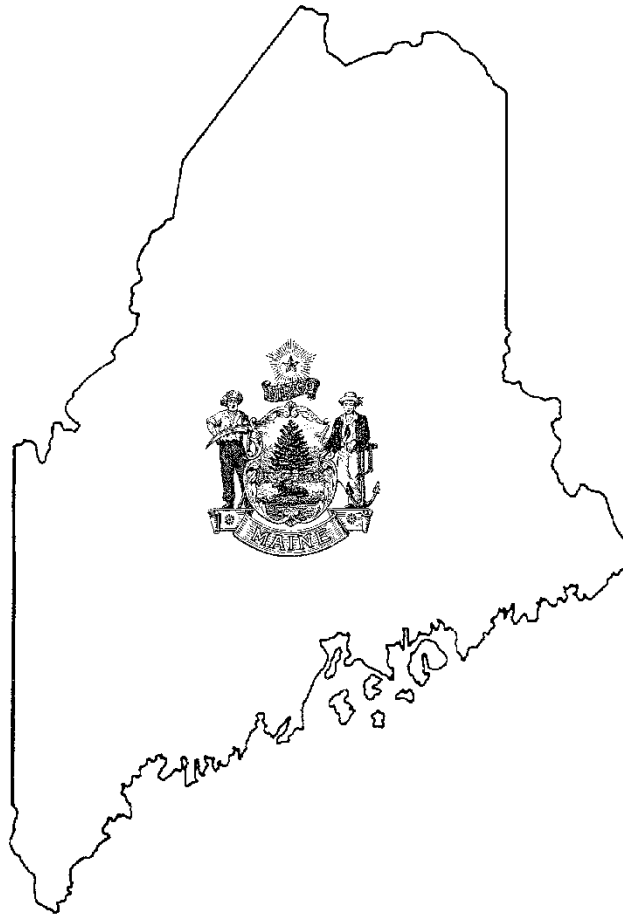


PINE TREE DEVELOPMENT ZONE TAX CREDIT



GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Maine Revenue Services, Income/Estate Tax Division

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Introduction

A business that engages in qualifying activity in Maine and hires at least one additional employee for that activity may be eligible to participate in the Pine Tree Development Zone (“PTDZ”) program. This program is administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development (“DECD”) and Maine Revenue Services (“MRS”) and offers a wide range of benefits, including a reduction in taxes due to the state.

NOTE: Businesses may no longer be certified for PTDZ benefits after December 31, 2024 and benefits for businesses certified on or before December 31, 2024 will cease on December 31, 2034, including the tax credits for individual, fiduciary, and corporate income taxes, franchise tax, and insurance premiums tax.

This guidance document is intended to supplement the information about the PTDZ program tax credit available in the filing instructions for tax returns. The applicable statutory and regulatory references, and other informational documents, are listed below.

- Statutory: Title 30-A, Chapter 206 (see Subchapter 4):
legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/30-A/title30-Ach206sec0-2.html
- Title 36, Chapter 357 (§ 2529):
legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/36/title36sec2529.html
- Title 36, Chapter 822 (§ 5219-W):
legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/36/title36sec5219-W.html
- Title 36, Chapter 917:
legislature.maine.gov/legis/statutes/36/title36ch917sec0.html
- Regulatory: Department of Economic and Community Development Rule 100:
maine.gov/sos/rulemaking/agency-rules/departement-economic-and-community-development-rules
- Instructional: Maine tax credit worksheets:
maine.gov/revenue/tax-return-forms (select “Worksheets for Tax Credits”)
- Maine income, franchise and insurance premiums tax returns:
maine.gov/revenue/tax-return-forms
- Additional information: Sales Tax Division bulletins:
maine.gov/revenue/taxes/sales-use-service-provider-tax/bulletins
- Department of Economic and Community Development:
maine.gov/sos/rulemaking/agency-rules/departement-economic-and-community-development-rules

The Pine Tree Development Zone credit for individual, fiduciary, and corporate income taxes, franchise (financial institution) tax, and insurance premiums tax, and the increased reimbursement rate applicable to Employment Tax Increment Financing (ETIF) benefits is available to certified businesses engaged in qualified activity for tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2004 and before January 1, 2035. The credit is available to businesses (corporations, pass-through entities, or sole proprietorships) that are certified by the DECD on or before December 31, 2024.

Generally, a qualifying PTDZ business must be engaged in financial services, manufacturing, or a targeted technology business. A business engaged in one of these activities must hire at least one qualified employee above its base level of employment for work in one of the areas in Maine designated as a Pine Tree Development Zone.

From September 20, 2007 through December 31, 2009, certain manufacturers qualified for benefits whether or not the activities occurred in a designated zone. During that time period, the manufacturers had to meet certain expansion requirements in order to qualify for the program, such as a minimum investment of \$225,000 and creation of at least four new quality full-time jobs.

The process for establishing Pine Tree Development Zones has varied since the enactment of the program. Prior to 2009, Pine Tree Development Zones were designated by the DECD. For qualified business activity beginning in 2009, the entire state was classified as a single Pine Tree Development Zone. Beginning in 2010, the state was divided into two tiers. Tier 1 is comprised of municipalities in all counties of the state except Cumberland and York counties, plus the municipalities in Cumberland and York counties that have an unemployment rate that is at least 15% higher than the local labor market unemployment rate for the calendar year. The towns of Sanford and Berwick are also designated as Tier 1 locations. Qualified businesses located in Tier 1 locations are eligible for tax benefits for up to ten years. Tier 2 locations are all municipalities that do not qualify for Tier 1 designation. Qualified businesses located in Tier 2 locations are eligible for tax benefits for up to five years. After December 31, 2013, a business located in a Tier 2 location may not be certified under the Pine Tree Development Zone Program. After December 31, 2024, no businesses may become certified for the Pine Tree Development Zone Program; program benefits will cease on December 31, 2034.

Certified businesses must file an annual report with the DECD, which will review these reports and any other required information and determine whether the business continues to meet the requirements for a qualified Pine Tree Development Zone business. A certified business that has sustained at least a 15% loss in employment due to a catastrophic occurrence, as defined in 30-A M.R.S. § 5250-I(5-A), may within two calendar years of the catastrophic occurrence, apply to the DECD for a reduction in its base level of employment to reflect reduced employment levels at affected locations. More information about catastrophic occurrence relief is available online at maine.gov/decd/business-development/financial-incentives-resources/incentives. For more information about catastrophic occurrence relief, contact the DECD at DECDTaxIncentives@maine.gov.

Note: A business that is certified under the PTDZ program does not qualify for the Certified Visual Media Production tax credit under 36 M.R.S. § 5219-Y or the Dirigo Business Incentives Program tax credit under 36 M.R.S. § 5219-AAA.

Part 1 – Determination of Credit Amount

The tax credits against income, franchise, and premiums taxes are based on the Maine tax liability attributable to the net new business activity of the qualified PTDZ business. New qualified business activity (QBA) is determined by the DECD. For more information, see 30-A M.R.S. chapter 206, subchapter 4 and DECD Rule 19-100, Chapter 100. For the first five years, the credit for new QBA in a Tier 1 location is equal to 100% of the tax liability; for the next five years, it is equal to 50% of the tax liability. Certified business entities that have both new qualified and existing or non-qualified business activity are allowed a credit for only a portion of the total tax liability. To determine the percentage of tax that is allowed as a credit (the apportionment percentage), the business must divide the value of property used and payroll paid during the year that was related to new QBA (the numerator) by the total value of all Maine property used and Maine payroll paid in the year (the denominator). This process is called apportionment and is described in more detail in Part 2, below. The apportionment percentage is then applied against the total tax liability prior to the use of any other tax credits to determine the dollar amount available for the credit. See the credit worksheet at maine.gov/revenue/tax-return-forms (select “Worksheets for Tax Credits”).

The program is not intended to provide tax benefits for simply shifting existing Maine business activity from one in-state location to another. Therefore, property and payroll that have been shifted within Maine cannot be used in new QBA and must be eliminated from the numerator of the apportionment calculation. See Part 2 below for an explanation of the apportionment calculation. Likewise, property and payroll associated with business activity in years prior to certification must not be included in the numerator of the apportionment calculation. Payroll for employees hired during the year of certification, but prior to the actual certification date, is included in the numerator of the apportionment calculation.

If the apportionment calculation does not fairly reflect the fraction of business activity that is new QBA, the business may request, or the State Tax Assessor may require, an alternate method of calculating the tax credit. For more information, see Part 2 below.

Because the credit is based on a percentage of tax liability in a given tax year, taxpayers must apply the PTDZ credit against their tax liability before utilizing any other available credits. There is no provision for carrying the credit forward to future years.

Part 2 – Apportionment Percentage

The apportionment requirement appears in 36 M.R.S. § 5219-W for income and franchise taxes and in 36 M.R.S. § 2529 for the insurance premiums tax.

New qualified business activity includes only the activity associated with the expansion or initial business creation for which the entity has been certified by the DECD. For more information, see 30-A M.R.S. §§ 5250-I(16) and 5250-I(17). Therefore, a taxpayer that has income from both new and existing business activity is allowed a tax credit for only the portion of tax liability associated with the income generated by the new QBA. To ensure that the tax credit is based only on the expansion activity, the numerator of the apportionment percentage may not include shifted property, employees, and positions. Likewise, the value of any existing Maine property that is sold in connection with the expansion of the QBA must be subtracted from the property value in the numerator. The shifting of Maine property through the sale and replacement of existing or non-qualifying Maine property with PTDZ property must be discounted from the calculation of the tax credit.

The apportionment percentage is a fraction used to calculate the ratio of new business activity to total business activity for the tax year. The numerator of the apportionment percentage is the value of the taxpayer's property attributed to new QBA during the taxable year plus the payroll attributed to new QBA during the tax year. The denominator of the apportionment percentage is the total value of all property used by the taxpayer during the tax year in Maine plus the total payroll in Maine during the tax year. A business may not include in the numerator property or payroll related to the shifting of those amounts from elsewhere in Maine. For more information, see 30-A M.R.S. §§ 5250-J(3)(C) and 5250-J(3)(D).

The determination of property values and payroll generally follow the methods and definitions that are used for multistate corporate income tax apportionment under 36 M.R.S. §§ 5210 and 5211 and MRS Rule 801 sections .09 and .10. However, for purposes of the PTDZ program, property is limited to real and tangible personal property that is owned or rented and used during the tax period. Property owned by the taxpayer is valued at its original cost. Property rented by the taxpayer is valued at 8 times the net annual rental rate. Payroll includes compensation paid for work in Maine during the tax period by the qualified business, including wages, pretax employee contributions made to a benefit package, and employer contributions made to an employee benefit package.

Note: “Qualified Pine Tree Development Zone Employees” has the same meaning as defined in 30-A M.R.S. §5250-I. The term does not include employees shifted to a qualified business activity from a nonqualified activity of the qualified PTDZ business or an affiliated business. The term also does not include employees who primarily work remotely outside of a PTDZ, excepting temporary remote work within the State of Maine due to the effects of a state of emergency as designated by the Governor.

Part 3 – Members of Pass-through Entities

For shareholders of S corporations and partners of partnerships, including members of LLCs that are treated as disregarded entities for federal income tax purposes, tax credits attributable to PTDZ qualified businesses are determined at the individual taxpayer level (or at the corporate level for corporations that are partners in a partnership). That is, the amount of income tax credit for a shareholder, partner, or member (“member”) is based on the tax liability that is attributed to PTDZ income earned by, or distributed to, the member by the business entity.

The business entity first determines the income that is distributable to each of the members. The entity next calculates the PTDZ credit percentage through the PTDZ apportionment process, which divides the property and payroll attributable to new QBA by the total Maine property and payroll for the business. The business entity then passes the share of income and the PTDZ credit percentage to each of the members. Each member will calculate the ratio of income from the business entity to total income for that member from all sources. The member then multiplies the entity income ratio by the PTDZ credit percentage and then multiplies the result by that member’s total Maine income tax liability. The result is the dollar value of the PTDZ credit for that member. See Part 4, Example # 3 (below) and the PTDZ worksheets at: maine.gov/revenue/tax-return-forms (select “Worksheets for Tax Credits”) for more information.

Part 4 – Examples of Apportionment

In all the following examples, it is assumed that all expansion property and payroll is 100% qualified. The following examples illustrate the available tax credit under varying circumstances.

Example #1 – A new business conducting qualified business activity

Corporation A: startup business conducting qualified business activity

Corporation A applies for and receives certification as a PTDZ business and then commences qualified business activities. Since all of Corporation A's business activity is new qualified activity, it receives an income tax credit equal to 100% of its tax liability prior to the use of any other tax credits.

Example #2 – An existing Maine business expands to conduct new qualified business activity

Corporation B: exists prior to PTDZ certification, then expands its qualified business activity

Existing facilities: \$1,000,000 property; \$1,000,000 payroll

Corporation B applies for and receives certification for an expansion of qualified business activity. The expansion includes \$200,000 of property and \$200,000 of payroll for total Maine property of \$1,200,000 and Maine payroll of \$1,200,000. Since Corporation B was already engaged in business activity in Maine prior to certification, the income tax credit must be apportioned as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{new QBA property} + \text{new QBA payroll}) / (\text{All Maine property} + \text{All Maine payroll}) \\ & = (\$200,000 + \$200,000) / (\$1,200,000 + \$1,200,000) = 16.67\% \end{aligned}$$

Corporation B's PTDZ tax credit equals 16.67% of its total Maine tax liability prior to the use of any other tax credit, which reflects the tax liability associated with the income from the new QBA.

Example #3 – Individual member of a pass-through entity

Individual A is a 50% owner of S corporation #1 that qualifies for a 50% PTDZ credit. Individual A has \$30,000 of income from S corporation #1 and \$40,000 of income from other sources. S corporation #1 passes taxable income and the income tax credit to its shareholders, including Individual A. Individual A's total Maine income tax liability is \$3,500. Individual A then calculates the apportionment percentage and tax credit as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Entity income ratio} &= (\text{S corporation \#1 income to Individual A}) / (\text{Individual A total income from all sources}) \\ &= \$30,000 / (\$30,000 + \$40,000) = \$30,000 / \$70,000 = 0.428571 \text{ or } 42.8571\% \end{aligned}$$

PTDZ credit percentage = 0.50 or 50%

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Apportionment percentage} &= \text{Entity income ratio} * \text{PTDZ credit percentage} \\ &= 0.428571 * 0.50 = 0.214286 \text{ or } 21.4286\% \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total credit} &= \text{Apportionment percentage} * \text{Total Maine income tax liability} \\ &= 0.428571 * 0.50 * \$3,500 = 0.214286 * \$3,500 = \$750 \end{aligned}$$

Individual A may claim a PTDZ credit of \$750 prior to the use of any other tax credit.