Immediate/Quick-Start Recommendations for Innovation Subcommittee Consideration Based on Past Meeting Discussions/Emerging Ideas

These recommendations were not all specifically captured in June 5th initial recommendation cohort but have been raised through Subcommittee deliberations and/or industry and public input since June 5th.

Subcommittee should discuss (1) inclusion as recommendation; (2) where the recommendation fits into provided framework

**Policy/Program Opportunities—**

- **Infrastructure** –
  Expand free and easily-accessible and available COVID-19 testing to improve safe movement into and around the State

- **Infrastructure/Workforce** –
  Create business incubation for service-based businesses and individuals. When outsourced services replace in-house service positions, the new professional service entrepreneurial sector needs support and training

- **Workforce** –
  Use CARES Act funding to create “Innovate for Maine Fellows” type program to connect recent college grads with job opportunities and companies with talent that they may have difficulty paying for in current environment

**Access to capital** -
- Expand and make key changes to Maine Seed Capital Tax Credit specifics to recommendation
  - explore allowing revenue/royalty-based investments, not just equity
  - raise % eligible
  - explore eligibility of private individual investors and family offices from outside of Maine
  - raise to what dollar amount?
  - other changes?
- “MTAF3.0” – capitalize fund for innovative solutions and/or growth of promising companies through Maine Technology Institute; not limited to capital improvements
- Expand technical assistance to individual companies to apply for Federal grant opportunities – time and paperwork a barrier – potential stronger
collaboration options between PTAC and MTI’s SBIR Technical Support Program
✓ Establish a cross-agency (DECD, ACF, DMR) grant program for Maine food and beverage companies who need to pivot from B2B to B2C business models.

Regulatory –
✓ Provide clear and consistent guidance on how to return to work safely – for employers, employees and customers.
- Partner with existing business resources, service provider networks, and industry groups to market their technical assistance programs for access to best practices and guidance on enforcement and liability – SBDC, MMEP, Others receiving CARES Act funding directly?

✓ Timely and streamlined licensing processes
- continue remote options as available under shut down
- Eliminate business registration and occupational licensing fees not directly related to public or environmental health until there is full economic recovery

✓ Short term – subsidy to build out fiber to collaborative work spaces similar to federal subsidy for schools and libraries

✓ Bankruptcy changes in the law – provide technical assistance for small businesses to navigate these potentially beneficial changes

✓ Allow laid off workers to access their UI benefits for the purpose of starting a small business, eliminating job search requirements and providing wrap around business development services through existing service providers, like SBDC.

Communications/Bully Pulpit Opportunities –

✓ Promote Maine through Office of Governor and Office of Tourism as:
  - safest state to visit and live
  - best place to work remotely
  - open

✓ Send explicit recognition of diversity as a key ingredient for innovation by:
  - promoting and support Black Owned Maine Business Directory and other business segment support opportunities
-amplifying messages of programs and platforms supporting safe and healthy workplaces for diverse workers

✓ Build on Live and Work In Maine efforts currently underway with marketing push to remote workers from outside the State in multiple market segments

✓ Promote policy changes in Maine from last legislative session that strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystem
  - Benefit Corporations
  - disallowing some non-compete clauses

✓ Create an “Ambassador Program” for entrepreneurial community, to complement similar Maine & Co opportunity for established companies, where a few key members of (a) the startup community and (b) the tech community are part of two separate short videos extolling the benefits of being in Maine and agree to take calls from business leaders thinking about locating the business or a branch of the business in Maine. The videos could be located on the DECD and other relevant websites but more importantly, used in an outreach program; amplify private sector, organic efforts underway.

Cross Cutting Initiative - “Make Maine The Digital State” – addressing common themes of internet connectivity, cell service, remote work, digital tech assistance and others.