

Women In Government  
National Summit on Adult Learning

Maine Department of Labor

October 2009

Protecting Workers \* Creating Opportunity

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# Maine Department of Labor Mission

- **Assisting individuals, families and communities when jobs are lost**
- **Helping People Prepare for and Find Jobs**
- **Protecting Workers on the Job**
- **Researching, analyzing employment data to support job growth**

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# Demographics Impacting Adult Learning

- Maine continues to rank last in New England in percentage of adults with a post secondary degree. (35.7% vs 42.5%)
- Maine is the oldest state in the nation.
- 15% of 18-24 year olds are not working or in school.

# Supporting Adult Learning in Maine

- Governor Baldacci's Vision
- The Legislature
- Other initiatives/collaborations:  
Packaging programs / financial resources to make higher education more accessible for adult workers.

# Governor Baldacci's Support of Adult Learning

- Workforce Cabinet
- Use of ARRA Workforce Investment Act funds
  - 80% of ARRA funds to be spent directly on program participant training and support
  - Identified key sectors to focus on
    - Green/Energy
    - Healthcare
    - IT
- Competitive Skills Scholarship - Recovery
- Maine Laptop Initiative

# Maine Legislature Support of Adult Learning Examples

- Legislation
  - Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)
  - Dislocated Worker Benefits
  - Opportunity Maine
- Funding Programs
  - Governor's Training Initiative
  - Adult Education/Maine College Transitions
  - Apprenticeship

# Maine Legislature Support of Adult Learning

The Commission to Develop Strategies to Increase Postsecondary Access, Retention and Completion for low wage, low skilled adults.

- Strategies:
  - Maximize the Use of Available Federal Resources
  - Align Existing State Program Resources
  - Establish Benchmarks and Measure Results
  - Strengthen Coordination and Accountability
  - Provide New Resources to Meet the Needs of Low income, Low Skilled Adult Students

# Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP)

- Competitive Skills Scholarship Program enacted to provide access to post-secondary education for people below 200% of the poverty level so they can work in occupations that are well paid and in high demand.
- Received wide support from business groups and worker advocates and was signed into law in June 2007.

# Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

- Funded by employer contributions to a dedicated fund (approximately \$3,000,000 per year); employers costs are offset by reduction in their unemployment insurance taxes.

# Competitive Skills Scholarship Program

## Basic Eligibility & Assessment

- At least 18 years old; Legally eligible to work in US
- Have income of less than 200% of the federal poverty level for the family size involved
  - Verify last 4 weeks of income
- Are applying for education or training for a job in High wage High growth occupations
- Do not have a marketable postsecondary degree
- Have the aptitude to undertake and complete education or training as determined by the institution providing the education or training

# CSSP Support Services

- Childcare (by licensed providers or legal in-home providers)
- Transportation
  - Mileage (currently .44 per mile, the State of Maine's per mile)
  - Auto Repairs (up to \$1,000 per person per calendar year)
  - Auto Liability (minimum liability limits up to max \$1,000 year)
  - Advance Payments
- Eye Care (up to \$200 per calendar year)
- Dental Care (up to \$2,000 for whole period of CSSP enrollment)
- Books, Supplies, Tools, Equipment, Uniforms
- Computers (up to \$750 for a one time only purchase)
- Other Needs/Emergency Funds (up to \$1,000 per year to meet unexpected needs – as authorized by the case manager)

\*Support Services dollars are available to participants to the extent that they are necessary for successful completion.

# CSSP Training Stipend

- Income Eligibility - 125% of Poverty Level
- Verify last 4 weeks of income
  - Re-verification of income every 6 months
- Stipend is 33% of Maximum weekly UI benefit -paid per month for full time students; Currently \$510 per month for F/T and \$255 P/T
  - Participants eligible for DWB, Unemployment Comp, or TRA benefits are not eligible for the CSSP training stipend.

# CSSP Referrals to Other Sources

- MaineCare
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Food Stamps
- \*Dislocated Worker Benefit (DWB)
- \*Childcare
- \*Financial Aid
- \*\*Parents as Scholars

\*\*Participants are required to apply for childcare, DWB and financial aid support. If they receive this support, still eligible for CSSP.

\*\* Participants are required to apply for Parents as Scholars. If eligible, they are not eligible for CSSP.

# CSSP Enrollment Data

- 412 Participants Currently Enrolled
  - 274 Women (66.5%)
  - 138 Men (33.5%)
- Certificate, 2-Year and 4-Year Degrees
  - **51 are enrolled in developmental courses** through the adult education system
  - **88 are enrolled in certificate or 1 year degree** programs at approved educational institutions
  - **207 are enrolled in 2 year degree** programs at a technical college or university.
  - **117 are enrolled in 4-year degree** programs at a University of Maine institution

\*It's important to note that some students are enrolled in both developmental courses and certificate or degree programs

# Dislocated Worker Benefits

- The Dislocated Worker Benefit program (DWB) may provide up to 26 more weeks of unemployment benefits to unemployed workers in “approved” training programs.
- Workers in an approved training program do not have to look for work as long as they are attending school.
- **Who is eligible for DWB?**
- Be a “dislocated worker.” A dislocated worker is someone who:
  - Has been laid off from a job or has a layoff notice; OR
  - Has been unemployed for a significant length of time and has little chance of returning to their prior job, or getting a similar one.
- Be eligible for unemployment benefits
- Have used up all of their regular and any extended unemployment benefits
- Be enrolled in an “approved training program.”

# Opportunity Maine

## How it works

- Any associate or bachelor's degree earner can be reimbursed for their student loan payments through a Maine income tax credit if they are living and working in Maine.
- Alternatively, any business in Maine can earn the tax credit for creating a student loan payment program as an employee benefit.

# Programs Funded By the Legislature to Support Adult Learning

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# Governor's Training Initiative

- The Governor's Training Initiative (GTI) is joint program of the Maine Department of Labor and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. Whether your business is large or small, the Governor's Training Initiative can provide financial assistance for training new employees and/or retraining existing workers with innovative, non-routine training.

## How companies may qualify for GTI funding:

- Are a Maine private-sector employer;
- Provide a post-training wage equal to 85% of the average wage for the given occupation in your labor market area;
- Contribute at least 50% of the premium cost of employee health insurance, unless yours is a small business with fewer than 25 employees and have been in business fewer than 3 years;
- Commit to long-term operation in Maine.

## Training services eligible for reimbursement include:

- high performance skills training
- technical training
- on-the-job training
- workplace safety
- training needs assessment
- job task analysis
- workplace literacy
- higher education.

# Adult Education in Maine

- High School Completion – 15,597 enrollments
- Literacy and Family Literacy – 12,727 enrollments
- Business and Skills Training – 19,582 enrollments
- Maine College Transition Program – 3,924 enrollments

# Adult Education Maine College Transition Program

- Maine College Transitions Target Population:

Adults who are first time post secondary education candidates, in the workforce, beyond their teenage years, and have either never attended college or have not been successful in college, and can build skills to enter college within 12-18 months.

- Emphasis on counseling and skills for college life and success builds student confidence and self-efficacy.

- Preliminary Results:

- More than 75% of enrolled students have the goal of enrolling in a 2-year post secondary institution.
- 75% of MCT students are increasing their Accuplacer scores in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Algebra.
- 29% of students chose careers in healthcare as their course of study in college.

# Maine Apprenticeship Program

## What is the Maine Apprenticeship Program and what does it do?

The Maine Apprenticeship Program combines on-the-job training with related education that reinforces what is learned on the job.

- Participants receive college credit for all courses taken as part of their related instruction and these credits can earn them a college degree.
- MAP may reimburse a portion of tuition costs for these college credit courses. Up to half of tuition fees for up to 4 courses per year.
- Apprentices who successfully complete all Maine Apprenticeship Program requirements receive a Certification of Completion of Apprenticeship from the Maine State Apprenticeship & Training Council.

## Other Current Maine Collaborations/Initiatives Supporting Adult Learning

- President's Training Initiative
- NOQ4U
- Life Long Learning Accounts (LiLA's)
- MOLI
- Work Readiness
- MELMAC Foundation Grants
- Maine Employer's Initiative

# President's Training Initiative

- President Obama's May announcement featured a displaced worker from Maine
- Hotline
- Distribution of Pell letters
- Development of website
- Partnership with Maine Educational Opportunity Center (TRIO program) provides one-on-one and group support and guidance to adults with disabilities or low income, as well as adults who will be the first in their families to attend college.

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