State Workforce Board
Workforce Development Recommendations

August 14, 2020
The SWB is an employer-led board appointed by the governor whose purpose is to ensure that Maine’s workforce development system helps Maine people and businesses compete successfully in the global economy. The SWB advises the Governor on policies beneficial to the success of Maine’s workforce development system.

SWB membership is comprised of:

- Governor
- Employers/business owners
- Representatives of the workforce (i.e. labor organizations, community-based organizations and joint management/labor apprenticeship programs)
- Member from each chamber of the State Legislature
- Chief local elected officials (County Commissioners)
- State officials responsible for the five core programs identified in WIOA
State Workforce Board Responsibilities

Purpose is to convene state, regional and local workforce system partners to:

- enhance the capacity and performance of Maine’s workforce development system,
- align and improve the outcomes and effectiveness of workforce programs and investments,
- promote economic growth, and
- engage public workforce representatives, including businesses, education providers, economic development, labor representatives and other stakeholders to achieve the State’s strategic and operational vision and goals as outlined in the State plan.
Big Picture

- Workforce development is an important component of economic development
  - Increased collaboration with DECD as a bigger partner in workforce training development to support economic development
  - Opportunity to restructure how we support new and existing businesses in Maine

- Successful workforce programs have three main components
  - Government, Education, and Business

- Employers want a streamlined training system that can adjust quickly to changing environment
Employers urgently need people who are willing and able to work.
- Employers are deeply concerned about their ability to continue operating without a skilled workforce.

Many employers are willing to provide the necessary job training because they see no other option with the current environment.

Some new businesses looking to setup in Maine are asking what workforce programs are available while others are looking for financial assistance to train new employees or upskill incumbent workers.
COVID has exacerbated the pre-pandemic skills shortages while exposing flaws and weaknesses in the workforce development system.

Many workers have challenges due to lack of childcare and uncertainty about K-12 structure.

Many workers lack transferable skills to move from one industry to another.
Goal for Workforce Development

Focus on creating workforce development programs that serve both individuals and businesses (unemployed vs incumbent worker)
Recommendations - Infrastructure

- Explore and establish a collaborative link between MDOL and local job boards, for example Live & Work in Maine, JobsinME.com, Opportunities Aroostook, etc., to aid in rapid and simplified job connection.

- MDOL and DECD to conduct a survey of Maine employers, via virtual meetings, online survey’s via DECD’s website, etc., to assess workforce and job training needs and knowledge of workforce development programs available to Maine businesses.
Recommendations - Talent

- Develop a marketing campaign for employment and workforce training programs targeted at the 80k unemployed Mainers
  - Reference similar initiatives by other states and modify for Maine, as appropriate, i.e. Connecticut’s “CT Back to Work Initiative” ([https://portal.ct.gov/Business/Jobs-and-Resources](https://portal.ct.gov/Business/Jobs-and-Resources))
Recommendations - Innovation

- Provide re-training to help transition workers from industries impacted by COVID-19 towards those with greater career opportunities

- Capitalize on, and make available, existing virtual learning platforms, like Coursera, that:
  - provides for a broader set of on-line learning;
  - are free for qualified Mainers; and
  - companies can link to on their company websites

- Build a program to reimburse employers who provide or pay for their employees to obtain a new credential
Questions?