

# COASTAL COUNTIES WORKFORCE, INC.

*Your partner in business development  
and economic prosperity...*



2025 – 2029

Coastal Counties Workforce Board  
Local Workforce Plan

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## Introduction

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The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) in partnership with our chief elected officials<sup>1</sup> (CEO) are pleased to present our local<sup>2</sup> comprehensive 4-year plan for 2025-2029. This local plan will guide our investments in regional workforce development services. The local plan addresses the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (29 USC § 3123) and incorporates the local planning requirements identified for local plans at WIOA 20 CFR § §679.560 et seq. The local plan serves as a primary vehicle for communicating the Coastal Counties Workforce Board's (hereinafter Workforce Board) vision for the local workforce system<sup>3</sup>. Importantly, this includes the integration of service delivery across federal programs in the region to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, integrate service delivery across programs, and ensure that the workforce system is job driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. Lastly, our local plan aligns with and supports the vision and goals of the State of Maine's Unified State Plan under Title I of WIOA.



This plan incorporates the input of stakeholders and leadership from business, industry, labor, non-profits, education, and government agencies and is meant to be a broad vision that effectively serves the Coastal Counties' region. CCWB staff engaged in a variety of processes to ensure this local plan incorporates all partner/stakeholder input and is consistent with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, in addition to the State's 2024-2027 Unified State Plan (hereinafter State Plan). CCWB hosted public events, reviewed various surveys, and engaged partners in regularly scheduled board meetings. All local plan project information was posted on the Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. website at: [coastalcounties.org](https://coastalcounties.org) under "announcements" including steering committee schedules, agendas, and minutes.

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<sup>1</sup> The Chief Elected Officials (CEO) Board is made up of the county commissioners in our region. There is one county commissioner from each of our six counties on this board for a total of six CEO members.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this plan, the terms regional and local are used interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> Our local workforce system (i.e., area) consists of the following counties: York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Waldo, and Knox.

## Executive Summary

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### Introduction

A skilled workforce is the foundation of Maine's economy. A skilled workforce not only improves the productivity of businesses but is also the source behind the creativity that drives the innovation of firms, industries, and clusters. The development of a robust and responsive system to train workers and entrepreneurs is a reflection of engaged leaders from business and economic development who articulate the needs of established, in-demand, and emerging industries.

Through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), the Federal government provides allocations to Local Workforce Boards throughout the country to invest in a workforce development system that prioritizes those with barriers to employment, including Veterans, persons with disabilities, seniors, immigrants, and low-income residents.

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) is the Local Workforce Board for six contiguous counties in Maine - **York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo**. Workforce services are delivered at the One-Stop Comprehensive Center located at 56 Northport Drive, Suite 202, Portland, along with affiliate centers in Belfast, Brunswick, South Portland, Rockland, and Springvale. Additionally, CCWB, in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor and the two other local workforce development boards, developed and deployed a multi-faceted virtual American Job Center, branded Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter (VCC), that has expanded access to workforce development services for both job-seekers and employers statewide. Partners in the delivery of services include Adult Education, Maine Community College System, and the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment Services and Bureau of Rehabilitation Services Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired, along with dozens of programs provided by state agencies and community-based organizations. Whether the economy is up or down, it is essential to have a strong Local Workforce Board and flexible workforce partners that can respond nimbly to changing economic conditions.

The purpose of the 2025-2029 Regional Strategic Workforce Plan is twofold: first, to comply with both Maine and the US Department of Labor's requisite information regarding our local workforce board's operations, and second, to guide state and federal investments to address workforce challenges in Maine's Coastal Counties region. Since February, over 50 people have participated in the development of this plan through public Workforce Board meetings, committees, stakeholder sessions, and surveys.



## Strategic Plan 2025-2029

### Vision

To meet the changing workplace needs of businesses and job seekers by promoting economic opportunities through the development of in-demand workforce skills.

### Targeted Industry Sectors

Manufacturing ◊ Healthcare ◊ Construction ◊ Accommodation & Foodservice ◊ Retail

### Goals

System	Employers	Job Seekers	Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB)
Regional workforce system partners align and integrate services and resources to create a “no wrong door” employment and training network easily accessed by workers and employers.	Employers are actively engaged with the regional workforce system that understands and appropriately responds to their skilled workforce needs.	Job seekers and current workers can easily access and participate in workforce services relevant and appropriate to their career goals and align them with the skilled workforce needs of the local economy.	The CCWB is responsive to funding trends.

### Strategies

<b>System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed integration of the WIOA required partners into the work of the region’s One-Stop Operator</li> <li>• Improve referral systems among partners</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration of front-line staff across partners</li> <li>• Strengthen the region’s delivery structure</li> <li>• Foster integration and best services practices for youth services with community partners</li> </ul>
<b>Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote use of work-based training in targeted industry sectors</li> <li>• Strategize and streamline outreach to employers</li> <li>• Align business outreach resources across WIOA core partners</li> <li>• Promote career pathways</li> </ul>

### Strategies continued...

<b>Job Seekers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversify and expand outreach that incorporates social media channels</li><li>• Continue to expand remote access to virtual meetings and training models</li><li>• Promote continuous improvement of programs</li><li>• Prioritize cohort projects to serve priority populations and sectors</li></ul>
<b>Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focus service delivery on most highly eligible / in-need populations and/or revise funding targets</li></ul>

## Local Area WIOA Title IB Performance Measures for PY 25

WIOA requires the Local Workforce Development Board and the State to negotiate and reach an agreement on local levels of performance for WIOA Title I programs. These performance goals/measures are known as “primary indicators of performance.” In negotiating the local levels of performance, the Local Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Officials, and the Governor must adjust to the expected economic conditions and the expected characteristics of participants to be served in the local area.

Table A below provides the six primary indicators of performance for Program Year 2025. Table B explains each indicator.

**Table A**

	Youth	Dislocated Workers	Adults
<b>Employment Rate (2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after exit)</b>	<b>69.0%</b>	<b>75.5%</b>	<b>72.5%</b>
<b>Employment Rate (4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit)</b>	<b>69.0%</b>	<b>77.5%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Median Earnings</b>	<b>\$4,900</b>	<b>\$9,100</b>	<b>\$7,600</b>
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Measurable Skills Gains</b>	<b>52.0%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>52%</b>

**Table B**

Primary Indicators of Performance:		
1	<b>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit:</b>	The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.
2	<b>Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit:</b>	The percentage of participants enrolled in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.
3	<b>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit:</b>	The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

4	<b>Credential Attainment:</b>	The percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding on-the-job training and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its equivalent, during participation in the program or within one year after exit from the program.
5	<b>Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):</b>	The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains. Measurable skill gains are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards a recognized credential or employment. It is expected that every participant enrolled in education or training will have an MSG goal established in Maine JobLink.
6	<b>Effectiveness Serving Employers:</b>	<p>WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers for Core WIOA Partners. MDOL has selected the following two approaches designed to gauge critical workforce needs of the business community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;</li> <li>2) Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time.</li> </ol>

## Vision & Goals

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### **Maine's Strategic Vision**

Maine's residents and businesses will have economic opportunity and contribute to the growth of Maine through a responsive, networked, and coordinated workforce development system across public and private sectors. All components of the workforce development system will be provided seamlessly, resulting in increased educational and employment attainment for residents with a focus on careers, not just jobs, and support Maine's business sectors with skilled and qualified workers.

For more information visit:

<https://www.maine.gov/swb/stateplan/index.shtml>

### **Coastal Counties Regional Workforce Planning**

#### **Vision**

To meet the changing workplace needs of businesses and job seekers by promoting economic opportunities through developing workforce skills in demand. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) supports the regional economy by advancing a range of workforce training services that meet current business needs.

#### **Mission**

To accomplish our vision of creating economic opportunities, the Coastal Counties Workforce Board is committed to the effective use of resources to improve workforce skills throughout the region. Existing resources are leveraged and enhanced through strategic partnerships with organizations of similar vision, thereby raising the economic capacity of our regional community, its businesses, and citizenry.

#### **Workforce Board Goals**

- 1) Regional workforce system partners align and integrate services and resources to create a "no wrong door" employment and training network easily accessed by workers and employers.
- 2) Employers are actively engaged with a regional workforce development system that understands and appropriately responds to their skilled workforce needs.
- 3) Job seekers and current workers easily access and participate in workforce services relevant and appropriate to their career goals and align with the skilled workforce needs of the local economy.
- 4) The Coastal Counties Workforce Board is responsive to funding trends.

## Regional Service Strategies

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To address the challenges and opportunities of the region’s labor market and workforce, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) worked with representatives of the CCWB to formulate goals targeted to employers, job seekers and workers, and the workforce development system. The following goals and subsequent strategies (developed with stakeholder input) will play a key role in how CCWI, our Chief Elected Officials (CEO) and Workforce Board guide investments in order to maximize workforce preparation and skill development and address demand concerns of our local employers. These goals and regional service strategies align and support the State of Maine’s Unified Plan.

<https://www.maine.gov/swb/stateplan/index.shtml>

**Goal 1:** Regional workforce system partners align and integrate services and resources to create a “no wrong door” employment and training network easily accessed by workers and employers

- **Embed integration:** utilize the work of the region’s One-Stop Operator and quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to set actionable goals regarding integration and regularly check in on progress.
- **Foster integration and best practices for youth services with community partners:** One-Stop Operator will facilitate youth specific engagement for service providers to discuss best practices. Including but not limited to integrating resources and funding for shared client pools to meet client needs.
- **Improve referral systems:** the region’s One-Stop Operator will work with partners to track referral outcomes and continue staff training to strengthen referrals among partners.
- **Encourage front-line staff collaboration:** One-Stop Operator will continue to utilize quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to prioritize planning and implementing cross-training and collaboration opportunities for front-line staff.
- **Strengthen regional delivery structure:** utilize the Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter (VCC), established in 2025, which serves as a centralized resource to support workforce development and service accessibility and work with stakeholders and partners to analyze regional service delivery locations, using best practices to offer virtual services in addition to aligned and co-located physical centers.

**Goal 2:** Employers are actively engaged with the regional workforce system that understands and appropriately responds to their skilled workforce needs.

- **Promote use of work-based training:** partner with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Associations, and Industry Associations, and their employer members to identify and support worker training projects (i.e., incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and work experience) in target sectors. Continue to meet or exceed 20% of program expenditures on youth work experience development.

- **Strategize and streamline outreach:** develop a value proposition for employers and develop a coordinated outreach strategy for businesses utilizing Industry Associations, Economic Development Associations, and Chambers of Commerce as information repositories and points of contact.
- **Align business outreach resources across WIOA core partners:** the region's One-Stop Operator will facilitate the core partners' work in aligning regional business engagement activities.
- **Promote Career Pathways:** Work closely with the State Workforce Board's Industry Partnership Initiative. Local board members to advise on sectors, career pathways, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other employer-sponsored work-based opportunities.

**Goal 3:** Job seekers and current workers can easily access and participate in workforce services relevant and appropriate to their career goals and align them with the skilled workforce needs of the local economy.

- **Diversify and expand outreach:** WIOA Title IB Service Provider will develop outreach strategy for the region that incorporates social media channels.
- **Continue to integrate remote access:** apply best practices in virtual meetings, remote training, and hybrid models across programs to broaden access to services in rural and remote areas. Frontline staff trained on VCC to utilize with supporting job seekers.
- **Promote continuous improvement:** continue surveying clients on customer satisfaction, including on movement towards and achievement of their career goals, relevance of the services they received, and employment outcomes.
- **Cohort projects:** CCWI will focus on implementation of cohort projects to serve priority populations and sectors, including, but not limited to, Integrated Employment and Training cohorts to serve Basic Skills Deficient individuals, work readiness cohorts to serve youth with barriers to employment, and sector specific projects. CCWI will develop new processes for group enrollments.

**Goal 4: The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) is responsive to funding trends.**

- Focus service delivery on most highly eligible/in-need populations and/or revise funding targets.

## I. Strategic Planning / Regional Analysis

### A. Planning Process for Local Plan

From February to June of 2025, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) orchestrated a robust planning process to inform the development of the 2025-2029 Local Plan. This process was designed by an internal team of CCWI staff, including Antoinette Mancusi, Executive Director; Heather Stott, Deputy Director; Kyle Olson, Senior Program Manager; Jillian Sample, Senior Advisor; and Jennifer Galletta, Executive Assistant. The planning process was designed to reflect the following goals:

- **Enlist key workforce leaders as stewards of the planning process**, including Local Workforce Development Board members representing the public and private sectors.
- **Engage a critical mass of stakeholders in the planning process**, including business leaders, economic developers, workforce training providers, education providers and representatives of community-based organizations.
- **Sponsor a variety of opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the planning process**, including outreach sessions and adhering to the public comment period requirement.
- **Utilize multiple points of data to shape the plan**, including labor market information, best practices at the national level, and results of stakeholder engagement.

**Steering Committee.** The planning process was guided by a steering committee who met on April 8; April 15; April 29; May 7; and June 5 to drive decision making. Recruited from CCWI’s Local Workforce Development Board, the steering committee included representatives of the major stakeholder groups:

Economic Development	James Rather	Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission
Business	Kelly Flagg	Associated General Contractors of Maine
	Jaime Grover	Dynamics Fitness
	Justin Cotta Holmes	Transworld Business Advisors of Maine
	Kelly Osborn	Bartlett Woods, Inc.
Education & Workforce Training	Tom Nickerson	Univ. of Maine at Augusta Brunswick Center
	Jim Whitten	Southern Maine Community College

**CCWI Website.** To promote both transparency of process and dissemination of information, CCWI developed a landing page on its website to host all information concerning the local plan process. The page contained stakeholder session information, and steering committee member information, in addition to meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes.

<https://www.coastalcounties.org/announcements/>

**Labor Market Information.** Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. contracted with the Maine Center for Business and Economic Research (MCBER) to provide technical analytical assistance to Coastal Counties Workforce Inc. in the preparation and evaluation of the region's four-year workforce investment plan.

**Quarterly meeting updates.** CCWI provided updates of the Local Plan process at quarterly meetings of the Local Workforce Development Board on March 27 & June 12, 2025. These updates enabled over 50 business, community, non-profit, WIOA system partners and government leaders to gain a high-level overview of the planning process, empowering them to serve as ambassadors who could provide input on strategic vision and strategies and answer basic questions on the plan's importance, sense of urgency, and channels of participation.

**Stakeholder surveys.** CCWI collaborated with Maine's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) on outreach for the refresh of its 10 Year Economic and State Workforce Development Plan over the fall of 2023. This process engaged over 600 participants and received survey responses from 113 respondents. As part of the collaboration with the SWDB, a community planning meeting was held in the Coastal Counties Region on September 21, 2023, with representatives from the four stakeholder groups attending, including education & training, economic development, business & industry, and community-based organization partners.

**Stakeholder meetings.** On April 22 and 24, 2025, CCWI hosted three virtual sessions via Zoom with groups of stakeholders representing education, community-based organization, business and industry, WIOA system partners, and economic development partners. Invitations were emailed to over 175 stakeholders and posted on the CCWI website. Each meeting featured an overview of the region's economy and targeted industry sectors, draft of the plan's goals and strategies, Q&A, and a facilitated discussion of the strategic vision and proposed strategies for the Local Plan. A total of 15 stakeholders outside of CCWI staff, board, and contractors attended these meetings. Additionally, CCWI gathered stakeholder input informally throughout the year as well from stakeholders at regularly scheduled meetings. Feedback on programs and services throughout the year was used to inform strategies for the Local Plan.

**Internal evaluations.** CCWI maintains a system for generating feedback from both clients and partners. These documents, which range from a client satisfaction survey to the certification process for its One-Stop comprehensive and affiliate centers, are a source of information for both continuous improvement and long-range planning.

**Public comment.** CCWI posted the Local Plan in the Portland Press Herald and on its website. Additionally, an email was sent to 175 interested parties regarding the plan and the public comment period. The public comment period ran for 10 business days from May 22, 2025, to June 2, 2025. A total of 0 comments were received.

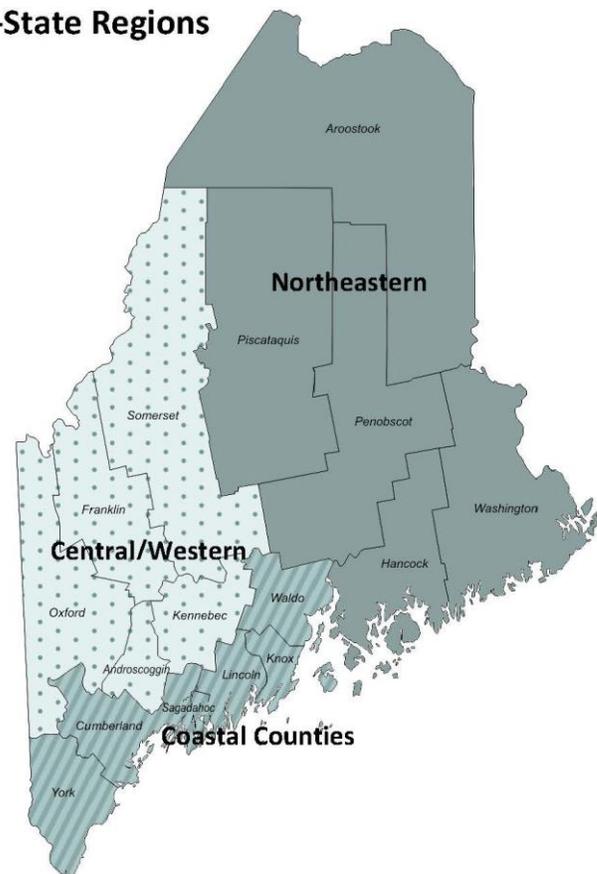
**Vote to approve proposed plan:** The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) held a quarterly meeting on June 12 to discuss and vote on the final draft of the Plan. The CCWB voted unanimously to approve the final draft.

## B. Description of the Region

While occupying just 12% of Maine’s land area, the Coastal Counties Workforce Board region (i.e., Coastal Counties Region) is the economic driver of the state. Comprised of the six contiguous counties York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo — from the New Hampshire border to Midcoast Maine, the region is home to 692,085 residents who account for 49.1% of Maine’s population and, between 2019 and 2024, gained nearly 37,800 new residents (a 5.8% increase). Growth in the region exceeded the state’s growth rate (4.7%) by 1.1 percentage points.

The region currently hosts 377,166 jobs and accounts for 50.9% of the state’s employment. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of jobs in the region increased by 2.4%, which is lower than the state rate of 3.7%. This difference between population growth and job growth creates several unique challenges and opportunities for the region to be discussed in this report, including post-pandemic economic recovery, and changes in the ways people work in the “work-from-home” and “gig” economy. Additionally, the report will describe changes to the area demographics. For instance, more of the region’s workers are leaving due to reaching retirement age than new workers are entering the workforce. Additionally, the region’s younger workers (aged 16-24) have a significantly higher unemployment rate than other age groups. The size and health of the economy is measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP<sup>5F6</sup>), the total value of goods and services generated annually. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Coastal Counties region generated \$44.2 billion in 2024, accounting for 58.7% of Maine’s GDP. Over the last 70 years, the region’s economy has restructured from Goods-Producing to Service-Providing. In 1950, manufacturing, for example, accounted for 43% of Maine’s economy, including the production of paper, food, textiles, shoes, electronics, ships, and other products. After peaking in 1979, manufacturing accounted for 8.8% of Maine’s economy in 2024 and 9.3% of the region’s economy. The Coastal Counties region accounts for 6 of Maine’s 16 Counties. The characteristics of these counties are briefly described.

### Sub-State Regions



## Overview of Counties

### **Cumberland County**

Cumberland County, the most populous county in the state, is comprised of 215,038 jobs. While Portland, Maine has the highest population of workers in the county, more than half of Portland workers (52.1%) commute from another town or city. Cumberland County's largest industries are health care and social assistance, retail trade, and accommodation and food services. Major employers include Maine Medical Center, Hannaford Brothers, Unum, IDEXX, L.L. Bean, and the University of Southern Maine. Cumberland County is also one of Maine's most educated counties, with 33.1% of residents possessing a bachelor's degree – 9.7 percentage points above the national average. Between 2019 and 2024, the county's population grew by over 17,500 people, 5.9% increase; however, the number of jobs in the county increased by only 1.6%. The difference in population growth and job growth can partially be contributed to remote workers migrating to the region during the pandemic.

### **Knox County**

Knox County is comprised of 21,303 jobs. Its largest industries are retail trade, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services. Major employers include Maine Medical Center, Hannaford Brothers, and Maine Behavioral Health. Despite a 3.8% growth in population since 2019, Knox County experienced a 1.9% decline in jobs over the same time period, suggesting that the community may be travelling to other counties to find work.

### **Lincoln County**

Lincoln County is comprised of 14,713 jobs. Its largest industries are retail trade, health care and social assistance, and construction. Top employers include the Bath Iron Works, Maine Medical Center, and Hannaford Brothers. Percentage wise, Lincoln County saw the highest population growth (6.8%) but also the lowest job growth (1.2%) in the region.

### **Sagadahoc County**

Sagadahoc County, the smallest county by geographic area in Maine, is comprised of 19,327 jobs. This county has seen a 5.8% increase in the number of jobs since 2019, the highest in the region, which outpaces the county's population growth of 5.1% across the same time period. Sagadahoc County's largest industries are manufacturing, retail trade, and construction. Top employers include Bath Iron Works, General Dynamics, and L.L. Bean. It is important to note that this county has a high rate of veterans within their population, outpacing the national average for an area of similar size by over 1,900 veterans.

### **Waldo County**

Waldo County is comprised of 14,439 jobs, a slight decline of 1.3% since 2019. Its top industries include retail trade, health care and social assistance, and construction. Manufacturing jobs greatly exceed the national average of around 1,500 jobs: Waldo County has nearly 7,000 manufacturing jobs. Major employers are Maine Medical Center, Athenahealth, and Bank of America. Monthly job postings in Waldo County were mainly comprised of healthcare practitioners and technical assistants, with over 40 of these

types of jobs posted each month. This demonstrates Waldo County's need for health care workers. Despite this shortage, the medical industry is already a top industry for the county.

### **York County**

York County, which is Maine's southern- and westernmost county, is comprised of 92,347 jobs, which represents an increase in jobs of 5.7% since 2019. Its largest industries include accommodation and food services, health care and social assistance, and retail trade. Top employers for York County are Maine Medical Center, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and the University of New England. Much like Sagadahoc County, York County has a high rate of veterans compared to the national average of 11,092 for a similar geographic area, where 16,103 York County residents are veterans.

### **C. Analysis of the Regional Economic Conditions 2025-2029**

To evaluate the current conditions of the Coastal Counties Workforce Region, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) completed an extensive updated data analysis of the region's labor market, industrial structure, occupational mix, and skill requirements for the period 2019-2024, and inventoried the region's workforce training capacities. The analysis employed readily available secondary data from a variety of federal, state, and local sources.

Since the pandemic, the region has seen an uptick in population growth. However, the growth in population has exceeded job growth over the same time period. One factor behind this difference is the rise of the 'gig economy' - people who work remotely and are not tied down to a specific location. According to a recent analysis done by Co-Working Magazine of 2023 remote-work data, Portland, Maine ranked fourteenth among cities with the highest proportions of remote workers. Because jobs data follows the employer, not the employee, jobs, industries, and occupations who have out-of-state employers are not included in any regional data and therefore an important cohort within the region is missing from much of this analysis.

A number of challenges, as well as opportunities, are present in the region, as it adjusts to broader economic shifts in the global and U.S. economy and within the state of Maine. As the state's economic center, the success of the Coastal Counties region will continue to drive the success of Maine.

## Regional Economic Conditions and In-Demand Industries

Industry employment trends since 2019 highlight a continued transition from traditionally more trade and hands-on oriented skills, toward professional service and social skills. The region retains relative specializations, and growing employment demands in healthcare, retail, accommodation & food services, and construction.

It is critical that a successful workforce strategy addresses the region's industry and employment sector strengths, as well as how the region's industries are changing. In the Coastal Counties Workforce Board region, health care, government, and retail remain as the three dominant industries by employment size. Together, these three core industries comprise 38.9% of the region's employment base and grew by 3.2% from 2019 to 2021, with 56,870 jobs in health care and social assistance (15.1%), 47,646 in government (12.6%), and 42,124 in retail trade (11.2%). The regional share of employment in the health care and retail trade industries is significantly higher than national shares, suggesting a relative specialization. Likewise, the region specializes in manufacturing and tourism-based industries of retail trade, and accommodation and food services. In these industries, the region supplies 31,771 manufacturing jobs and 34,754 accommodation and food services, the latter of which is highly concentrated in the region relative to the nation.

The fastest growing sectors in the region represent a mix of goods-producing and service-orientated industries. The top growing goods-producing industries were agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and construction – both of which outpaced growth at the national level – increased by 24% and 11%, respectively. The growth in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting was primarily driven by crop production, which gained over 1,400 jobs, a 93% increase. Crop production includes cannabis farms, an industry that has grown significantly since October 2020, when marijuana dispensaries began selling cannabis for recreational use. Management of companies and enterprises and professional, scientific, and technical services also grew significantly over the period and outpaced national growth. Arts, entertainment, and recreation also grew significantly over the period in line with national growth. Growth in health care, the largest employer, and a key driver of employment growth over much of the 2000's, increased by just 6% and at a slightly lower rate than the rest of the nation (8%).

Table 1: Employment, growth, and wages in the CCWB Region by major industry classification, 2024

Industry Description	Jobs	Growth Rate		Avg annual wage	
		'19-24		CCWI	United
		Region	States	Region	States
Health Care and Social Assistance	56,870	6%	8%	\$81,405	\$76,400
Government	47,646	2%	1%	\$87,109	\$93,656
Retail Trade	42,124	2%	(0%)	\$48,273	\$49,212
Accommodation and Food Services	34,754	(2%)	1%	\$38,870	\$33,234
Manufacturing	31,771	1%	1%	\$90,112	\$102,163
Construction	26,249	11%	7%	\$72,916	\$85,402
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	24,236	15%	13%	\$110,063	\$135,963
Other Services (except Public Administration)	17,866	(2%)	(2%)	\$44,460	\$45,840
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,176	(8%)	(0%)	\$56,322	\$62,451
Finance and Insurance	15,558	(12%)	5%	\$134,431	\$156,404
Educational Services	10,265	(9%)	4%	\$54,660	\$62,888
Wholesale Trade	9,822	(4%)	3%	\$109,270	\$115,465
Management of Companies and Enterprises	8,904	18%	7%	\$140,657	\$178,792
Transportation and Warehousing	8,696	1%	17%	\$69,278	\$77,855
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	8,102	16%	5%	\$40,747	\$55,100
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,795	24%	2%	\$51,603	\$53,535
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,770	2%	6%	\$79,087	\$85,345
Information	4,829	2%	4%	\$92,924	\$183,407
Utilities	634	15%	7%	\$179,382	\$176,702
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	95	2%	(12%)	\$90,306	\$147,696
Total	377,166	2%	4%	\$75,838	\$85,003

Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees.

Overall, average annual wages in the region are lower (in some cases significantly) than the nation in all but three sectors: health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and utilities. Despite this, average wages for the region have increased by 28% since 2019. While wages in the CCWI region have risen at a higher rate than the rest of the nation (national wages have increased by 23%), wages within the region are still 11% below the United States average. This remains a key challenge for the region as it attempts to attract workers from outside. Wages increased the fastest in utilities (40%), accommodations & food services (38%), and other services (37%). Although parts of the region offer a high quality of life and overall lower costs, relative pay differences to competitor regions outside of Maine are significant.

#### Targeted Industries for Workforce Development Programming

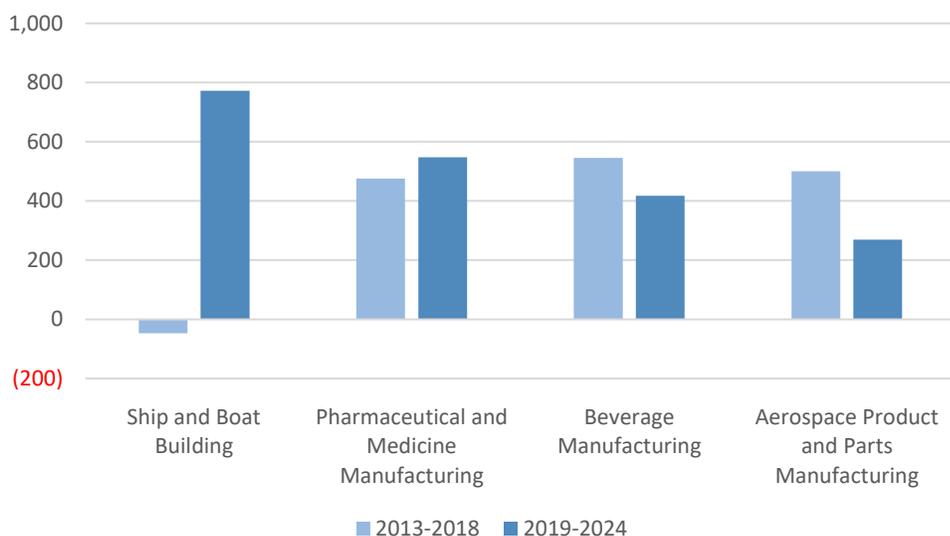
While employment numbers have returned to pre-pandemic levels, the rate of growth within specific industries has been sporadic and thus making employment projections less reliable. Therefore, the

suggested target sectors remain unchanged since the last plan (2021 -2025) and include: manufacturing; health care and social assistance; accommodation and food services and construction. Several other industries of significance include crop production, fishing, business support services, office administrative services, and truck transportation. <sup>4</sup> The following paragraphs highlight trends within those industries followed by a look at key occupations within each of these sectors to target in workforce development programming.

### MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Within the manufacturing sector, the fastest growing industries include ship and boat building, pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing, and beverage manufacturing (Figure 1). Growth in federal defense spending is expected to drive growth in ship and boat building and aerospace manufacturing. Meanwhile growth in the pet healthcare market and health care diagnostics more generally will continue to boost employment in pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing. Likewise, the craft brewing industry is expected to continue its growth in the short term, assuming local brewers tap into the demand in export markets and capture the growing tourism market.

Figure 1: Industry employment trends in the manufacturing sector



Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees.

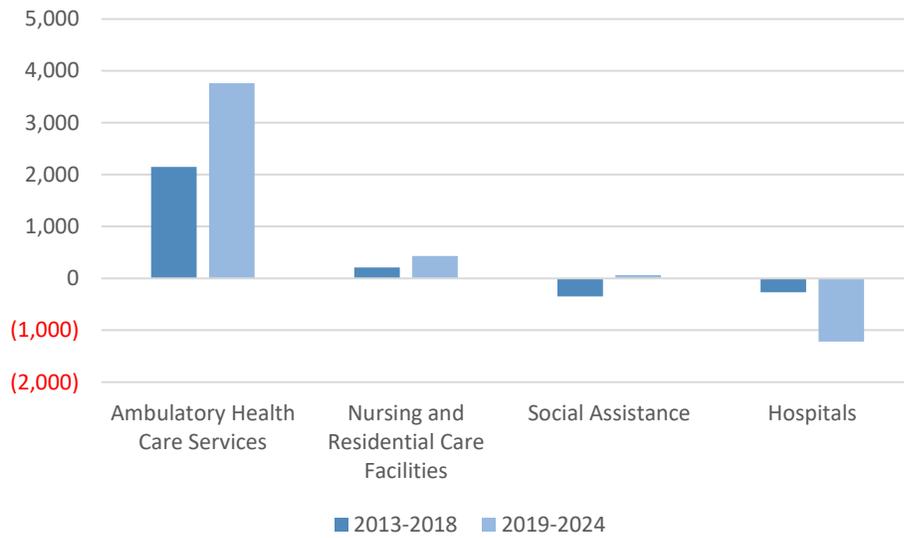
### HEALTH CARE SECTOR

Growth in the health care sector is being driven by ambulatory health care services, which saw a 21% increase in the number of jobs between 2019 and 2024 (Figure 2). Even though the demand for hospital services has declined, as of 2024 hospitals account for nearly a quarter of jobs within the healthcare sector. Additionally, the region’s aging population (see *Regional Population & Labor Force Analysis* section) will continue to drive demand for a variety of jobs and services across the health care spectrum. Overall, this

<sup>4</sup> Much of the recent growth in the crop production industry is due to the legalization of recreational cannabis use.

is a critical sector for the state and the regional economy and the ability to address labor shortages in the sector has major implications for the welfare of the populous.

Figure 2: Industry employment trends in the healthcare sector

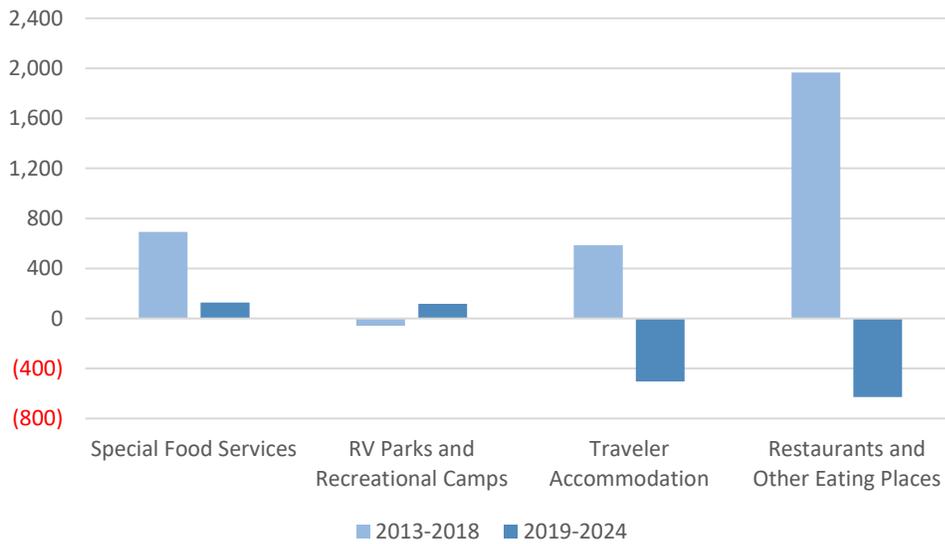


Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees

## ACCOMMODATIONS & FOOD SERVICES SECTOR

Growth in the overall economy and the tourism sector fueled growth in the accommodations and food services industry. In particular, the greater Portland region emerged as a hotbed for the gastro-economy culminating with national attention after being named the Restaurant City of the Year in 2018 by Bon Appetite magazine. While this growth has stagnated or declined following the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 3), the accommodations & food services industry still accounts for 9% of the region's jobs and is therefore a vital sector of the overall economy.

Figure 3: Industry employment trends in the accommodations & food services sector

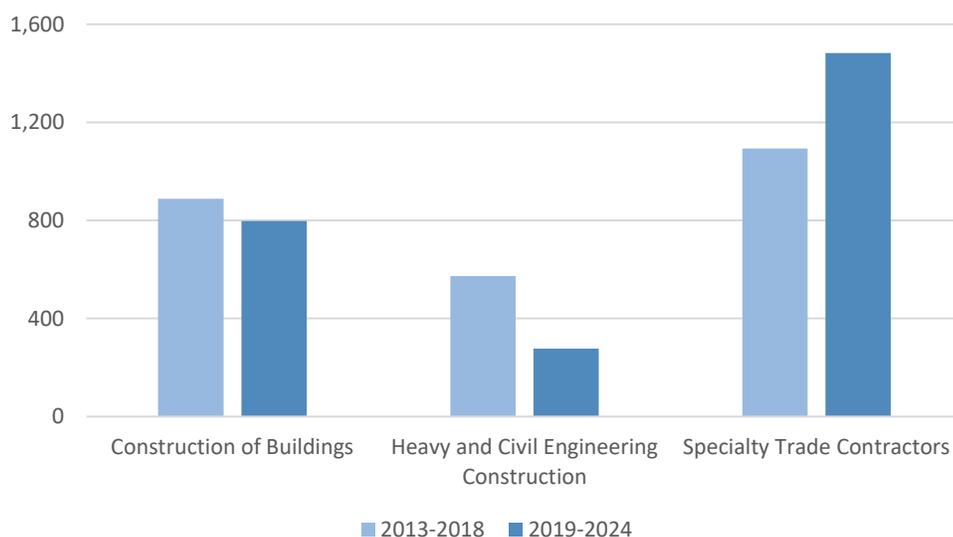


Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees

## CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The construction sector is closely tied to overall macroeconomic conditions in areas like real estate sales and development, unemployment, and interest rates. Strong demand over the last several years has fueled growth but also tight labor market conditions in the sector exist. Workforce shortages have been well documented in this sector in the region and across the state. Although employment growth has slowed down, there will be continued demand for specialty trade contractors, as well as jobs in heavy and civil engineering construction and more traditional construction industries (Figure 4).

*Figure 4: Industry employment trends in the construction sector*

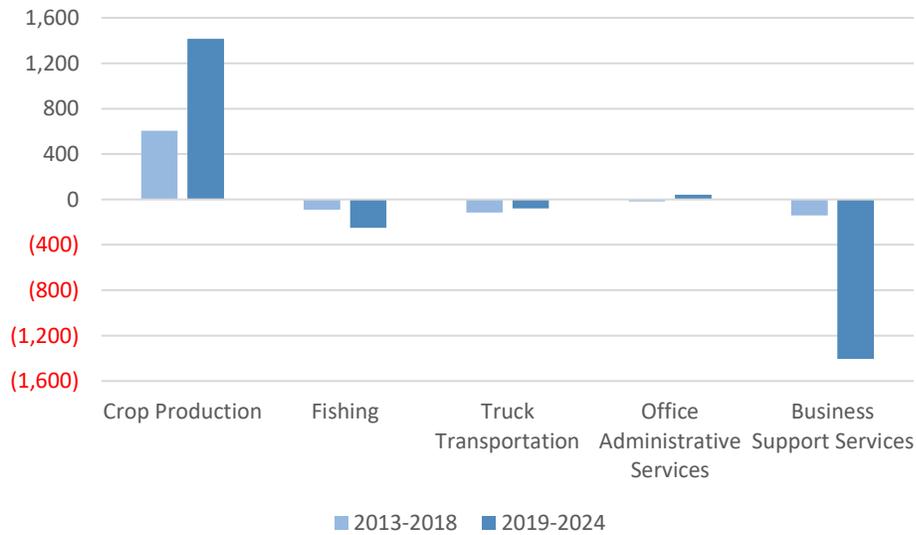


*Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees*

## OTHER INDUSTRIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

In the 2021-2025 Regional Plan, four other industries of significance were identified as having healthy employment projections: crop production, fishing, business support services, and office administrative services. Additionally, truck transport, which was projected to decline due to a lack of available workers and industry restructuring, was also included. As shown in Figure 5, crop production jobs increased by 93% between 2019 and 2024 while office support services increased by 8%. The increase in crop production jobs is most likely due to the legalization of recreational cannabis sales. Between 2019 and 2024, business support services lost approximately 1,400 jobs, which was primarily driven by a decrease in call center jobs.

*Figure 5: Industry employment trends in other industries of significance*



*Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees*

## Occupational Overview and In-Demand Occupations

Industry employment captures all workers in an industry regardless of the types of jobs in which they engage. Some jobs can transcend industries, while others are specific and specialized to a certain industry. Occupational data measures the number of workers that do similar jobs across all industries. This data can be used to identify the things that people do in a region and the skills and knowledge that is required by workers in the region.

The largest occupational groupings in the region are in office and administrative support, sales and related, food preparation & serving related, and management. These top four occupations are in line with national shares and make up over a third of workers in the region (Table 2). While the top three occupations are identical to those shown in CCWI's previous regional plan, there has been a substantial increase (24%) in the number of workers within management occupations within the last five years. While this growth rate is slightly lower than the management occupations growth rate at the national level (27%), the occupation is somewhat concentrated to the region (1.07). The region is also somewhat concentrated in farming, fishing, and forestry (1.78), construction and extraction (1.32), building and grounds cleaning and maintenance (1.27), architecture and engineering (1.20), and arts/entertainment (1.14). These concentrations also happen to comprise occupations that tend to pay lower wages, with the exception of architecture and engineering (\$42.13/hour median wage) and management (\$45.38). Occupations that tend to pay higher wages are in groupings that are generally referred to as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) jobs that require specialized skill sets, higher training, more knowledge/education, or decision-making abilities. Nearly all occupational categories grew at a pace slower than the nation.

Table 2: Summary of major occupational groupings in the CCWB Region, 2024

Description	Jobs	Median Hourly Wage	Growth Rate '19-24		Female to male ratio
			CCWI Region	United States	
Office and Administrative Support	42,386	\$21.91	(8%)	(5%)	3.62
Sales and Related	33,021	\$18.76	(1%)	(5%)	1.09
Food Preparation and Serving Related	30,947	\$18.00	(4%)	(0%)	1.46
Management	29,776	\$45.38	24%	27%	0.63
Transportation and Material Moving	24,253	\$19.73	1%	9%	0.27
Construction and Extraction	22,277	\$25.61	2%	1%	0.04
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	22,084	\$39.78	4%	9%	2.88
Business and Financial Operations	21,144	\$36.75	17%	21%	1.18
Educational Instruction and Library	20,872	\$26.06	0%	1%	2.95
Production	20,678	\$22.11	(7%)	(4%)	0.39
Healthcare Support	18,753	\$19.24	9%	9%	4.20
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	16,416	\$18.69	4%	(1%)	0.69
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	14,981	\$26.59	3%	5%	0.04
Personal Care and Service	11,051	\$17.08	(1%)	(5%)	2.72
Computer and Mathematical	8,759	\$40.55	3%	11%	0.45
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	7,848	\$22.89	8%	6%	1.12
Community and Social Service	7,179	\$25.09	12%	8%	2.27
Architecture and Engineering	7,161	\$42.13	0%	(1%)	0.20
Protective Service	5,914	\$24.29	(1%)	2%	0.27
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	4,485	\$18.25	15%	(5%)	0.25
Life, Physical, and Social Science	3,485	\$34.25	13%	9%	0.85
Legal	2,546	\$36.56	(1%)	8%	1.06
Military-only	1,150	\$28.38	(17%)	0%	0.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>377,166</b>	<b>\$22.11</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>0.96</b>

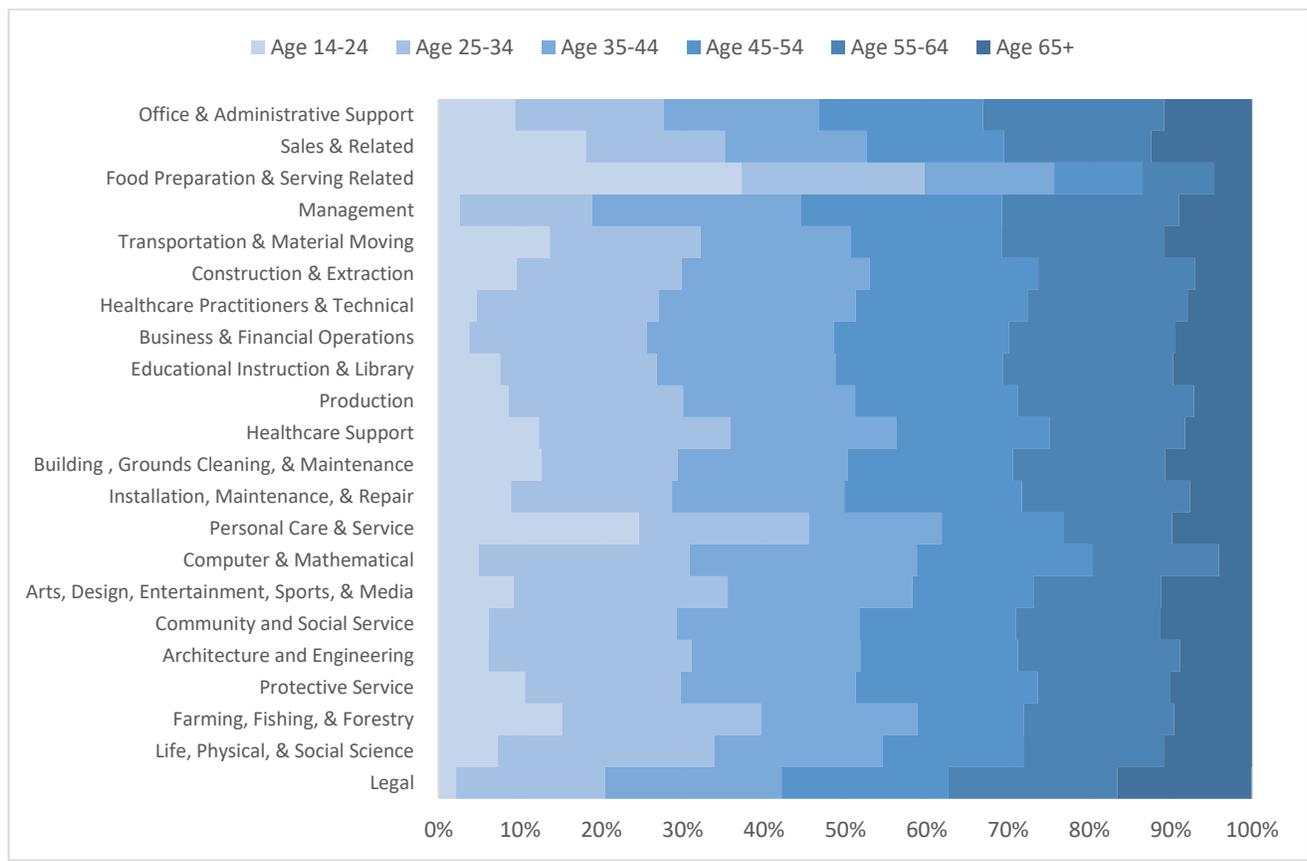
Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – includes QCEW and Non-QCEW Employees; total median wage estimated by MCBER.

As is the national pattern, gender concentration is present across occupational groupings. Healthcare, education, personal care and services, and office and administrative support are female dominated, ranging from three to four female workers for every male. Alternatively, male occupations are concentrated in construction and extraction, installation, and maintenance, architectural and engineering, and farming, fishing, and forestry (Table 2).<sup>5</sup> This has implications for developing workforce strategies that target specific occupations traditionally dominated by a particular gender.

<sup>5</sup> The terminology used in occupation groupings differ from the terminology used for industry sectors. For instance, the farming, fishing, and forestry occupation is generally aligned with the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry.

Figure 6 shows the age distribution across major occupational categories. Of particular interest are the occupational groupings with a greater share of the two darkest blocks, which represent workers aged 55 and older. In all occupations, except computer & mathematical and food preparation, the largest age group is 55 and over and thereby suggesting the region’s aging issue (described further in the *Analysis of Regional Population & Labor Force* section) is a broader challenge rather than isolated to specific groupings. However, information about the age of new workers entering into specific occupational groupings, aka the replacement workers, is limited as statistically reliable data on the age of new workers are not easily accessible.

Figure 6: Age distribution of major occupational categories, 2024



### Detailed Occupational Analysis

A look at detailed occupations within occupational groupings allows us to identify key skill levels and educational requirements, while gaining a more nuanced understanding of the growing and in-demand occupations in the region. As such, this section first looks at the fastest growing occupations regardless of wages or skill requirements. Occupations are then identified as high wage and in-demand, broken out by educational requirements.

### FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS

Analysis was conducted to determine the top 20 growing occupations in the region. Within these top 20, virtually every occupation identified grew at a faster pace than at the national level and half of these

occupations are concentrated in the region (Table 4).<sup>6</sup> Among the top fastest growing occupations, 12 out of 20 pay higher than the region’s median hourly wage and half of the higher paying occupations do not require a college degree (6 out of 12). This is a shift from the previous period when the region’s fastest growing high wage employment opportunities were dominated by occupations requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher. Interestingly, there has been a decrease in jobs requiring a bachelor’s degree: in the prior period, seven of the fastest growing occupations required a bachelor’s degree compared to only three in the current period. Half of the fastest growing occupations (10 out of 20) are concentrated in the region relative to the nation. 8F

Table 4. Fastest growing detailed occupations, 2024

SOC	Description	Jobs	Growth '19-24		Concentration	Median Hourly Earnings	Education requirements (entry)
			CCWI Region	United States			
11-9179	Personal Service Managers, All Other	183	169%	58%	2.20	\$24.46	Bachelor's degree
51-9011	Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	184	140%	37%	0.70	\$25.14	HS diploma
27-1012	Craft Artists	240	132%	56%	2.58	\$8.58	Less than HS
19-3051	Urban and Regional Planners	150	126%	13%	1.55	\$32.30	Master's degree
45-2099	Agricultural Workers, All Other	229	117%	23%	1.16	\$15.92	Less than HS
19-1029	Biological Scientists, All Other	157	111%	48%	1.06	\$40.89	Bachelor's degree
33-9021	Private Detectives and Investigators	161	102%	(1%)	1.76	\$23.01	HS diploma
43-5021	Couriers and Messengers	329	95%	51%	0.78	\$18.07	HS diploma
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	924	87%	3%	0.85	\$18.35	Less than HS
43-3099	Financial Clerks, All Other	143	80%	51%	1.32	\$24.54	HS diploma
19-1021	Biochemists and Biophysicists	244	79%	3%	3.17	\$41.36	Doctoral/professional
51-2011	Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	363	78%	(28%)	5.22	\$29.41	HS diploma

<sup>6</sup> Similar to measures of industry specialization, the measure of occupational concentration uses location quotients to gauge the presence of an occupation in the region compared to the nation. A ratio greater than 1.2 suggests an occupation is concentrated in the region, while a ratio below .80 suggests an underrepresented occupation. A ratio at or close to 1 suggests a similar share of occupations in the regional workforce relative to the nation.

29-1211	Anesthesiologists	163	74%	13%	1.89	\$132.52	Doctoral/professional
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	639	72%	(24%)	4.93	\$25.37	HS diploma
49-9051	Electrical Power-Line Installers and Repairers	306	71%	10%	1.11	\$49.41	HS diploma
45-2093	Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, and Aquacultural Animals	493	70%	(0%)	1.27	\$14.37	Less than HS
51-3092	Food Batchmakers	282	69%	8%	0.73	\$17.97	HS diploma
39-5092	Manicurists and Pedicurists	398	67%	31%	0.75	\$13.95	Postsecondary nondegree
19-3033	Clinical and Counseling Psychologists	150	63%	28%	0.81	\$48.67	Doctoral/professional
11-9013	Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers	1,510	63%	5%	1.20	\$14.81	HS diploma

Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – Includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees; MCBER calculations.

Note: Occupations with less than 100 employees are excluded from the table. Highlighted median hourly wages are those above the total workforce median of \$22.11. Highlighted concentration ratios are occupations concentrated in the region (a measure greater than 1.20).

#### IN-DEMAND, HIGH-WAGE OCCUPATIONS WITH AN ASSOCIATE OR LOWER EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENT

Table 5 shows in-demand, high-wage occupations that require less than a 4-year university degree, including 2-year awards and below. The occupations identified include a number that are specialized to the industries that were previously identified as in-demand, including healthcare workers, workers in manufacturing, accommodation and food services, and construction.

Table 5: In-demand, high-wage occupations with low formal educational requirements

SOC	Description	Jobs	Growth '19- '24	Median Hourly Wage	Concentration	Education (entry)	'25- '30 Projections	
							Annual opening	Growth
31-9092	Medical Assistants	2,504	8%	\$22.56	1.42	Postsecondary nondegree	372	174
47-2111	Electricians	2,035	10%	\$28.94	1.13	HS diploma	199	69

29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	525	17%	\$22.32	1.88	Associate's degree	62	55
31-9011	Massage Therapists	465	26%	\$22.04	1.19	Postsecondary nondegree	77	50
31-9091	Dental Assistants	843	17%	\$24.37	1.00	Postsecondary nondegree	128	36
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	1,517	(5%)	\$28.93	0.58	HS diploma	152	34
49-9021	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	1,345	10%	\$27.84	1.34	Postsecondary nondegree	122	32
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	696	3%	\$30.82	0.73	HS diploma	62	30
49-2022	Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers	223	(30%)	\$28.52	0.60	Postsecondary nondegree	30	26
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	541	(10%)	\$31.77	0.37	Postsecondary nondegree	49	23
29-1292	Dental Hygienists	517	(14%)	\$40.87	1.07	Associate's degree	40	23
37-2021	Pest Control Workers	233	42%	\$21.99	1.02	HS diploma	37	22
11-9051	Food Service Managers	1,066	7%	\$32.74	1.44	HS diploma	125	22
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,438	7%	\$22.99	0.92	HS diploma	368	19
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	236	8%	\$29.73	0.97	Associate's degree	38	19
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	699	8%	\$29.20	1.52	HS diploma	89	19
47-4051	Highway Maintenance Workers	711	(4%)	\$23.45	2.09	HS diploma	68	18
49-9052	Telecommunications Line Installers and Repairers	259	(21%)	\$37.80	1.12	HS diploma	27	17

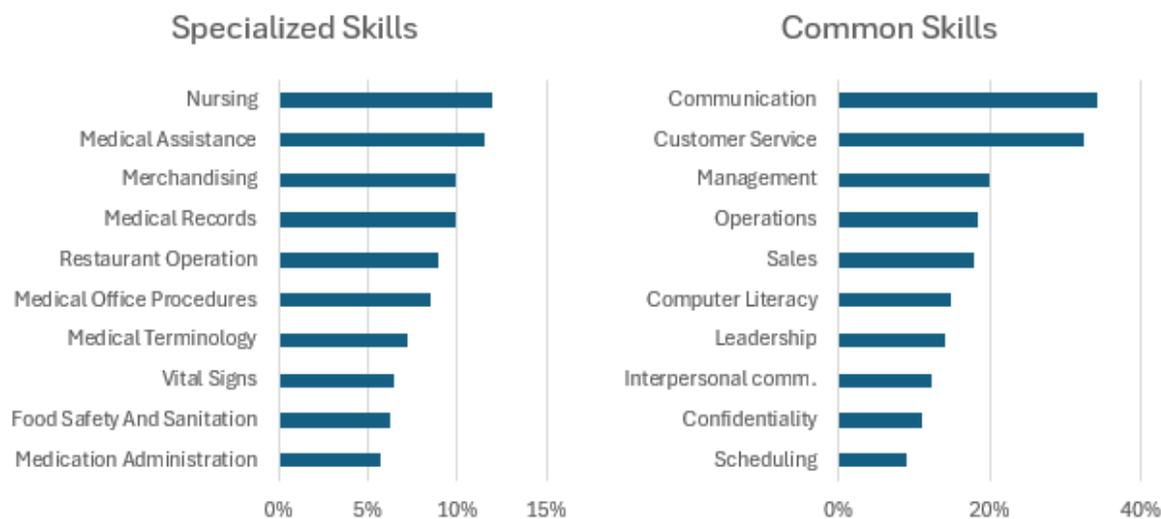
29-2099	Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	266	(18%)	\$25.42	0.67	Postsecondary nondegree	22	16
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,737	6%	\$29.55	1.55	HS diploma	157	14

Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – Includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees

Information about the types of broad skill and knowledge requirements of the projected workforce are key to directing training and program initiatives that address workforce demands. The skill and knowledge requirements of in-demand occupations are essentially the key skills and knowledge domains that are in demand in the region.<sup>7</sup>

Figure 7 lists the top 10 most important skills and knowledge areas required of the in-demand and high wage occupations that require less than a 4-year degree. The average common skill levels reflect a mix of basic communication, management, and other soft skills, such as computer literacy. These reflect a mix of service and product based, cognitive and production-oriented skill sets. This is not to say that other skills are not important to specific occupations or industries. Similarly, the types of specialized skills required of the in-demand, high-wage occupations include a mix across knowledge domains but are also reflective of respective industries and skill requirements represented by this group of occupations, such as healthcare, retail, and accommodations and food services.

Figure 7: Top skill and knowledge requirements of in-demand and high-wage occupations with below a bachelor’s degree educational requirement



Source: Lightcast, 2025.1

<sup>7</sup> The skill and knowledge occupational requirements do not represent the full range of necessary skills and knowledge, but rather this analysis provides a snapshot of the skills that will likely be more important to in-demand workers than the remainder of the workforce. The measures reflect the difference between weighted average skill levels of in-demand occupations relative to the weighted average skill importance of all occupations.

## IN-DEMAND, HIGH-WAGE OCCUPATIONS IN CCWB-IDENTIFIED FOCUS INDUSTRIES

Table 6 provides a list of in-demand, high-wage occupations specific to target industries that require an associate degree or less as a typical entry-level requirement.

*Table 6: Top in-demand, high-wage occupations in focus industries requiring associate degree or less, 2024.*

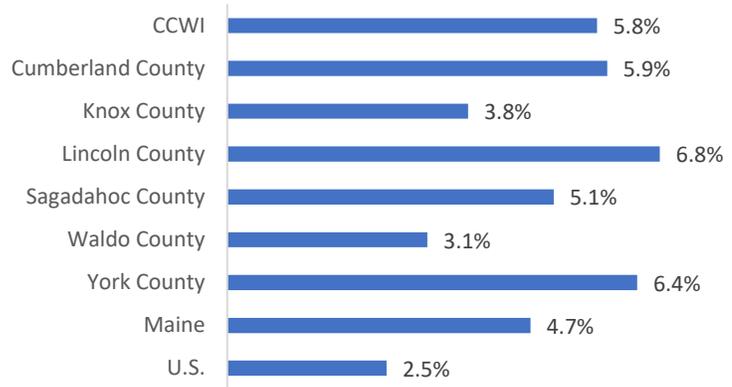
<b>Description</b>	<b>Employed in Industry Group (2024)</b>	<b>Change (‘19-24’)</b>	<b>Median Hourly Earnings</b>	<b>Typical Entry Level Education</b>
First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers	372	112	\$35.63	HS diploma
First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers	1,641	308	\$34.00	HS diploma
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	918	172	\$30.50	HS diploma
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	1,576	80	\$29.55	HS diploma
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	352	153	\$29.41	HS diploma
Electricians	1,804	230	\$28.94	HS diploma
Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	222	75	\$28.71	HS diploma
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	970	161	\$27.84	Postsecondary nondegree
Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers	412	87	\$27.48	Less than HS
Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	117	73	\$27.07	HS diploma
Sheet Metal Workers	531	147	\$26.28	HS diploma
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,147	80	\$25.68	HS diploma
Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	621	259	\$25.37	HS diploma
Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders	179	105	\$25.14	HS diploma
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	822	160	\$24.71	Postsecondary nondegree
Dental Assistants	815	130	\$24.37	Postsecondary nondegree
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,156	155	\$22.99	HS diploma
Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	397	80	\$22.79	HS diploma
Medical Assistants	2,405	193	\$22.56	Postsecondary nondegree
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	375	78	\$22.15	Less than HS

*Source: Lightcast, 2025.1 – Includes QCEW employees and non-QCEW employees; Note: Occupations with less than 100 employees are excluded from the table.*

## Regional Population & Labor Force Analysis

The CCWB region’s population as of 2024 was about 692,000, a majority of which is concentrated in the larger counties of York and Cumberland. Between 2019 and 2024, the region’s population grew by 5.8%, which more than double the population growth of United States (2.5%). Additionally, the growth within the region exceeds Maine’s growth (4.7%) by 1.1 percentage points (Figure 8). As a result, population levels are projected to continue to increase over the next ten years; however, at a slower pace.<sup>8</sup>

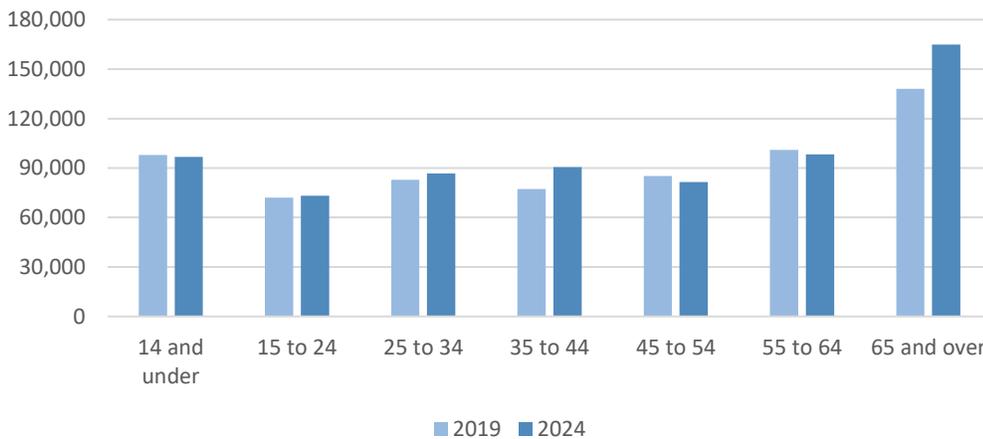
**Figure 8. Population change in the CCWI Region, 2019-2024**



Source: Lightcast 2025.1

Maine is the oldest state in the nation by median age, though the Coastal Counties region is slightly younger than the statewide average due in part to relatively younger populations in the Portland area, although the mid-coast counties of Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo are significantly older. Figure 9 shows a sharp increase in the older age cohort of 65 and older between the years 2019 to 2024. There is a 25,000-person difference between age cohorts that are currently entering the labor force (ages 15 to 24) and the cohorts that will be exiting the labor force in the next 10 years (ages 55 to 64). Thus, a larger share of the region’s population will be retiring and subsequently leave the workforce while a smaller share of younger workers will be entering. These projections are shown in Figure 10, where the proportion of the region’s population aged 65 and over continues to rise.

*Figure 9: Age Distribution of the Coastal Counties Regional Population*

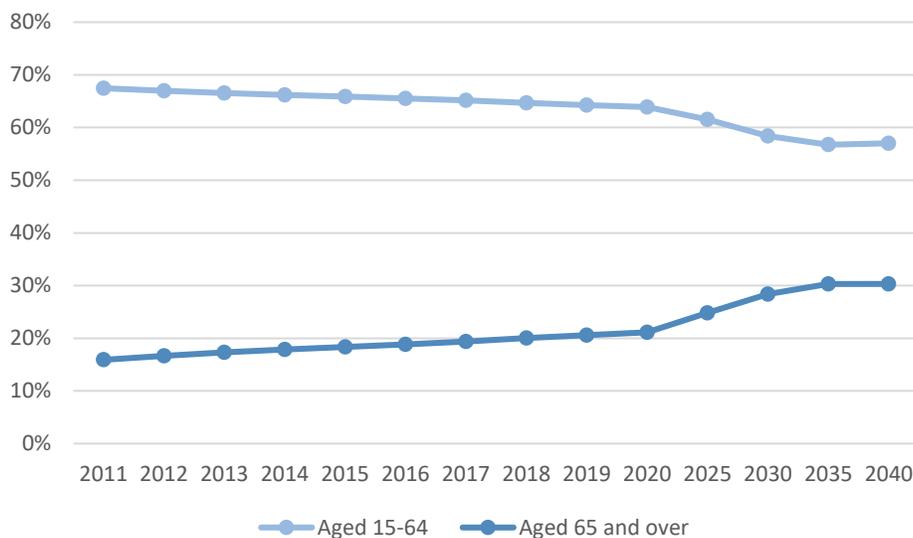


Source: Lightcast, 2025.1

<sup>8</sup> Data is based on the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, State Economist Population Projections 2040

There are two key implications of these trends. The first poses significant challenges to the labor market in the form of a smaller labor pool for firms to access. It is likely that some workers will benefit in the form of higher wages, but ultimately these restrictions, particularly in a healthy economy, will have dramatic effects on the regional and state economy. The second relates to the loss of skill and experience in the workforce from retiring workers. This creates additional competitive disadvantages and unless addressed, may result in a decline in the number of firms in the region who will move to seek talent elsewhere.

Figure 10. Population Projection of the Coastal Counties Region, 2011-2040



Source: Maine Office of Policy and Management, Maine state and county population projections 2040; MCBER calculations

On average, the CCWB region has a higher level of educational attainment than both state and national averages, with a somewhat higher concentration of middle skills training and education. More of the population has completed high school, with about 95.7% of the population aged 25 years and older holding a diploma (or equivalent) or some level of post-secondary education, compared with about 94.7 percent statewide and just 89.6 percent for the nation. Cumberland County, the urban center of the region, has the highest concentration of people who have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher (52.8%), which is significantly higher than the rest of the counties in the CCWB region individually, the state, or nation.

The health of the overall labor market is an important consideration in any regional workforce strategy. Changes in population demographics are beginning to influence the labor market and employment and magnifying already tight labor market conditions.

Table 7. Employment, 2023

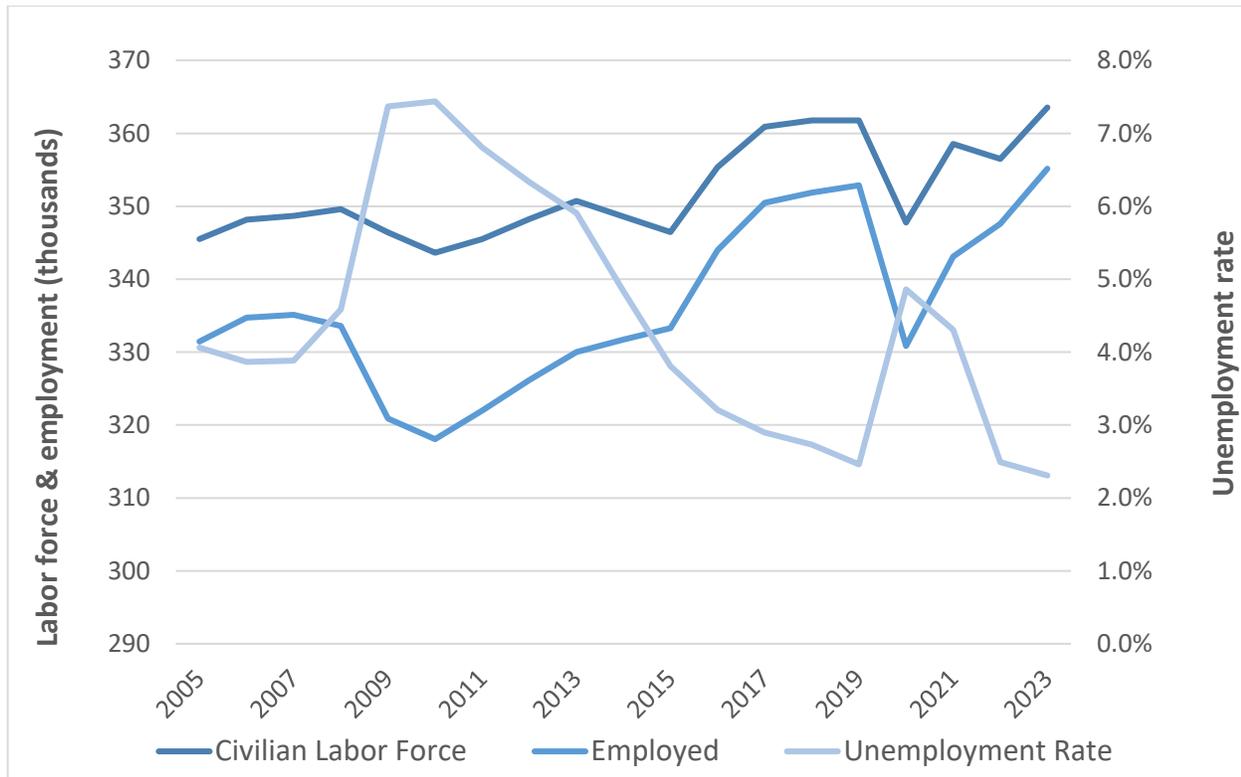
<b>Geography</b>	<b>Employed 2023</b>	<b>% Change from '19</b>
CCWI Region	355,149	3.5%
Cumberland	168,399	3.8%
Knox	19,289	0.6%
Lincoln	16,298	2.5%
Sagadahoc	18,929	3.3%
Waldo	18,324	1.3%
York	113,910	4.1%
Maine	674,460	2.7%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information (CWRI); MCBER calculations

Unemployment rates are at historic lows in the region and labor force participation is above national rates. Unemployment rates in the CCWB region are lower relative to both Maine and the nation, ending 2023 at 2.3 percent (refer to Table 8) and have dropped down to pre-pandemic levels (Figure 11). Within the region, Cumberland, and Sagadahoc (both at 2.1%) continued to have the lowest unemployment levels in the CCWB region, whereas Waldo (3.0%) and Knox (2.7%) had slightly higher unemployment rates in 2023. With the region at what economists consider full employment – virtually all workers participating in the workforce are able to find a job provided the individuals do not have barriers to employment such as deficiencies in soft skills, literacy/numeracy, limited English proficiency, criminal record barriers and addiction issues. Unemployment numbers do not capture individuals who are disengaged from the workforce.

While good for job seekers, employers struggle to find workers. As a result, employers have been raising wages to attract and retain workers and to entice those who gave up looking for work to reenter the job market. However, it is important to recognize that unemployment rates vary by educational attainment level. For example, within the region, workers whose highest level of education was a high school degree had a significantly higher unemployment rate than workers with a bachelor’s degree.

Figure 11: Labor force trends in CCWI region from 2005-2023



Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information (CWRI); MCBER calculations

Table 8: Labor force summary, 2023

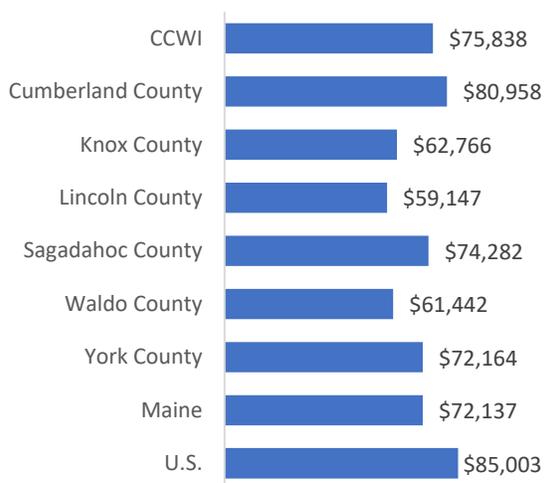
	Labor Force		Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Participation Rate	
	2023	% Change from 2019	2023	2023	% Difference from 2019
CCWI Region	363,540	1.4%	2.3%	62.1%	-3.5%
Cumberland	172,086	1.8%	2.1%	64.8%	-3.5%
Knox	19,821	-1.3%	2.7%	56.2%	-3.1%
Lincoln	16,736	0.3%	2.6%	54.1%	-2.3%
Sagadahoc	19,339	1.4%	2.1%	61.0%	-2.7%
Waldo	18,887	-0.9%	3.0%	55.3%	-1.6%
York	116,671	1.7%	2.4%	62.0%	-4.4%
Maine	692,674	0.5%	2.6%	57.9%	-3.2%

Source: Maine Department of Labor, Center for Workforce Research, and Information (CWRI); MCBER calculations

Between 2019 and 2023, the number of people aged 16 and over in the CCWB’s labor force increased by 1.4%, which is almost three times the rate of increase across the state (0.5%). Due to the pandemic, the region’s overall labor force participation rate declined by 3.5 percentage points. During this same time period, the labor force participation rate also declined at the national and state level. Labor force participation rates vary across counties in the region. Lincoln, Waldo, and Knox County have the lowest labor force participation rate at 54.1%, 55.3%, and 56.2% respectively, while Cumberland County, Sagadahoc, and York rates are above the state ranging from 61% to 64%. Some of these differences are, in part, a result of differences in population age across the region, such as a greater share of retired persons reside in Lincoln and Knox County. Like unemployment rates, education level is closely correlated with labor force participation with lower percentages of individuals with lower levels of formal education participating less than those with higher levels of education.

The region is at a relative competitive disadvantage when it comes to paying workers. In 2018, the CCWB region had an annual average wage of \$75,838, which is almost \$9,200 below the national annual average, though still above Maine’s annual average wage of \$72,137 (Figure 12). Between 2019 and 2024, the region’s annual average wage increased 28%, on par with growth at the state level (29%) and slightly exceeding growth at the national level (23%). All counties within the region saw positive wage growth, ranging between 23% and 31%. Cumberland and Sagadahoc County had the highest annual average wage, \$80,958 and \$74,232 respectively, whereas Waldo and Lincoln have the lowest annual average wage. While pay varies across industries and occupations, the relative low wages will continue to make it difficult to attract talented workers to the region that are so important to the modern economy.

**Figure 12. Average annual wages, 2024**



Source: Lightcast 2025.1

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## VETERANS

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Maine and the region have a large share of veterans in the population compared to other US states. About 8.3% of the population over age 18 identifies as veterans in the CCWB region, approximately 45,500, with the highest shares located in Lincoln and Sagadahoc County.<sup>10</sup> In general, veterans in the CCWB region are paid higher than their non-veteran counterparts and there is a lower share of veterans living at or below the poverty level. Yet there is a lower share of veterans participating in the labor force and a slightly lower unemployment rate for veterans, both of which are likely due to a significantly higher mean age among the veteran population.

Educational attainment of veterans is similar to the non-veteran population, with a few differences. More veterans in the CCWB region have a high school diploma, but about 6 percent fewer have obtained a bachelor's degree or higher, although there are more veterans that have some college or an associate degree than non-veterans. Veterans within the CCWB region tended to have higher educational attainment levels than the rest of the state's veteran population.

The unemployment rate for veterans in the CCWB region was similar to the non-veteran population for this period. However, the labor force participation rate of veterans (44%) was much lower than the nonveteran population (67%), though slightly higher than the statewide veteran labor force participation rate of 42%. This is due in part to the older age population of veterans in the state. The percent living at or below the poverty line was lower for veterans (4.2%) relative to non-veteran population (6.6%) in the region. However, when it comes to disability, 32% of veterans in the CCWB region claim a disability status compared to just 18% of the non-veteran populations.

## INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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Individuals with disabilities represent a key population group with significant barriers to employment. In general, individuals with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, be unemployed, and have a lower educational attainment level. Approximately 13.5% of the region's population are disabled, which is slightly lower than the overall state's disability rate (16.2%). However, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities in the region was higher (12.4%) than the statewide rate (10.6%).

## IMMIGRANT POPULATION

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Approximately 4.6% of the region's population are naturalized citizens or are not yet citizens, which is higher than the state average of 3.9%. The largest share of this population was born in Africa (20.5%), While this population's labor force participation rate, unemployment rate, and median household income are similar to the overall region's rates, the immigrant populations poverty rate (14.7%) is more than double that than the non-immigrant population (6.3%). A common barrier among this population,

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<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section comes from 2019-2023 5-year ACS microdata (accessed through IPUMS USA) and calculations made by MCBER; because ACS microdata cannot be isolated to individual counties, regional data includes Hancock County.

<sup>10</sup> Lightcast, 2025.1

especially those seeking/granted asylum, is educational degrees and other job credentials not transferring from the country of origin and in turn leading to underemployment.

### POPULATION IN POVERTY AND WORK STATUS <sup>13</sup>

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In 2023, the percentage of people in the region reported as being at or below the poverty level was about 8.1%, which is lower than both the state (10.5%) and national average (12.5%). Within the region, Sagadahoc and Waldo Counties had the highest rates of poverty, at 11.1% and 12.8% respectively, while Cumberland County (7.2%) and York County (7.8%) had the lowest rates.<sup>11</sup> Overall, the rate is approximately 3 percentage points lower than the previous reporting period, suggesting varying degrees of economic status across the region's populations. Labor force participation was significantly lower for the poverty population (33.5%) and, for those participating in the workforce, the population in poverty had a higher unemployment rate (17.0%) than the non-poverty population.

### LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND YOUTH WORKERS

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The lower a person's educational attainment, the less likely they are to participate in the labor force or to be employed. In the CCWB region, 58% of people 25 and older with less than a high school degree do not participate in the labor force. Those who received a high school diploma but did not pursue further education had the highest level of unemployment at 4.8% compared to only 2.0% unemployment for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

For the youth population aged 16 to 24 years old, labor force participation (68.2%) is slightly higher than the state (65.4%). Still, 6.6% of youth that would like to find a job were unemployed, which was slightly better than Maine, where 7.2% of youth looking for a job were unemployed.

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<sup>11</sup> Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), MCBER calculations.

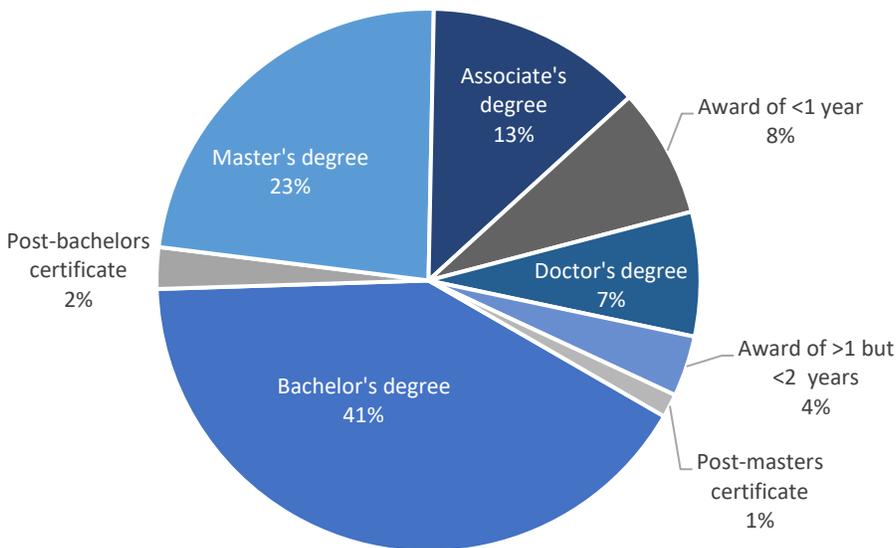
## Training & Education

The underlying workforce trends in the Coastal Counties workforce region present real challenges and will require a nimble and responsive workforce training system to address failures in the marketplace. Most notably, these will come in the areas of underserved industries that traditional may not have been the focus of the region's workforce programs. Still, there are a great number of resources in the region to address these needs. Alignment of resources and goals of the workforce system with industry economic development initiatives will be a critical factor in the success in meeting these workforce challenges.

In order to develop a plan to meet industry and workforce demands, an assessment of the regional capacity to provide appropriate training and educational services is important. This section provides a step in that direction by providing a brief overview of the existing training service providers and the pertinent programs available and identifies any gaps in meeting demands. We highlight training capacity in relation to in-demand occupations identified in the previous section.

In the CCWB region, there are fourteen institutions that grant certificates and degrees. In 2023, there were a total of 6,559 completions, a 6% decrease from 2019 levels. Over three-quarters of completions were for four-year degrees or higher, an increase from 2019 levels (Figure 4).

Figure 13: Completions in 2023 by award type



Source: Lightcast, 2025.1

In addition to these institutions, there are upwards of 100 education training service providers located in the region, which does not include the numerous organizations that provide training statewide or nationally that might also service the CCWB region.<sup>12</sup> A vast majority of these organizations are specialized to a particular topic, skill, or career area, while a selection provide training across multiple areas.

<sup>12</sup> This analysis is limited to Maine-based service training providers and does not extend the analysis to service providers located outside of the region.

## IN-DEMAND OCCUPATION TRAINING GAPS

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An inventory from public data sources was reviewed to determine the alignment and capacity of training programs with occupations identified as in-demand in focus industries. These occupations and respective service providers are shown in Table 9. Data and information were sourced from specific training institutions, as well as the CareerCenter website.<sup>13</sup>

Occupations in manufacturing appear to have good coverage including at the secondary education and post-secondary levels. Training for healthcare in-demand occupations appears to be a bit more dispersed across a variety of service providers. Of the in-demand occupations identified in the previous section, all but four appear to have specific programs to provide skill and knowledge training to meet those occupations' requirements located in the region.

Two of these occupations include commercial pilots and aircraft mechanics in the transportation and logistics sector. Given the specialized training for these occupations, this is no surprise. In addition, our review was not able to identify specific training programs for industrial machinery mechanics or physical therapy assistants. However, it may be the case that training for these occupations would likely overlap with similar occupations.

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<sup>13</sup> The web address can be accessed at <http://198.182.162.220/mecrs/training.asp>.

Table 9: In-demand occupations training capacity matrix

Industry	Occupational description	Educational requirements	High school, vocational		Certification	2 year	4 year	Gaps identified
Manufacturing	Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators, Metal and Plastic	High school diploma or equivalent	Windham School Dept.		Midcoast School of Tech, SMCC, Portland Adult Ed, Northeast Tech Inst, Windham School Dept.	SMCC		
	Machinists	High school diploma or equivalent	Windham School Dept.		Midcoast School of Tech, SMCC, Portland Adult Ed, Northeast Tech Inst, Windham School Dept.	SMCC		
	Industrial Machinery Mechanics	High school diploma or equivalent						Yes
	Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	High school diploma or equivalent		Windham School Dept.		Midcoast School of Tech, SMCC, Portland Adult Ed, Northeast Tech Inst, Windham School Dept.	SMCC	
	Coating, Painting, and Spraying Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	High school diploma or equivalent		Windham School Dept.		Midcoast School of Tech, SMCC, Portland Adult Ed, Northeast Tech Inst, Windham School Dept.	SMCC	
Healthcare	Registered Nurses	Associate's degree				SMCC, UC at Thomaston	USM	
	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	Postsecondary non-degree award			InterCoast Career Institute (1-2 yrs)			
	Dental Hygienists	Associate's degree			UNE (1 Year) towards bachelors			
	Radiologic Technologists	Associate's degree				St. Joseph's College,		

				SMCC		
	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	High school diploma or equivalent		Various programs that may be relevant		
	Surgical Technologists	Postsecondary non-degree award		Maine Medical Center School of Surgical Tech		
	Physical Therapist Assistants	Associate's degree				Yes
Transport	Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians	Postsecondary non-degree award				Yes
	First-Line Supervisors of Helpers, Laborers, and Material Movers, Hand	High school diploma or equivalent		University College at Bath/Brunswick, 1600 Degrees	Various programs that may be relevant	Various programs
	Commercial Pilots	High school diploma or equivalent				Yes
	Truck Drivers, Heavy	High school diploma or equivalent, post-secondary	Windham School Dept.	Midcoast School of Tech, Northeast Tech Inst, Pro Drive Driver, Crooked River, GoDriving Co		
	First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators	High school diploma or equivalent		University College at Bath/Brunswick, 1600 Degrees	Various programs that may be relevant	Various programs
	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	High school diploma or equivalent				
Finance	Computer User Support Specialists	Some college, no degree		Numerous providers		

#### **D. Top Take Aways from USM's 2025 Economic Conditions Analysis:**

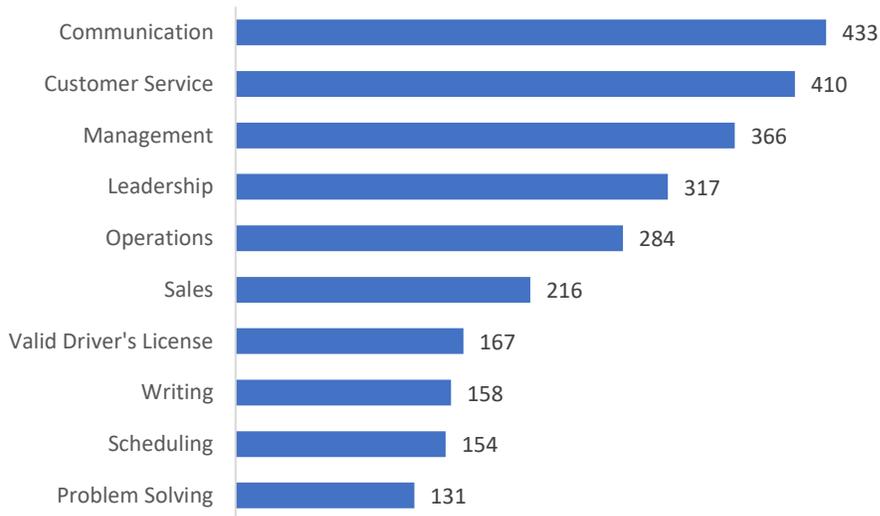
##### ***1. The aging labor force and shrinking labor pool will impact specific industries vital to the region's overall economy***

Collectively, the current labor market trends and demographic projections pose very difficult challenges for the Coastal Counties Region and the greater state of Maine in terms of competitiveness and economic development. The challenges of population demographics in the region and state are not new. There is a dearth of younger populations entering the labor force to replace aging workers that will soon reach retirement age. While impacts of these trends are beginning to show in the labor market, they will continue to affect the supply of workers in the years ahead restricting access. Specific industries will be affected the most, such as manufacturing and to some degree education and health care, which tend to have higher median ages than other professions. Without a steady increase of workers migrating to the region, the labor pool will continue to shrink. Fortunately, the region has seen significant population and wage growth over the past five years – thus, making the region better able to attract new workers.

##### ***2. As more of the region's population reaches retirement, targeted skill-building programs will become increasingly important***

Another critical implication of these trends is the loss of skills and experience in the workforce from retiring workers. This creates additional competitive disadvantages for the region and state. These impacts will likely vary across industries in the region, affecting mature industries to a greater extent than other more knowledge-intensive and innovation-based industries. Furthermore, filling these skills and worker voids may increasingly rest upon the workforce system and training programs to keep the region's industrial drivers competitive. This has two implications for workforce development. The first is that training will likely focus on existing employer needs and upskilling to bolster productivity. Second, while it is expected that market forces will correct some of these imbalances, targeted training programs will be increasingly important to help maintain regional competitiveness and halt the loss of firms in the region that will seek talent elsewhere (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Top skills in occupations with high proportions of workers ages 55 and older



Source: Lightcast, 2025.1

### 3. In general, the CCWB regional economy is healthy and expanding

Employment in the region has returned and exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Simultaneously, labor force participation rates have fallen which indicates employment growth is being driven by migration. Unemployment rates are at historic lows and from traditional labor market perspective the region is at full employment. Labor market conditions in the region are extremely tight as a result, and many employers are scrambling to fill positions. These conditions will present positives mainly in the form of increased wages and opportunities for previously discouraged workers to re-enter the labor market, as well as other dislocated individuals. It may also provide greater opportunity for underemployed individuals seeking more work.

## II. Access to Services

### A. Job Seekers

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB provides our local workforce board with annual funding for three programs: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) has a long history of prioritizing individuals with barriers to employment through this WIOA funding as well as additional resources it brings to the local area. The CCWB will grow and diversify the labor force available to meet demand from employers for skilled workers by better engaging the following targeted populations:

- Low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills-deficient
- Individuals with disabilities
- Veterans
- New Immigrants (immigrants who have immigrated to Maine within the last 5 years)
- Ex-offenders / Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Youth (16-24) with a particular focus on out-of-school youth
- Older workers (55+)

For more information on the local area's priority of service, see the Priority of Service Policy in Appendix A-ii. To ensure that individuals who are eligible are aware of and able to access these resources, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) maintains strong partnerships with community-based organizations, education, and training providers, as well as employers. To effectively offer individuals with barriers to employment access to credentials, career pathway programs, and employment, CCWI implements a multi-pronged approach of:

- 1) pursuing funding to diversify its programmatic offerings
- 2) maintaining strong relationships with education and training providers in the local area, and
- 3) innovating its model in working with employers

#### Acquisition and implementation of discretionary grants

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. has a history of pursuing funding opportunities that augment the area's WIOA formula funds and effectively expand access to training and employment for individuals with barriers to employment. In CCWI's over twenty-four-year history, it has obtained and managed \$105 million in workforce development funding. CCWI has effectively brought in over \$53 million in competitively awarded discretionary grant funding in addition to overseeing over \$52 million in WIOA funding to our region.

Currently, the local area is overseeing the implementation of two H-1B Job Training Grants funded entirely by the U.S. Department of Labor: Building Infrastructure Grant (BIG) or Green Jobs for ME and Maine Rural Healthcare Partnership, the QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the American Rescue Plan Act or ARPA Workers Fund. All of these funding streams assist

the local area in expanding access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for individuals with barriers to employment. Brief descriptions of these programs are below:

- Maine Rural Healthcare Partnership

The Maine Rural Healthcare Partnership is a U.S. Department of Labor H1-B Job Training Grant awarded to CCWI in January 2021. This four-year grant seeks to address healthcare worker shortages in rural areas by training workers on career pathways in Nursing and Pharmacy. The four target occupations are Home Health Aide, Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant, and Pharmacy Technician. Career Advisors will work across the Coastal Counties region to support participants' acquisition of and persistence through in-demand healthcare training programs and help connect them to employment. Support for students will include best practices in supporting remote, virtual, and hybrid students and equipping rural and under-resourced students with the technology and skills they need to succeed. This project has effectively attracted job seekers and addressed Maine's demand for front-line healthcare workers.

- Building Infrastructure Grant (BIG)

The Building Infrastructure Grant (BIG) or Green Jobs for ME is a U.S. Department of Labor Grant awarded to CCWI in September 2023. This five-year grant seeks to develop, implement, and scale worker-centered sector strategy training programs in H-1B industries and occupations critical to meeting the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) goals, formally known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Pub. L. No. 117-58. To maximize the impact of the BIL investment, CCWI established a new sector partnership in Renewable Energy to prepare target populations for high-wage, high-skill careers as Engineers and Construction Managers. These include occupations in the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors and electrical, industrial, and civil engineers and technicians who facilitate the nation's infrastructure's design, construction, modernization, and maintenance.

- QUEST DWG

The QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant is a U.S. Department of Labor grant awarded to CCWI in October 2022. This grant aims to serve individuals whose employment has been negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic. This award's eligibility criteria allow us to serve individuals from historically marginalized and underserved populations disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Individuals that can be served include low-wage earners, women with children, minorities, immigrants and refugees, individuals with disabilities, discouraged workers, justice-involved or incarcerated individuals soon to be released, individuals in recovery from substance use disorder, and individuals from historically marginalized communities. This grant will support individuals promoting access to work in safe, well-paying employment, further building their own and the community's resilience to any continued economic impacts of the pandemic.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

The American Rescue Plan Act or ARPA Workers Fund was awarded through the Maine Department of Labor to invest in two distinct projects. The first was implementing a stipend pilot to incentivize participants' attendance and completion of occupational skills training. Stipends for individuals enrolled in occupational training will address the economic barriers that individuals face, which can prevent them from choosing to attend and persist in training. Second, for sourcing a communications contractor to

design and launch an innovative outreach campaign to engage eligible individuals not previously connected to the workforce development system, in hopes of getting them connected to services.

### *Strong relationships with education and training providers*

Strong relationships with education and training providers are crucial to ensuring access to post-secondary credentials and career pathways. The local area's strategies to further strengthen these relationships and implement collaboration include supporting cohort projects, including those proposed by education and training providers. CCWI will continue to promote the use of incumbent worker training in targeted sectors from entry level to mid-level along career pathways when funding is available for incumbent worker training.

The opportunities for communication and collaboration will allow the local board to ensure that projects are meeting the needs of the hard to serve in the Coastal Counties region. Additionally, it is through these opportunities that partners evaluate the system, identify gaps, and create innovative practices and programs to fill those gaps. CCWI will also work to promote the training of WIOA partner's frontline staff on career pathways in targeted industries.

### *Innovation in working with employers*

CCWI continues to work to streamline and clarify the around available programs and services to employers. The goal is to make employment services through the One-Stop partners more accessible to employers, work collaboratively to grow industries, and offer opportunities for stability and advancement to job-seekers. The key elements of our approach are:

- Partnering with industry associations and chambers of commerce to streamline outreach
- Supporting cohort style trainings that are employer driven
- Work closely with the Industry Partnerships Initiative with the State Workforce Board to build career pathways
- Local CCWB members to advise on sectors, career pathways, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other employer-sponsored work-based opportunities

### **Workforce System Services Available**

The WIOA funded workforce system in the Coastal Counties region offers a multitude of valuable resources to support employers and jobseekers in meeting the changing demands of today's economy.

Note as to comprehensiveness: As indicated in the 'overview of the local workforce development system,' there are a variety of entities who partner with businesses in the Coastal Counties region. As part of this local plan, Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) is providing an overview of services available through Wagner Peyser and WIOA Title IB. This is not an exhaustive list of services or work done in the region but provides a thorough description of what CCWI seeks to align and leverage in its business services work.

## 1. Wagner Peyser Services

Maine CareerCenters provides a variety of employment and workforce training and services at no charge for both workers and businesses in the State of Maine. For more information on services available to employers, see section VI.

## 2. Work-Based Learning Services

The utilization and promotion of Work Experiences, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Customized Training leading to industry-recognized credentials are strategies that CCWI intends to continue and expand to meet the needs of both job seekers and employers. Given new initiatives in the area and the priorities as laid out in the local area's goals and strategies, CCWI intends to see an increased utilization of incumbent worker (IW) training and Registered Apprenticeship over the next four years.

### I. *Work Experience*

For clients who lack significant work history, have inconsistent work history, persistent soft skills challenges, or are exploring a new occupation or field, Work Experiences may be an appropriate opportunity to transition them toward unsubsidized employment. Career Advisors work closely with employers to set up an experience where wages are covered 100% by WIOA Title IB funding, and the employer partner provides supervision and support. This approach allows clients to try out employment in a safe and supported environment and minimizes risks on the employer side as there is no expectation that they will hire clients at the end of the Work Experience, although many do. Work Experience is primarily a strategy used for participants in the WIOA Title IB funded youth program, as the provider must spend 20% of youth formula funds on creating and providing work experiences.

### II. *On-the-Job Training*

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is an excellent steppingstone to unsubsidized employment, as well as serving as a flexible training tool for employers. As a result, the Workforce Board will continue to keep OJT at the forefront of its business assistance strategies. An OJT is a strategy to address a gap in hard skills required to be successful in a given occupation. In setting up an OJT, employers must identify the training gap at hand and create an 8-12 weeklong training plan to address it. The employer hires the individual, but during the course of the OJT, the service provider reimburses 50% of the participant's wages.

### III. *Employed Workers & On-the-Job Training*

If the worker is currently employed at a business for which the OJT contract will be written, then the OJT must also relate to the introduction of new technologies, introduction to new production or service procedures, upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes identified by the Local Board, provided all other conditions are met. In addition, OJT contracts for employed workers must result in an employee wage gain.

### IV. *Customized Training*

CCWI defines customized training as "occupational training designed to meet the specific training needs of an employer or group of employers through a training curriculum that is 'customized' to address specific skill needs." Under the terms of the customized training contract, the employer agrees to employ a participant upon completion of training and agrees to pay a minimum of 50% of the cost of the participant's training.

The contractor and service provider must certify via contract that this training is designed to meet the special requirements of the employer or group of employers, and that the training is not available in the absence of WIOA funds. The employer should provide a list of specific skills that must be mastered to accomplish specific tasks required by one or more occupations, and a schedule of the training hours dedicated to each task. The following training expenses may be reimbursed: instructor/trainer wages at a predetermined rate of pay, tuition, registration, textbooks/manuals, and direct training costs.

Customized Training may be provided to an employed worker if the employed worker is not earning a self-sufficiency wage as determined by the CCWI annual calculations, and the customized training relates to the introduction of new technology, introduction of new production or service procedures, or upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes identified by the CCWB.

Customized Training projects are opportunities for collaboration between different funding streams, and different workforce development system partners, including, integrally, employers and training providers. CCWI has seen success as a partner in funding employer driven trainings that fill a gap in an industry.

#### *V. Incumbent Worker Training*

Incumbent worker training under WIOA is targeted to improving the skills and competitiveness of the participant and increasing the competitiveness of the employer. The training should, wherever possible, allow the participant to gain industry-recognized training credentials, and ultimately should lead to an increase in wages. To receive incumbent worker funding under WIOA, an incumbent worker must have an employer-employee relationship and an established employment history with the employer. Incumbent workers are employed at the time of their participation. The contract funds are paid to the employer for training provided to the incumbent worker either to avert a lay-off or otherwise retain employment (i.e., increase competitiveness). An ideal incumbent worker training would be one where a participant acquires new skills, allowing him or her to move into a higher skilled and higher paid job within the company, thus allowing the company to hire a job seeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position.

To qualify as an incumbent worker, the incumbent worker needs to be employed, meet the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements for an employer-employee relationship, and have an established employment history with the employer for 6 months or more. The training must satisfy the requirements in WIOA sec. 134(d)(4) and §680.790 and increase the competitiveness of the employee or employer. Employers will be asked to validate the increased competitiveness of both themselves and the employee(s) in order to ascertain whether sufficient intervention has occurred in order to retain the employment of the employee(s). An incumbent worker does not necessarily have to meet the eligibility requirements for career and training services for adults and dislocated workers under WIOA.

While there are incumbent worker funds available under WIOA Title IB, given the decreasing annual allocation, the local area has not prioritized incumbent worker projects in recent years. Fortunately, CCWI

has been successful in acquiring U.S. Department of Labor HIB Job Training Grants, TechHire in 2016 and the Maine Rural Healthcare Partnership in 2021. With these additional funds in the Coastal Counties region, the local board has and will be able to offer employers the opportunity to utilize incumbent workers' funds to upskill their employees.

VI. *Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship:*

CCWI intends to promote access to Registered Apprenticeship in the local area. Apprenticeships are a high-quality training strategy that serves both workers and employers. CCWI is interested in serving as a partner in strategizing the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and supports the leveraging of WIOA Title IB funding as appropriate and useful to that end.

Pre-Apprenticeship programs are a viable pathway for youth to access Registered Apprenticeship and are an allowable service under WIOA Title IB youth programming.

Caveat: Given reductions to WIOA allocations (i.e., funding) the availability of services (e.g., incumbent worker, customized training, and other services) is sometimes limited.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Strategize and streamline outreach:</b> develop a coordinated outreach strategy for businesses utilizing Industry Associations, Economic Development Associations, and Chambers of Commerce as information repositories and points of contact.</li><li>• <b>Prioritize cohort projects:</b> CCWI will prioritize implementation of cohort projects to serve priority populations and sectors, including, but not limited to Integrated Employment and Training cohorts to serve Basic Skills Deficient individuals, work readiness cohorts to serve youth with barriers to employment, and sector specific projects.</li><li>• <b>Promote Career Pathways:</b> Board members advise on sectors, career pathways, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other employer-sponsored work-based opportunities and promote the use of incumbent worker training in targeted sectors from entry level to mid-level along career pathways.</li></ul>

**B. Employer Engagement**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) sets the expectation for a one-stop delivery system that serves both job seekers and businesses alike with high quality services seamlessly across partner programs. Under WIOA, both small and large businesses must be supported as partners and customers of the local workforce development system. Local Workforce Development Boards have responsibility and oversight over their region's business engagement strategies. Specifically, WIOA tasks Local Workforce Development Boards with leading the engagement of employers to support their utilization of workforce investment activities, ensuring that the system is responsive to the needs of employers, promoting communication and collaboration among service providers, economic

development entities, and employers, advancing best practices that meet both the needs of employers and expand employment opportunities in in-demand sectors and occupations, and ensuring at least 51% business representation on the Local Workforce Development Board.

### **Strategic priorities and next steps**

CCWI and the One Stop Operator will convene partners to drive sector strategy initiatives that address the workforce needs of multiple employers within an industry. Indeed, a priority of CCWI is to create opportunities for business owners and industry members to engage in the creation and execution of sector strategies. At minimum, this engagement will include reviewing plans and sharing feedback, but the engagement from some will be more extensive.

Over half of the local board's membership is comprised of representatives of private sector businesses. These individuals bring a much-valued perspective to the standard operations of CCWI, as well as new ideas and feedback on new initiatives. CCWI staff update board members at quarterly meetings, but more regularly elicit feedback through brainstorming sessions and surveys. CCWI will also continue to have local board members advise on sectors, career pathways, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other employer-sponsored work-based opportunities. CCWI will also work closely with the State Workforce Board's Industry Partnership Initiative to ensure that feedback from partners on the State Workforce Board's Industry Partnership are incorporated. CCWI will involve both local employers on the CCWB and the State Workforce Board's Industry Partnership committee to develop career pathways.

Additionally, CCWI will streamline its communication with businesses, by investing in and deepening relationships with entities that represent businesses' needs and interests, such as industry associations, chambers of commerce, and economic development agencies.

As CCWI moves into implementation of the strategies outlined in this local plan, it does so with the area's One-Stop Operator in place, an executed Memoranda of Understanding, and a shared expectation around quarterly meetings and ongoing collaboration among the WIOA partners. As such, the OSO will workshop the implementation of business outreach strategies during those quarterly meetings, toward the goal of aligning messaging and activities across system partners and soliciting feedback from businesses on employment and training.

The strategies in this plan, around communication with businesses and collaboration with partners, all seek to improve the workforce system to better serve employers and ultimately grow the local economy. CCWI staff will evaluate the efficacy of their approach by monitoring the utilization of work-based learning services and continuing its work in partnering with the local board members.

### **Business Services Model for Coastal Counties Region**

It is the work and intention of Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., and the area's One Stop Operator to promote collaboration and communication whereby the services from each partner are well utilized and employers have a streamlined and efficient way to engage with the complicated system. There are multiple and pervasive challenges in this work, both on the system's side and on the employer's side. On the employer side, the biggest challenge to active engagement is limited bandwidth: over 96% of

employers in the CCWI service area have less than 50 employees. Indeed, 62% of employers have less than 10 employees.

### Size of Businesses in Coastal Counties Region



Source: EMSI

This size has a two-fold effect. From marketing to human resources, the owner or manager wears many different hats, limiting their ability to leave the office to participate in a committee that does not directly increase productivity or sales. They may attend one meeting but eliciting a monthly commitment is almost impossible. Furthermore, the hiring needs of small employers can be unpredictable and sporadic. When they need to hire, it may just be for one worker for one job title at a time. Unless aggregated from a number of small employers, this degree of need is a disincentive to the creation of a cohort-based training solution.

On the system’s side, the opportunities for confusion, mixed messaging, and redundancy are abundant. There are many different programs that work with jobseekers, and there is work to do to get to a place where different programs know how to leverage each other’s strengths and relationships to make business engagement more efficient and effective.

Given the aforementioned obstacles, CCWI proposes to create a business services model that is built on a strong understanding of the local area’s economy and works to match this knowledge with the services available through all facets of the workforce system. CCWI acknowledges that the goal of having a fully aligned and responsive system, one that is easy for employers to access and responsive to economic changes, is ambitious. However, the strategies outlined in this plan represent actionable items that promote the tenets of the local board and best practices of a workforce system: communication, accessibility, and resourcefulness. This section reviews how the local board is investing in understanding the local economy and the area’s best opportunities for workforce investment, as well as a robust overview of the services available for employers.

#### Regional Economic Cluster Analysis

A cluster is a geographic concentration of businesses in a related field that drives economic performance. Anchored by manufacturers, clusters encompass suppliers, educational institutions, and service providers, creating a symbiotic ecosystem that increases productivity, innovation, and job growth. By

virtue of the relationships made possible by proximity, clusters provide regions with comparative advantages, such as a skilled labor force.

Certain state and regional agencies are charged with developing economic development plans. These strategies typically assess clusters and outline activities to increase their growth. Although none of the analyses cover geography that perfectly mirrors the six county CCWB region, the most applicable is the State’s plan.

<b>Statewide Agencies and Organizations</b>	
Maine Department of Economic and Community Development	Maine’s 10-year plan targets forest products, renewable energy, and food production clusters.
Maine Technology Institute	Maine’s innovation arm targets biotechnology, composites, environmental technologies, forest products, agriculture, IT, marine technology, and precision manufacturing clusters.
Focus Maine	Statewide venture targets food, aquaculture, and biopharma clusters.
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.	Nonprofit targets fisheries and agriculture sector.
Maine & Co.	Maine’s business attraction arm targets aquaculture.

<b>Regional Economic Development Districts</b>	
Eastern Maine Development Corporation	Covers Eastern Maine, including Waldo County.
Greater Portland Council of Governments	Covers Greater Portland and the Sebago Lakes region.
Midcoast Economic Development District	Covers portions of Sagadahoc, Lincoln, and Knox counties.
Southern Maine Planning & Development Commission	Covers York County and southern Oxford County.

<b>Other Regional Agencies</b>	
Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority	Covers Brunswick Landing, the former naval base.
Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission	Covers Lincoln County.

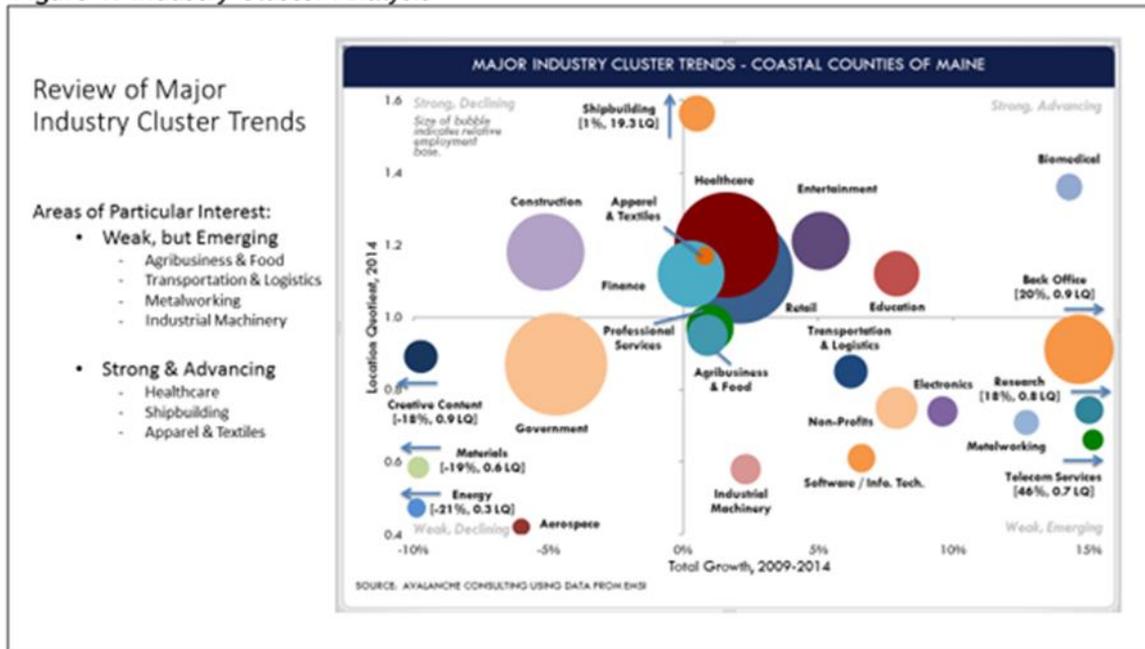
Understanding the regional economy is a critical component to identifying key sectors and target industries. Underlying questions in this process include “Which industries are best positioned for sustained growth in the Coastal Counties region?” and “What industries are economic drivers in the region?” This analysis should involve a combination of sources, including:

- Traditional Labor Market Information & proprietary labor market modeling programs, (e.g., BLS data, EMSI)
- Real-time Labor Market Information, e.g., Burning Glass Technologies, Wanted Analytics
- Meta-Analysis (scanning existing reports, research, etc.)
- Review of existing industry efforts and conversations with state and regional economic development staff

CCWI relies on the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) at the University of Southern Maine to generate the labor market information necessary to produce an analysis of the region’s clusters. A joint effort of the Muskie School of Public Service and the School of Business, CBER has been a leading producer of data and research on the Maine economy for over 25 years. Funded in part by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, CBER produces long range forecasts of the Maine economy and provides technical assistance and applied research for clients throughout the state.

The Location Quotient (LQ) is the primary tool for measuring the strength of a region’s clusters. The LQ is the industry’s share of a region’s total employment divided by the industry’s share of the nation’s total employment. The result is a decimal: a decimal greater than 1.0 means that a region’s cluster is more specialized than other regions. The higher the decimal, the greater the degree of specialization, and thus, the stronger, the cluster. Conversely, a decimal below 1.0 means that a region is not specialized. Change in the industry’s employment over time, however, can be used to evaluate which clusters are emerging or declining.

Figure 1: Industry Cluster Analysis



Results can also be plotted on a graph as shown above. The vertical axis is the LQ, which illustrates whether the cluster is more or less concentrated in the CCWB region compared to the national average. The horizontal axis represents the growth rate of the cluster within the CCWB region compared to the national average. The size of the circle represents the total number of jobs within each cluster. The largest bubbles in the upper right quadrant are the most viable: they represent sectors with a high degree of specialization growing at a comparatively fast rate of growth. These visualizations show the concentration, growth and size characteristics of both industries and occupations.

Size, growth, concentration, and related projections are critical factors in determining priority industries. In evaluating which clusters to target, the CCWB considered the following key factors:

- Relative strength and breadth of regional education and training programs
- The existence of sector-based associations, intermediaries and engaged employers
- Industries that are the focus of local and regional economic development partners
- Sectors' potential jobs multiplier effects
- Industries that offer opportunities to individuals at many education levels
- Wages
- Age of existing industry workforce (percentage 45+)

Ultimately, the analysis resulted in the prioritization of five clusters:

- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Accommodation and Food Service
- Construction
- Retail

As part of CCWIs employer outreach strategy, CCWI will consult with industry associations covering each of the targeted clusters. Because they represent an industry, associations can provide confidential information from individual members on turnover, hiring methods, and salaries by aggregating data from hundreds of members. While industry associations may be thinly staffed, a skilled workforce is typically a top priority. Whether the purpose is mapping career pathways, forming sector partnerships, or implementing training programs, staff from industry associations can provide access to individual members as well as industry-wide perspectives. The outreach strategy is designed to meet the goal of increased employer engagement with the workforce system.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Embed integration:</b> utilize the work of the region's One Stop Operator and quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to set actionable goals regarding integration and regularly check in on progress.</li><li>• <b>Promote use of work-based training:</b> partner with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Associations, and Industry Associations, and their employer members to identify and support worker training projects (i.e., incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and work experience) in target sectors.</li><li>• <b>Strategize and streamline outreach:</b> develop a coordinated outreach strategy for businesses utilizing Industry Associations, Economic Development Associations, and Chambers of Commerce as information repositories and points of contact.</li><li>• <b>Align business outreach resources across WIOA core partners:</b> the region's One Stop Operator will facilitate the core partners' work in aligning regional business engagement activities.</li><li>• <b>Promote Career Pathways:</b> work closely with the State Workforce Board's Industry Partnership Initiative. Local board members to advise on sectors, career pathways, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, or other employer-sponsored work-based opportunities.</li></ul>

### C. Entrepreneurship

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) allows local workforce systems to support youth and adults in gaining the entrepreneurial skills necessary to start their own business. WIOA qualifying activities supporting entrepreneurship include skills and education training; career awareness and counseling; and services providing labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors.

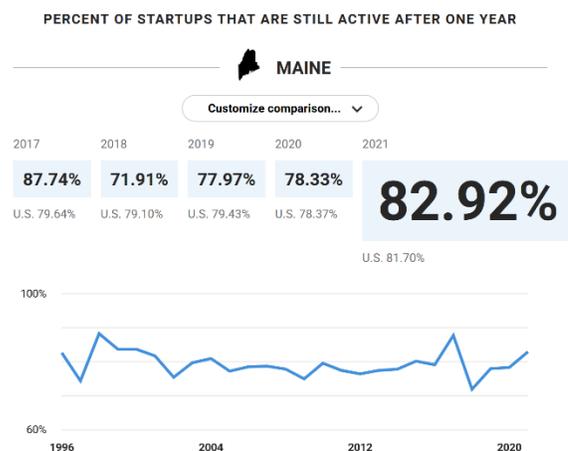
To support aspiring entrepreneurs in the Coastal Counties region, CCWI will deploy a strategy that includes strengthening institutional knowledge of our service provider to render guidance on regional entrepreneurial resources so that the Service Provider can connect job seekers with those resources.

For example, CCWI will work with the local area’s Service Provider to offer entrepreneurial skills training for youth clients engaged in the ‘Work Experience Cohort’ (see Section IV-B for more details). This will take the form of workshops on the critical skills for success as entrepreneurs that are transferrable to multiple careers and work scenarios. Skills emphasized in the curriculum may include problem solving, critical thinking, public speaking and presenting, flexibility and adaptability, communication, and collaboration.

#### Maine’s Entrepreneurship Landscape

According to the 2023 American Community Survey, 15.5% of the workforce in the Coastal Counties region is self-employed. This is 41% higher than the national rate of 11%. Self-employment is significantly higher in the counties furthest from Portland, where rates in Lincoln, Knox, and Waldo counties range from 18%-21%. This is due to the seasonal nature of the tourist economy, where those who are unemployed in the winter and spring may have a second “gig.”

Overall, Maine ranks as a great place to start a business. The Kauffman Foundation has developed indicators of entrepreneurship for all 50 states. Maine ranks #6 in Kauffman’s Early-Stage Entrepreneurship Index, which provides a snapshot of entrepreneurial activity, including the rate of entrepreneurship amongst the population and the time it takes for an entrepreneur to make their first hire from the date of incorporation. Not only is Maine a great place to start a business, but 82.92% of business survive their first year, which is higher than the U.S. rate. See chart at right.



The Coastal Counties region has a rich ecosystem ready to support the development of entrepreneurs and small businesses. The following organizations offer a robust calendar of entrepreneurial training opportunities, including workshops, boot camps, startup programs, and conferences:

- Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
- Maine Center for Entrepreneurs
- Maine Small Business Development Centers
- New Ventures Maine
- Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
- Startup Maine

In addition to programming, Southern Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine offer courses in entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, the region boasts over 30 incubators, co-working spaces, and maker spaces that offer the physical space at low-cost to launch a new business, including shared equipment and amenities. Some serve as a locus for educational programming to support entrepreneurship.

To begin to better understand the entrepreneurial landscape, CCWI surveyed economic developers and community-based organizations on the pertinence of local entrepreneurship in the workforce system. See the graph below for the results of this survey:



### III. Local One-Stop Delivery System

#### A. American Job Centers

##### **One-Stop Comprehensive Center:**

A comprehensive American Job Center, also known as a One-Stop Comprehensive Center, is a physical location where job seekers and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners including through direct linkages. The one-stop delivery system must include at least one comprehensive physical center in each local area. The One-Stop Comprehensive Center in the Coastal Counties region is located at 56 Northport Drive, Suite 202 in Portland, Maine.



##### **Affiliate Centers:**

Local Workforce Development Boards may also choose to designate affiliate centers in addition to comprehensive American Job Centers. Such affiliate centers are created to supplement and enhance customer access to American Job Center services. These sites make one or more of the one-stop partners' programs, services, and activities available to job seekers and employers. The affiliate sites in the Coastal Counties region are as follows:

- Belfast Workforce Solutions Center, 15 Starrett Drive, Belfast, Maine
- Brunswick Career Center, 29 Sewell Street, Brunswick, Maine
- Greater Portland Career Center, 151 Jetport Boulevard, Portland, Maine
- Rockland Career Center, 91 Camden Street, Rockland, Maine
- York County Career Center, 9 Bodwell Court, Springvale, Maine

In addition to the One-Stop Comprehensive Center and Affiliate Centers, in order to ensure regional access to services, the Title IB Service Provider may maintain primary itinerant Workforce Solution Sites (WSS) utilizing Adult Education facilities or other appropriate public spaces (e.g., public library).

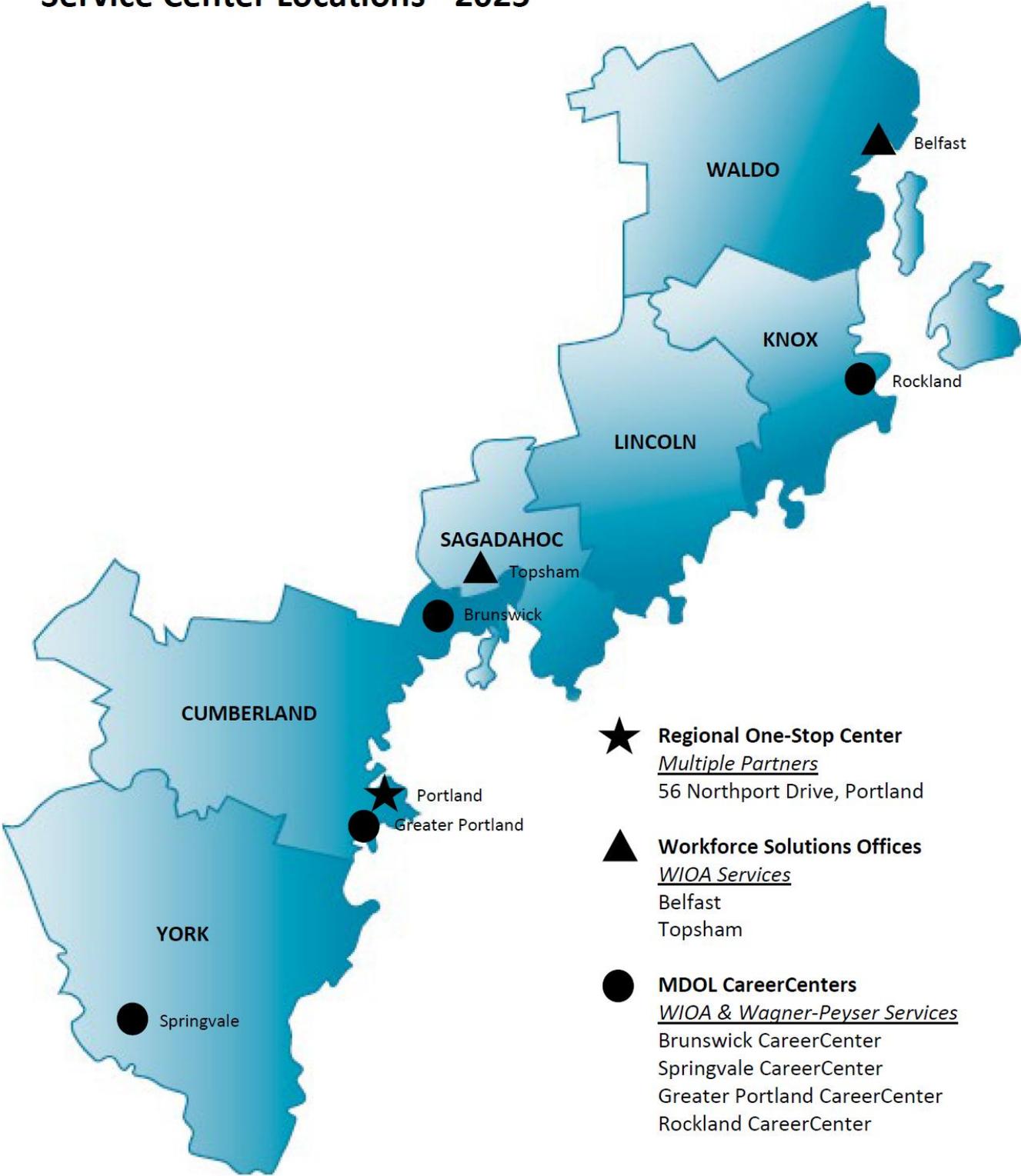
##### **Virtual Services:**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most services and meetings shifted to virtual and remote modalities, which expanded the capacity of Title IB services. This also reduced or eliminated the transportation barrier for many of their clients, while also minimizing resource strains such as staff time and travel. This change allowed Workforce Solutions and other one-stop partners to serve more clients in less time and without geographic restrictions. Other virtual opportunities that occurred during the pandemic included: virtual hiring events, online job counseling, and mock interviews. These could all continue to be offered post pandemic and are particularly important for a rural state like Maine where transportation has historically been a major access barrier.

Another service enhancement for virtual services has been the development of the Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter. With the success of the Comprehensive & Accessible Reemployment Through Equitable Employment Recovery (CAREER) Dislocated Worker Grant, CCWI, in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor and the two other local workforce development boards, developed and deployed a multi-faceted virtual American Job Center, branded Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter (VCC), that has expanded access to workforce development services for both job-seekers and employers statewide. The VCC increases access to one-stop system services and accessibility for all individuals, including those with disabilities, those for whom English is not their primary language, those with academic and digital literacy challenges, and those from rural areas who cannot easily get to a physical one-stop center. The VCC is available statewide, with content specific to each of Maine's three local areas represented by the public workforce entities who partnered on the project. Work Source Maine was funded through the Equitable Employment Recovery (CAREER) Dislocated Worker Grant through the U.S. Department of Labor.

# Coastal Counties Workforce Board

## Service Center Locations - 2025



## **B. Required One-Stop Partners**

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board Local Plan emphasizes a great level of service integration, alignment, and coordination among core partners –Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (WIOA Title II), Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (WIOA Title III), and Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)– and all other required one-stop partners under WIOA. The goal is to create a “no wrong door” employment and training network easily accessed by workers and employers. The four core partners include:

### **Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth programs:**

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) is the grant administrator of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds -- Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs in the Coastal Counties region. Title IB programs are funded with appropriated federal funds through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). Funds are then distributed to States and then to local workforce board areas (AKA regions) based on a formula that takes several factors into consideration about the local area, including: the number of unemployed, number living in poverty, number of disadvantaged youths, the amount of funds the local area received the previous year, the areas of substantial unemployment, and the number of significant plant downsizings in the local area. The WIOA Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth service provider in this local area is Workforce Solutions, operated by Goodwill Northern New England. The One-Stop Comprehensive Center (“One-Stop”) is currently located at 56 Northport Drive, Suite 202 in Portland, providing immediate and direct access to WIOA Title IB staff. Workforce Solutions’ other physical office is located at 15 Starrett Drive, Belfast. Workforce Solutions staff are also mobile and regularly meet clients at any appropriate partner location (e.g., adult education facility) or public space (e.g., library) throughout the Coastal Counties region. Services are also provided virtually through email, chat, telephone or Zoom meetings.

### **Adult Education:**

The Maine Department of Education is the grant administrator of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act funds for Maine, which it awards to local Adult Education service providers. Maine Adult Education is an education, life and career pathways system that enables adults to be prepared for post-secondary education and/or employment. Providing courses in literacy and adult basic education, high school completion, Maine college transition, career preparation and enrichment, Maine Adult Education has over 70 programs located throughout the state. Beginning in 2018, the State Office of Adult Education established nine adult education and career development areas (Hubs) that are aligned with the boundaries of the three local workforce boards. Three Hubs (Hubs 7,8, and 9) exist in the Coastal Counties region. This was done to encourage innovation and maximize efficiencies and resources amongst the local adult education providers and partners within these geographic areas.

A Title II representative has been designated and serves on the Coastal Counties Workforce Board. The Title II representative attends quarterly CCWB meetings and disseminates information to regional Adult Education Hub representatives, who then distribute to all programs within their region. Adult Education

providers within the CCWB region meet regularly with the State Office of Adult Education to review standards and maintain consistency in the education delivery system as it pertains to Title II providers.

**Bureau of Employment Services:**

The Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services (BES) is the grant administrator of WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Funds and is the provider of employment and labor exchange services across the State. BES staff provide Basic Career Services, administer, and coordinate the Maine JobLink, a labor exchange and case management system, and offer customized job fairs and recruitment services to employers and a variety of job search assistance workshops to the general public. A WIOA Title III representative has been designated and serves on the Coastal Counties Workforce Board.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Maine Department of Labor’s (MDOL) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) actively participate as part of the CCWB’s core team to support the integration of services for individuals with disabilities. BRS DVR/DBVI staff assist with the coordination of services on behalf of DVR/DBVI customers but also provide technical assistance, training, and consultation to other area partners to ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of the one-stop centers for all customers with disabilities. BRS is currently co-located at CareerCenters in the Coastal Counties Region including Southern Midcoast (Brunswick), York County (Springvale), and Greater Portland (South Portland). BRS DVR/DBVI are the grant administrators of Maine’s WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs. A WIOA Title IV representative has been designated and serves on the Coastal Counties Workforce Board.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):**

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the four core partners as well as all of the required one-stop partners listed below. The MOU can be accessed at <https://www.coastalcounties.org/resources/>

The MOU promotes alignment of resources, coordination of referrals, co-enrollment, and communication between and among core partners, job seekers, and employers. As outlined in the MOU, partners agree to commit to a new, more robust level of collaboration to bring about a local workforce system that:

- promotes improvement in the structure of and delivery of multiple partner services;
- addresses the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers;
- articulates career pathways for in-demand occupations and industries;
- results in workforce participation and preparation of priority populations and individuals with systemic barriers; and
- enables workforce participants to enter career pathways that provide self-sustaining wages and offer upward mobility.

To promote and coordinate the service integration of required One-Stop partners, the Coastal Counties Workforce Board has established a One-Stop Operator (OSO). The OSO’s primary responsibilities in this region (for PY2025 – 2026) include:

1. **Coordination/Integration of Services.** The OSO will support One-Stop partners to align resources, coordinate referrals and co-enrollment, encourage and facilitate strategies around collaboration among front-line staff, and disseminate communications between and among partners, job seekers and employers;
2. **Development and Implementation of One-Stop Partner MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).** The MOU and IFA reflects the roles and resources of the One-Stop partners. It can be accessed at <https://www.coastalcounties.org/resources>. The OSO will continue to lead the development and implementation of the methods for funding the infrastructure costs of the One-Stop System in the region; and
3. **Coordination of Employer Services.** The One-Stop Operator will work with One-Stop partners to improve the coordination and integration of employer engagement across One-Stop partners in the region.

Through the One-Stop Comprehensive Center, clients may also be referred, as needed, to services provided by other required partners including:

- *Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)* – The grant administrator for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) in Maine is Associates for Training and Development (A4TD). A4TD enrolls qualified older workers into part-time work experience positions (usually for 20 hours/week) with public or 501c3 non-profit organizations in the local community. The purpose of the program is to enable participants to transition back into the workforce.
- *Community Colleges* – The Coastal Counties Workforce Board has extensive relationships with the community colleges represented in the region, and Southern Maine Community College and York County Community College are included as MOU partners. Eligible clients are referred to relevant community college programs for education and training. Community Colleges also provide clients with access to the Accuplacer test.
- *Trade Act Adjustment Assistance* – The Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services (BES), is the statewide administrator and service provider of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), and Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) services that help trade-affected workers (those who have lost their jobs as a result of increased imports or shifts in production to companies outside of the United States as a result of an international Trade Agreement).
- *Jobs for Veterans State Grant programs* – BES offers specialized employment and training services to veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and their eligible spouses. Disabled veterans and veterans with significant barriers to employment may receive any of the services offered through the one-stop system, but in addition can receive individual assistance connecting them to a multitude of

specialized resources and programs.

- *Community Services Block Grant* – The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the grant administrator of the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG); a grant that provides core funding to Maine’s ten Community Action Agencies (CAAs). The goal of the CSBG is to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families to become economically self-sufficient.
- *Housing and Urban Development* – Portland Housing Authority administers the Department of Housing and Urban Development Employment and Training Grants, Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) and Resident Opportunity for Self Sufficiency (ROSS). Service Coordinators assist eligible residents to navigate their challenges, attain suitable employment, and meet their financial goals.
- *TANF/ASPIRE* –The local TANF program is a required partner in the one-stop delivery system. The local TANF program in Maine is the ASPIRE program. TANF participants, who are determined to be WIOA title IB eligible, and who need occupational skills training may be referred through the one-stop delivery system to receive training through WIOA title IB, when TANF grant and other grant funds are not available to the individual.
- *National Farmworker Jobs Program* – Eastern Maine Development Corporation is the grant administrator of the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) for Maine. The NFJP program is designed to counter the chronic unemployment and underemployment experienced by farm workers who depend primarily on jobs in agricultural labor. The NJFP provides funding to help migrant and seasonal farm workers, and their families achieve economic self-sufficiency by providing services to them while they work in agriculture or by assisting them to acquire new job skills in occupations offering higher wages and more stable future employment.
- *Loring and Penobscot Job Corps* – Job Corps is a residential program that assists eligible youth to connect to the labor force by providing intensive social, academic, career and technical education, work-based learning opportunities, college programming, and access to apprenticeships. Youth attain academic and industry credentials leading to successful careers in high-demand industry sectors, occupations, or the Armed Forces, which will result in economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement. Penobscot Job Corps staff are co-located at the One-Stop.
- *Youthbuild* – LearningWorks is the grant administrator and contractor of Youth Building Alternatives, a WIOA YouthBuild program that is funded through a grant from the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and is available to residents of Portland, Maine, and surrounding communities.
- *Unemployment Insurance* – One-Stop clients have access to UI through internet, phone, or postal system. BES staff have been trained to provide meaningful assistance to claimants who enter one-stops with inquiries about UI Claims and each comprehensive one-stop provides access to an electronic contact option, which will result in a call-back to the claimant within 24 hours. This electronic contact option is only available through the one-stops and limited other non-public portals.

All of these One-Stop Partners have signed onto the MOU with CCWB. Each agency and organization is invited to send a representative to quarterly one-stop partner meetings to discuss opportunities for

service integration, alignment of programs, and best practices in learning and utilizing partner strengths across the workforce system. CCWI staff and the OSO for the region are committed to working collaboratively with the One-Stop Partners on implementation strategies for the opportunities identified through service integration discussions.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embed integration:</b> utilize the work of the region’s One Stop Operator and quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to set actionable goals regarding integration and regularly check in on progress.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage front-line staff collaboration:</b> One-Stop Operator will utilize quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to prioritize planning and implementing cross-training and collaboration opportunities for front-line staff.</li> </ul>

### C. Common Intake System

As stated in the Maine Unified Plan, the State Workforce Board (SWB) will take the lead in aligning technology and data systems across partner programs. With the leadership of the SWB and core partners, a comprehensive strategy for aligning and integrating complex data systems will establish the parameters for new technology systems in order to allow core partner systems to communicate, enable common intake, and other shared front-end system activities. The SWB will also take a leadership role in establishing the parameters for new system software that will enable common intake and other shared front-end system activities.

In the interim, in the Coastal Counties region, the region’s One-Stop Operator will work with partners to track referral outcomes and develop shared goals by which to measure progress.

Relevant Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improve referral systems:</b> the region’s One-Stop Operator will work with partners to track referral outcomes and continue staff training to strengthen referrals among partners.</li> </ul>

### D. Coordination of Workforce Development and Education Partners

As formalized in the one-stop partner MOU, CCWB coordinates with Maine Adult Education programs (Hubs 7, 8, and 9) in the region as well as the Maine Community College System (MCCS) office and local community colleges, Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) and York County Community College (YCCC).

Maine Adult Education is an education, life and career pathways system that enables adults to be prepared for post-secondary education and/or employment. Providing courses in literacy and adult basic education, high school completion, Maine college transition, career preparation, workforce training, and enrichment, Maine Adult Education has over 70 programs located throughout the state. If applicable,

Adult Education partners assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma if they meet the eligibility criteria for that service; and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways. See section V-A for additional details about Adult Education programs in the Coastal Counties region.

The MCCS office works to ensure students enrolled in and graduating from Maine’s community colleges register for the Maine JobLink, a system that provides students with information about employment and occupations in demand in Maine and nationally and that matches skilled workers and recent graduates to employers. SMCC and YCCC representatives participate in quarterly one-stop partners meetings as well as quarterly CCWB meeting to communicate about community college initiatives, goals, and challenges and likewise, communicate workforce system initiatives, goals, and challenge to the Maine Community College System.

SMCC and YCCC representatives will collaborate with Adult Education partners and the Title 1B provider to identify, support and articulate Career Pathways for Maine’s high-growth, high-wage sectors, which may include implementing articulation agreements between the MCCS and secondary and adult education, universities, and apprenticeship programs. SMCC and YCCC will promote formal partnerships between WIOA workforce programs and Maine Quality Center initiatives that support workers and employers through mutually beneficial braided service approaches. SMCC and YCCC will collaborate to implement proactive models for addressing the skill needs of current and emerging industry sectors.

As a strategy to further our work with education programs, the One Stop Operator (OSO) will also work to deepen collaboration across education partners. The OSO will lead efforts to develop and implement career pathways within the Local Area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers to employment.

#### **E. Process Used to Competitively Select a One-Stop Operator (OSO)**

On September 29, 2019, the Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., on behalf of the Coastal Counties Workforce Board, posted the “One-Stop Operator” Request for Proposals (RFP). No responses were received from our initial September 2019 posting. After consulting with the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) in November of 2019, it was decided that the CCWB would once more attempt an RFP posting. This time around it was decided to both provide more time to respond to the RFP and also to expand the Q&A period along with the list of recipients. Our November RFP process timeline was as follows:

- November 18, 2019 – Posting of RFP
- December 11, 2019 – Questions about the RFP must have been received by noon.
- January 13, 2020 – RFP Responses were due by COB.
- February 3, 2020 (on or about) - Decision on RFP was to be made.
- March 9, 2020 - Deployment of One-Stop Operator contract.

The posting was emailed out to 187 recipients. We did a thorough review of non-profits (i.e., community-based organizations) in Maine using MANP’s database and derived 35 non-profits for our list. Additionally, we also sent the posting to 32 education entities i.e., institutions of higher education that could be eligible to apply (pursuant to 20 CFR § 678.600).

Despite our best efforts, we received no inquiries/questions about our RFP, and we again received no responses to the RFP. Since the “competitive procurement” process failed – not once but twice – in order to comply with the WIOA requirement to obtain a One-Stop Operator, after confirming with MDOL, CCWI proceeded with a “sole source” process. Consistent with both federal procurement law (2 CFR § 200.320) and our own procurement policies, we CCWI had no option but to follow this sole source procurement route.

As of July 1, 2020, the Cutler Institute, Research Services Center which was selected as this area’s One-Stop Operator (OSO). Our agreement with the Cutler Institute for OSO functions remains in place and is focused on three areas: integrated service delivery, MOU/IFA development and engagement of employers within the Coastal Counties Area.

#### **F. Community-Based Organizations**

CCWI understands community-based organizations (CBOs) to be integral to a responsive and forward-looking one-stop system. Overarchingly, community-based organizations offer a touchpoint through which the board and service provider reach individuals in need of and eligible for services, as well as gather crucial information on emerging needs and initiatives. Specifically, in the local one-stop system, community-based organizations provide:

*Referrals:* Community-based organizations refer eligible individuals to WIOA Title IB and other programs. WIOA Title IB staff will conduct information sessions on available services for staff from CBOs, to position those staff to make referrals when their own clients present interests and/or challenges that would be well served by workforce development programs.

*Partnership on Outreach:* Staff from the one-stop system will partner with community-based organizations to effectively target outreach to priority populations. This partnership will often include a presentation (referenced above), offering a tour of the one-stop center and the CBOs offices, placing pamphlets and other program material at the community-based organization, and setting up regular check-ins on interest in and uptake of services.

*Feedback and input:* CCWI values the input and feedback that community-based organizations provide in response to the implementation of programs and the planning of new initiatives. CBOs are invited to CCWIs quarterly board meetings; CCWI held a stakeholder session with CBOs during the development of the local plan; CCWI engages CBOs on an ad-hoc basis during the planning and roll out of new services or grants, such as the COVID-19 Dislocated Worker Grant.

*Network:* CCWI participates in structured community-based collaborative work, such as the Greater Portland Workforce Initiative (GPWI). GPWI is a group of stakeholders engaging in collective impact work, comprised primarily of CBOs. Through this engagement, and participation in other advisory groups, CCWI has established a strong network of CBOs.

Some of our regional partner community-based organizations include:

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine
- Catholic Charities
- Day One
- Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

- Knox County Homeless Coalition
- LearningWorks
- Maine Inside Out
- Midcoast Youth Center
- Opportunity Alliance
- Preble Street
- Spurwink
- Sweetser
- United Way of Greater Portland
- Volunteers of America of Northern New England
- Waldo Community Action Partners
- York County Community Action
- York County Shelter Program

#### **G. Access to Services for Individuals in Rural Areas**

The CCWB provides access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals in rural and remote areas through the Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth service provider, Workforce Solutions. In addition to having established access points for service delivery with, for example, adult education providers and libraries throughout rural areas, Workforce Solutions staff are mobile and can meet clients in any public space throughout the Coastal Counties region as well as provide services virtually.

Workforce Solutions also provides services from the following locations:

- Belfast – Workforce Solutions Center
- Portland – One-Stop Comprehensive Center
- Topsham – affiliate Workforce Solutions site

The Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services is the provider of Wagner-Peyser Employment and Labor Exchange Services. These services are offered through the CareerCenters in Greater Portland (South Portland), Southern Midcoast (Brunswick), Rockland, and Springvale.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most services and meetings shifted to virtual and remote modalities, which expanded the capacity of Title IB services. This also reduced or eliminated the transportation barrier for many of their clients, while also minimizing resource strains such as staff time and travel. This change allowed Workforce Solutions and other one-stop partners to serve more clients in less time and without geographic restrictions. Other virtual opportunities that occurred during the pandemic included: virtual hiring events, online job counseling, and mock interviews. These all continue to be offered post pandemic and are particularly important for a rural state like Maine where transportation has historically been a major access barrier.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strengthen regional delivery structure:</b> The Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter (VCC), established in 2025, serves as a centralized resource to support workforce development and service accessibility. CCWI will analyze regional service delivery locations, in addition to best practices for utilizing the VCC virtual service delivery.</li> <li>• <b>Continue to integrate remote access:</b> apply best practices in virtual meetings, remote training, and hybrid models across programs to broaden access to services in rural and remote areas.</li> </ul>

**H. Customer-Centric Services**

The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offered an opportunity to modernize and establish a workforce system that is customer-centered: where the needs of businesses and workers drive services; and where American Job Centers (AJCs) meet customers’ needs in a holistic way that leverages the resources and expertise of all of the workforce system partners. Achieving these goals requires strong partnerships throughout and across the workforce, education, and social services systems at both the state and local level. CCWI is committed to integrated service delivery among partners that provide seamless and comprehensive services to customers. To that end, CCWI has contracted for One-Stop Operator services that focus on system integration, and we have been meeting with partners on a quarterly basis to move this work forward.

In the Coastal Counties region, all WIOA Title IB staff receive comprehensive training and supports to ensure the provision of customer-centric customer service. This includes orientation to all core programs and discretionary grants in the region at the time of hire as well as an annual refresher. This orientation ensures that staff are trained on the central tenets of WIOA including individualized services, consumer choice; and customer-centered design.

Additionally, CCWI has required that the WIOA Title IB Service Provider provide regular customer satisfaction surveys across all WIOA Title IB and discretionary programs, giving clients an additional avenue to provide feedback that management can utilize to identify trends, challenges, and strengths within the service model.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Embed integration:</b> utilize the work of the region’s One Stop Operator and quarterly meetings between WIOA required partners to set actionable goals regarding integration and regularly check in on progress.</li> <li>• <b>Promote continuous improvement:</b> continue surveying clients on customer satisfaction, including on movement towards and achievement of their career goals, relevance of the services they received, and employment outcomes.</li> </ul>

## **I. Eligible Training Provider List**

Maine’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) is operated by the Maine Department of Labor and can be accessed through Maine JobLink. The purpose of the ETPL is to support participants with making informed choices regarding selecting job-driven training providers. To be listed on the ETPL, providers must ensure the following: program accessibility, that the program of study prepares students to enter in-demand occupations in Maine, and that the programs offered online provide access to a live instructor. Providers must complete a data sharing agreement assuring they will provide required performance data for all students participating in the approved training programs. Continued eligibility requires provider conformance with data reporting requirements. Providers are required to report on training completion and credential rate for all students enrolled. Providers are also required to provide the necessary information for students to allow for a UI wage match to validate earnings and employment for all students enrolled.

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board supports this process by determining whether there are sufficient eligible providers of training services in the region. The CCWB may also require additional criteria or set higher levels of performance for the Coastal Counties region.

## **IV. Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Program Services**

### **A. Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Services**

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) is the grant recipient and administrator of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds -- Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in the Coastal Counties region. The WIOA Title IB Adult and Dislocated Worker service provider in this local area is Workforce Solutions, operated by Goodwill Northern New England. The One-Stop Comprehensive Center (“One-Stop”) is currently located at 56 Northport Drive, Portland, providing immediate and direct access to WIOA Title IB staff. Workforce Solutions’ other physical office is located at 15 Starrett Drive, Belfast. Workforce Solutions staff are also mobile and regularly meet clients at any appropriate partner location (e.g., adult education facility) or public space (e.g., library) throughout the Coastal Counties region. Services are also provided virtually through email, telephone or Zoom meetings.

#### Dislocated Worker Program

The WIOA Title IB Dislocated Worker (DW) program is designed to help workers that have lost employment get back to work as quickly as possible and overcome such difficult barriers to employment as: difficulty transferring specialized skills to other occupations or industries; or a decline in the market demand for certain skills. It also helps separating service members to enter or reenter the civilian labor force. While some dislocated workers are called back to their jobs or are able to independently find new employment, many others may need assistance in finding or preparing for new jobs.

Eligibility criteria for dislocated workers as defined in WIOA<sup>14</sup> is outlined below. This definition pertains to all dislocated worker funding streams; however, some National Dislocated Worker Grants allow for expanded participant eligibility criteria to ensure those dislocated by a disaster can receive services. WIOA defines a dislocated worker as an individual who:

1. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment and
  - a. is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; or
  - b. has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings (i.e.: did not work long enough with the company to establish a benefit year) or worked for an employer not covered under State unemployment compensation law (i.e.: employed in certain agricultural positions); and
  - c. is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.
2. Has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment: a. as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility or enterprise; or b. is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or c. for the purposes of eligibility to receive career services, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close.
3. Was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, rancher, or fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides, or because of natural disasters;
4. Is a displaced homemaker; or
5. Is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces who is on active duty, and
  - a. who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; or
  - b. who is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment;

The list below identifies some factors the WIOA Title IB service provider may consider when determining whether a Dislocated Worker is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation:

- The individual is likely to enter a new job that is different structurally or organizationally than his/her previous job.
- The individual is likely to enter a new job with lower seniority compared to his/her previous position.
- The individual has a gap in employment that decreases his/her chances of returning to the same level of occupation or type of job.
- There are limited employment opportunities in the occupation or industry within the local area.
- There is an excess number of workers with similar skill sets and experience in the local area.
- The individual has out-of-date or inadequate skills.
- The individual has adequate skills, but lacks a credential required by most employers.

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<sup>14</sup> 29USC§3102(15)

- The individual has a barrier to employment such as a disability, medical condition, or legal issues that could prevent a return to employment in the same industry or occupation.
- An unsuccessful job search suggests the individual is unlikely to regain employment in his/ her previous occupation or industry.

### Adult Program

The Adult formula program helps job seekers who are at least 18 years old succeed in the labor market. Adult program services provide career and training services through the local One-Stop system. Through the provision of individualized career services and training services, WIOA establishes a priority for serving low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance, as well as individuals who are basic skills deficient. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) funded programs among all participants.

In addition to the priorities established under WIOA, the Coastal Counties Workforce Board has established the following additional priorities for WIOA Title IB Adult services in the Local Area.

- Individuals with disabilities
- New Immigrants (immigrants who have immigrated to Maine within the last 5 years)
- Ex-offenders/formerly incarcerated individuals
- Youth (16-24) with a particular focus on out-of-school youth, and
- Older workers (55+)

Priority is implemented through services and targeted outreach. On an annual basis, Workforce Solutions presents to the Coastal Counties Workforce Board to highlight the demographics of participants served through the Title IB programs in the Coastal Counties region. This allows board members and community-based partners to help ensure that priority populations are being served in the Coastal Counties region.

To target outreach to English language learners, the service provider has translated outreach materials into the languages (other than English) most frequently spoken by individuals in the Coastal Counties region. Additionally, the service provider ensures access to a language interpreter for anyone who needs/requests one in order to provide meaningful access.

Beyond the priorities, any adult that is of age, is work-authorized, is draft registered if required, and has been assessed and determined in need of supports can be provided with individualized or training services. Additionally, there are no restrictions to providing basic career services – they can be provided to any eligible adult. Please refer to Appendix A-ii for the Priority of Service Policy in the Coastal Counties region. In the Coastal Counties region, the service provider is responsible for developing an outreach strategy that incorporates social media channels, to make services known to eligible individuals.

### Career Services

WIOA authorizes career services for adults and dislocated workers. There are three types of career services: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. The provision of individualized career services must be based on the employment needs of the individual as determined jointly by the individual and their WIOA Title IB Career Advisor and should be identified through an

individual employment plan (IEP). Although WIOA distinguishes levels of service, this distinction is not intended to imply that there is a sequence of services. These services can be provided in any order. Career services under this approach provide the WIOA Title IB Service Provider with flexibility to target services that meet the needs of the customer, while still allowing for tracking of outcomes for reporting purposes. The three categories of career services are as follows.

#### *Basic Career Services*

Basic career services are universally accessible and must be made available to all individuals seeking employment and training services in at least one comprehensive American Job Center per local area. Generally, these services involve less staff time and involvement and include services such as eligibility determinations, initial skill assessments, labor exchange services, provision of information on programs and services, and program referrals. These services may be provided by both the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, as well as by the Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services.

#### *Individualized Career Services*

Individualized career services must be provided to participants after WIOA Title IB staff determine that such services are required to retain or obtain employment, consistent with any applicable statutory priorities. Generally, these services involve significant staff time and customization to each individual's needs. Individualized career services include services such as specialized assessments, developing an individual employment plan, counseling, work experience, etc. WIOA Title IB staff may use recent previous interviews, evaluations, or assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate.

#### *Follow-up Services*

The WIOA Title IB Service Provider must provide follow-up services for adults and dislocated worker participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. One type of follow-up service highlighted in WIOA is to provide individuals counseling about the workplace. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

<b>BASIC CAREER SERVICES</b>	
Primarily informational, many may be self-accessed, all must be provided through the one-stop delivery system.	
<b>Basic Career Services</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
Eligibility Determination	Eligibility for Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth WIOA Title IB programs
Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Information	Provision of information on training programs including cost, jobs they prepare one for, expected employment and earnings, and credential types.
Financial Aid Assistance Info	Provision of assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA, such as PELL, State, or Local funded programs, scholarships, etc.
Initial Assessment	Assessment of skill levels, including literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, aptitudes, abilities/skill gaps, support service needs, includes CASAS
Labor Exchange Services	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Search &amp; Placement Assistance</li> <li>• Career Counseling</li> <li>• Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations</li> <li>• Provision of information on nontraditional employment for women</li> <li>• Recruitment related services to businesses, including referrals to services not traditionally delivered through the one-stop system</li> </ul>
Labor Market Information	Provision of workforce and labor market information (LMI), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job vacancy listings in labor market areas (Local, State, National)</li> <li>• Information on the skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and</li> <li>• Occupational info about in-demand jobs, such as earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement</li> </ul>
Local Area Performance Info	Provision of information about local area performance, including accountability measures, one-stop certifications, etc.
Outreach – Intake – Orientation	Providing an orientation to or information about services available through the one-stop system including worker profiling. Must also include opportunity for an individual to initiate an application for TANF services.
Referrals to & Coordination	Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services of one-stop system partners and other appropriate services, including supportive services.
Supportive Services Info	Provision of information on availability of supportive services or assistance and appropriate referrals to agencies that provide them, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childcare</li> <li>• Child Support</li> <li>• Health Services (MaineCare, CHIP, Medicare, Health Insurance Options)</li> <li>• Food Stamps</li> <li>• TANF</li> </ul>

UI Claims Assistance	Provision of “ <b>meaningful assistance</b> ” to individuals seeking to file a UI claim via on- site staff trained in UI claims filing and claimant rights and responsibilities; or providing a direct link, within a reasonable amount of time, to a UI staff person who can answer such questions.
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<b>INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES</b>	
May be made available if determined appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment.	
<b>Individualized</b>	<b>Definitions:</b>
Career Planning	A client-centered approach in service delivery, designed to assist the participant in understanding the steps in a career pathway, and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans to ensure access to necessary activities and support services, using where feasible, computer-based technologies, and</li> <li>b. Provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate both during participation and after job placement. <a href="#">WIOA Sec(3)(8)</a></li> </ol> Note: career planning services must be provided in order for an individual to be eligible to receive “training” services.
Comprehensive Assessment	Specialized assessments of skill levels/service needs of Adult/Dislocated Workers such as diagnostic testing or in- depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
English Language Acquisition	A program of instruction designed to help eligible individuals who are English language learners to achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language; and that leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment of a secondary school diploma or equivalent;</li> <li>• Transition to post-secondary education; or</li> <li>• Employment <a href="#">Title II WIOA Section 203(6)</a></li> </ul>
Financial Literacy	May include activities that support participants’ ability to: create budgets; initiate checking/savings accounts; make informed financial decisions; effectively manage spending, credit, and debt; understand credit reports/scores and how to ensure accuracy of same; maintain good credit; improve poor credit; understand/evaluate/compare financial products and services; understand identity theft and other rights pertaining to personal identity and financial data; and to address the financial literacy need of non-English speakers; including distribution of materials on these topics in other languages.
Group Counseling	Involves two or more participants addressing certain issues, problems or situations that may be shared by the group members, such as: long-term unemployment, addressing ex-offender status with prospective employers, planning for living expenses while attending college, etc.
Individual Counseling	One-on-one sessions that may go into greater detail about a particular participant’s needs regarding specific issues, problems, or situations she/he is facing, such as planning for living expenses while in training, addressing ex-offender status during an interview, etc.

Individual Employment Plan (IEP) Development	Developed jointly with the participant and career consultant, may include other one-stop partner as appropriate. The IEP identifies employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services the participant will need to achieve his/her goals, including information about ETPL. It is an ongoing strategy that must be signed and dated by both the participant and the career consultant. Participant progress should be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the IEP revised if goals, objectives, or services to be provided change.
Out-of-Area Job Search or Relocation	Financial or technical assistance to conduct out-of-area job search activities, and/or informational or support services that support relocation to enter unsubsidized employment.
Short Term Pre-Vocational	Often referred to as Pre-employment competency or Work-Ready – it is the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. May also include digital/computer literacy.
Work Experience / Internship	Planned, structured, leaning experiences, linked to careers, that takes place in a workplace for a limited amount of time. May be in the non-profit, for-profit, or public sectors. May be paid or unpaid depending on whether it meets the employer/employee relationship as identified in the FLSA.
Workforce Preparation	Activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy, self-management skills-including competencies in utilizing resources and information, working with others, understanding systems, obtaining skills necessary for transition into and completion of post-secondary education or training, or employment <a href="#">Title II WIOA definitions Section 203(17)</a>

**FOLLOW UP SERVICES** are required for Adult/DW and Youth populations. Please refer to Appendix A iii for information on follow up services for youth.

<b>FOLLOW-UP SERVICES</b>	
Follow-Up Dislocated Worker / Adult	<p>Must be made available to Adult and Dislocated Worker participants, for a minimum of 12 months following the first day of employment.</p> <p>Follow-Up services for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants are primarily tied to job retention. Follow-up services include counseling regarding continued success in the workplace.</p>
<p><b>CRITERIA FOR TRAINING SERVICES</b> – Training services may be made available to WIOA Title IB eligible individuals who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. A one-stop center or one-stop partner determines, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, <i>and</i> career planning, are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

- sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services;
2. In need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
  3. Have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services;
- B. Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individuals are willing to commute or relocate;
  - C. Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and Federal Pell Grants established under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants (provisions relating to fund coordination are found at §680.230 and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(B)); and
  - D. If training services are provided through the adult funding stream, are determined eligible in accordance with the State and Local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA 134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600.

<b>TRAINING SERVICES</b>	
<b>Training</b>	<b>Definitions</b>
Adult Education & Literacy in combination w/ occupational training	Training funds may be used to support Adult education and literacy activities if they are provided concurrently or in combination with occupational training, (including training for non-traditional occupations), OJT, Incumbent Worker Training, Workplace training that combines training and related instruction, training programs operated by the private sector, skills upgrading or entrepreneurial training.
Customized Training <i>Unemployed Individuals</i>	Training designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (or group of employers), that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ the individual upon successful completion of the training, for which the employer pays a significant cost of the training as determined by LWDB policy.
Customized Training <i>Employed Individuals</i>	Customized training (CT) of an eligible employed individual may be provided for an employer or group of employers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employee is not earning a self-sufficient wage or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment as determined by LWDB policy;</li> <li>• The requirements of CT as listed above are met; and</li> <li>• The CT relates to new technologies, new production or service processes, upgrades to a new job that requires additional skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes identified by LWDB policy.</li> </ul>

Entrepreneurial Training	Training to prepare participants to enter self-employment, start microenterprises, may include writing a business plan, understanding market research, market or product development, financial request proposals, staffing, business accounting, record keeping, and more.
Incumbent Worker Training	Incumbent worker training must meet the requirements of WIOA §134(d) and must increase the competitiveness of the employee or the employer. It is training designed to meet the special requirements of an employer (or group of employers) to retain a skilled workforce or avert layoff of employees by assisting workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment; and that is conducted with a commitment by the employer to retain or avert the layoffs of the incumbent workers trained. Note: LWDB employer criteria and cost-sharing requirements apply. Not more than 20% of Local Adult / Dislocated Worker funds may be used for incumbent worker training.
Job Readiness in combination w/occupational training	If funded as a training activity job readiness must be provided in combination with occupational skills training including classroom or work-based occupational training.
Occupational Skills Training	Program of training offered by an Eligible Training Provider, paid for with an Adult/DW Individual Training Account (ITA), which may also include related instruction cost of Registered Apprenticeship program listed on ETPL.
On-the-Job Training (OJT) <i>Unemployed Individual</i>	<p>Training provided by an employer to a paid participant engaged in productive work in a job that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;</li> <li>• Is made available through a contract that provides a reimbursement of up to 50% of the participant wage to the employer to cover the extraordinary cost of training and additional supervision; and</li> <li>• Is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation, taking into account the content of the training, the participant's existing skills and prior work experience, and the participant's IEP.</li> </ul> <p>May include the cost of OJT for a Registered Apprenticeship program listed on the ETPL. May not be entered into with any employer who under previous OJT contracts failed to provide long term employment as a regular employee with wages, benefits, and working conditions equal to other employees working for a similar length of time.</p>
On-the-Job Training (OJT) <i>Employed Individual</i>	<p>OJT contract may be written for eligible workers when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employee is not earning a self-sufficient wage, or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, as determined by LWDB policy;</li> <li>• Meets the requirements for OJT listed above;</li> </ul> <p>Relates to introduction of new technologies, new production or service processes, upgrades to new job that requires additional skills, workplace literacy, or other appropriate purposes</p>

	identified by LWDB policy.
Pre-Apprenticeship Training	A program designed to prepare an individual to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and that provides: Training & curriculum that aligns with the skill needs of employers in the local or State economy, access to educational and career counseling and other supportive services, directly or indirectly, hands-on, meaningful learning activities that are connected to education and training activities, such as exploring career options hands-on, understanding how course work applies on the job, leads to an opportunity to attain at least one industry-recognized credential; and is in partnership with one or more registered apprenticeship programs/sponsors that assist individuals who complete the pre-apprenticeship to enter a registered apprenticeship program.
Registered Apprenticeship	WIOA participant entry into a registered apprenticeship program as a training pathway. Enrollment for the full term of RA program is not necessary, if enrolled for up to one year the above measures apply, if the apprentice receives a certification of apprenticeship within one year of exit of program a credential measure also applies.
Skills Upgrade & Retraining	Training designed to enhance the skills of currently employed participants who are working at less than their potential and have minimal or no advancement capability without gaining the skills required for them to upgrade and retrain to move them to self-sufficiency.
Training programs operated by the private sector	Private sector training programs that provide specific skills pertaining to a plant function or plant machine that cannot be provided by an Eligible Training Provider or OJT.
Transitional Jobs	A time-limited work experience, for which wages are subsidized by the program and that are targeted to individuals with barriers to employment that are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history. Transitional jobs are designed to enable individuals to establish a work history, demonstrate success in an employee/employer relationship and develop skills that will lead to unsubsidized employment. Transitional job training must be combined with comprehensive career services and supportive services. Funds for this type of training are limited to 10% of the local area's Adult/Dislocated Worker allocation.
Workplace training combined with related instruction	Training that combines hands-on occupational training with related instruction classes, such as cooperative education.

## Relevant Strategies

- **Promote use of work-based training:** partner with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Associations, and Industry Associations, and their employer members to identify and support worker training projects (i.e., incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and work experience) in target sectors.
- **Diversify and expand outreach:** WIOA Title IB Service Provider will develop outreach strategy for the region that incorporates social media channels.
- **Continue to integrate remote access:** Continue to offer virtual workshops for the public and for enrolled clients to inform them of available workforce services for specific populations or career pathways in specific sectors.

## B. Youth Program Services

### Local Youth Workforce Development Program: Overall Description of Approach and Program Structure

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) oversees a robust youth workforce development program that serves the six coastal counties in Maine. CCWI's program model is one characterized by client-driven activities and strong community partnerships, both of which ensure the program is responsive to the needs of the area. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB), CCWI and the local area's service provider have a long history of supporting youth with barriers to employment in pursuing education, training, and employment. One recent best practice that the local area is interested in sustaining is a 'Youth Work Experience' Cohort model, which offers young people an opportunity to participate in a structured work readiness training that prepares them for employment and integrates skills training in leadership development.

WIOA requires that 75% of WIOA Title IB youth funding is spent on out-of-school youth (unless a waiver is in place). Out-of-school youth served by WIOA Title IB face various challenges to obtain and retain employment and are often less connected to community resources than their in-school peers. Chief among these barriers are factors such as poverty, homelessness, basic skills deficiency, lack of high school diploma or equivalency, pregnancy and/or parenting, involvement in the juvenile justice system, lack of significant work history, lack of transportation, and speaking English as a second language.

The local area's youth workforce development activities are designed to address these barriers and facilitate a path toward employment. As a regional entity that seeks to invest in best practices in workforce and economic development, our youth are assets towards the economic future. As the population continues to age, the skills of our youth become more important to the success of the regional economy.

To address barriers to education and employment for out-of-school youth, youth workforce development activities are provided in all six counties of the local area. Workforce Solutions, operated by Goodwill Northern New England, is the WIOA Title IB Youth Operator for the Coastal Counties region. Youth Career Advisors provide **assessment** of eligible youth, develop an **individual service strategy** for each participant, and provide on-going **case management** and **follow-up**. To do this work well, Youth Career Advisors must be receptive to the needs and interests of youth participants, and knowledgeable about resources in the

community and other youth serving organizations. Youth Career Advisors also conduct outreach to employers and local businesses to identify employment or work experience opportunities for youth participants. See below for a more detailed description of the stages of the youth program.

*Assessment:*

Potential youth participants are referred to a Youth Career Advisor through a variety of means. Some participants walk into their local One-Stop or CareerCenter, actively seeking help completing their education or obtaining employment. More often, youth are referred from one of Workforce Solutions' many community partners such as adult education, the criminal justice system, Vocational Rehabilitation, foster care, or public housing.

To verify the eligibility of potential participants, Youth Career Advisors collect basic demographic information (name, address, social security number, age, citizen status, how they were referred); information on barriers to employment (homeless, pregnant/parenting, unemployed, TANF/food stamps, disability status, experience with criminal justice system, English Language Learner, veteran status); and educational status (currently in school, highest grade completed).

Upon enrolling in WIOA Title IB, Youth Career Advisors conduct a more in-depth assessment interview to determine the specific and unique needs, as well as education and employment goals of the participant. In addition to education and work experience, the assessment details the participants' family and living situation, health and mental health status and concerns, any substance use issues, and legal concerns. The interview will also determine if the participant is an English language learner.

All enrollees complete the O\*NET Career Interest Inventory, which offers an analysis of occupational interests based on preferred tasks. Depending on each participant's unique needs and short- and long-term goals, Youth Career Advisors may conduct additional assessments to determine the next steps. Assessments may include: The World of Work Inventory (WOWI), the Transferable Skills Scale (TSS), and My Best Bets, and O\*Net My Next Move.

*Individual Service Strategy:*

Based on information obtained through the interview and assessment process, Youth Career Advisors work with the young person to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) in partnership with the youth participant. The ISS sets long-term career goals for the participant, as well as more specific, short-term education and employment goals (i.e., completing the HiSET exam, obtaining a paid work experience). Participants may also set youth development or leadership goals as part of their ISS. The ISS outlines action steps for reaching each goal and documents which of the 14 youth service elements the program will connect the young person with to achieve each goal. Both the Participant and the Advisor sign and date the ISS and agree to future ISS review dates.

*Case Management and Follow-up:*

Youth Career Advisors provide on-going case management and are available on an as-needed basis to address new or on-going barriers or challenges that participants experience as they work toward their education and employment goals. Participants agree to maintain at least monthly contact with their Advisor as part of their ISS. Counselors will often check in with employers during a youth participant's

work experience to proactively identify and address any issues that may derail the participant's success. Youth Career Advisors meet with participants on an ongoing basis to check in on the progress of the goals stated in their plan. If the young person's interests or plans change course significantly, the Youth Career Advisor will work with the youth to revise the plan accordingly.

### **Community Partnerships**

Partnerships with other community based and youth serving organizations and entities are crucial to finding young people who are eligible for and in need of WIOA Title IB services, as well as referring WIOA Title IB participants to services they may need or want as part of their service strategy. Examples of specific partnerships are outlined below:

- *Local area justice and law enforcement officials:*  
Strong relationships with the Juvenile Justice system include partnering with Juvenile Community Corrections Officers and Long Creek Youth Development Center where Youth Career Advisors can meet with youth to provide services and access to employment opportunities prior to their release.
- *Local public housing authorities:*  
Local housing authorities, primarily the Portland Housing Authority, refer individuals to Workforce Solutions for employment and training services. Other larger communities like Westbrook, Biddeford, and Sanford may also make referrals from time to time. Additionally, Life Navigators at Workforce Solutions are knowledgeable about housing authority services and assist clients in connecting with and accessing these resources.
- *Local education agencies:*  
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. and the local Youth Career Advisors have developed relationships with local community colleges, four-year colleges, Adult Education programs, secondary schools, and alternative education programs to support youth in transition into HiSET classes and post-secondary education as well as augmenting education with subsidized employment and assistance transitioning into work. Youth Career Advisors also partner with education providers to provide young people with access to resources on financial aid and scholarships.
- *Local human service agencies:*  
Youth Career Advisors are actively engaged with youth-serving organizations in their communities. Youth Career Advisors make presentations about youth services available through WIOA TitleIB and how to refer eligible youth to work with Career Advisors, access job search supports, the 'Youth Work Experience' Cohort, and other job training and workforce education resources. Youth Career Advisors serve on committees of other community providers to provide information about youth services, encourage, and facilitate cross referrals, and expand linkages to area resources for youth participants.

- *Local disability-serving agencies and providers, and health and mental health providers:*  
Many young people who access WIOA Title IB have diagnosed disabilities or have experienced the disruptive symptoms of mental health struggles. Youth Career Advisors work closely with Vocational Rehabilitation staff to make referrals or coordinate services. Youth Career Advisors also work with MaineCare providers to understand eligibility requirements and availability of services.
- *Job Corps:*  
As a WIOA partner, Job Corps is a signatory of the area's MOU and also utilizes the area's One Stop Center. Youth Career Advisors partner with Job Corps to make referrals for youth who are good fit for either set of programming.

### **Focus on Out-of-School Youth**

CCWI conducts monthly monitoring, at 'Coastal Internal Group' meetings. During these meetings, CCWI and the WIOA Title IB service provider discuss the expenditure rate for spending on out-of-school youth to ensure it is at or above 75% of all youth spending (note: at times USDOL may grant a waiver to change the percentage of spending for out-of-school-youth, if determined to be in the best interest of youth in the Local Area). The board and its service provider have a long history of serving out of school youth and have strong community-based partnerships to support that focus and programming. Since its inception, Coastal Counties Workforce Board has focused on the hardest to serve out of school youth, and the board continues to place this as a top priority.

To develop the Youth Career Advisors' ability to serve this population, the local board, and the service provider work to maintain its partnerships with community-based organizations that serve out-of-school youth, as well as schools that identify youth at risk of dropping out and work to connect them to services. Youth Career Advisors who work primarily with this population do develop expertise in navigating resources, and balancing goal setting with immediate need, as many young people who access the program are not tethered to institutions that provide support.

### **Youth Service Elements: Description of Approach and Availability**

Once individuals are enrolled into the youth program, they access a combination of the 14 youth service elements. Below is a description of all service elements with how they are provided in the local area.

#### *1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Dropout Prevention*

Youth Career Advisors typically refer to adult education or other education providers to provide this service. If a participant has not received a high school diploma or equivalency, then preparing for and taking the HiSET exam is included as part of their ISS. The Youth Career Advisor will connect the participant to their local adult education provider to enroll in HiSET preparation and work toward the exam. For individuals who are enrolled in an academic program and need additional support, the Youth Career Advisor will work to connect the participant to tutoring services, as available.

## *2) Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services*

This local area's focus is and has been on the out-of-school youth population. However, Youth Career Advisors work to establish and maintain relationships with Alternative Secondary Schools in the Coastal Counties region to ensure knowledge of available services for eligible youth. Outreach work includes making presentations to young people and school staff and partnering with guidance counselors and social workers to receive referrals for youth who need assistance building work readiness skills, finding employment, and planning for future education.

## *3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences*

Both paid and unpaid work experiences are regularly utilized in the Coastal Counties area to promote post-secondary learning and occupational growth, and to prepare youth for unsubsidized employment. In addition, youth placed in paid work experience also occasionally transition into on-the-job training to secure regular, unsubsidized employment. Credential-based occupational skills training, paired with paid work experience, has been a successful tool for several youth participants.

As referenced above, the Coastal Counties area also runs a 'Youth Work Experience' Cohort, which creates an opportunity for young people to earn money while they learn work readiness skills and then transition into employment at a worksite.

The Coastal Counties area recognizes the opportunity to support entrée into Apprenticeships through Pre-Apprenticeship programs, which are an eligible modality under the Work Experience service element. CCWI and its service provider will continue to work with industry associations to promote pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship opportunities throughout the region. Additionally, CCWI intends to investigate and strategize how WIOA partners can come together to create apprenticeship opportunities in this area and ensure that the local board and WIOA Title IB service provider are key partners in the work.

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board ensures that 20% of youth funds are used for work-based training activities by conducting ongoing fiscal monitoring of the service provider. During monthly 'Coastal Internal Group' meetings, the board staff and service provider review fiscal reports, and specifically highlight and discuss the work-based training expenditures.

## *4) Occupational Skills Training*

Youth Career Advisors connect participants to occupational skills training when they identify an occupation of interest, or it is a part of the strategy to achieve the young person's goals. As a result of the sector strategies work discussed in Section II-C, youth participants will have access to training programs in in-demand occupations and growth industries in the local area.

## *5) Education offered Concurrently and in the same context as Workforce Preparation Activities*

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. is interested in promoting and utilizing WIOA Title IB funding to increase access to Registered Apprenticeship for young people, a hallmark of which is the comparing of classroom education with workforce training and preparation. Youth Career Advisors also partner with the local Youth Build program, Youth Building Alternatives, to serve youth through WIOA funded services as it fits with their plans and future education and career goals.

#### *6) Leadership Development Opportunities*

Youth Career Advisors utilize their strong partnerships with educational institutions to understand Leadership Development Opportunities for youth participants who are in-school or transitioning into Post-Secondary Education. For young people enrolled in the 'Youth Work Experience' Cohort through YouthBuild or the Farm Skills Work Experience, will have the opportunity to practice Leadership within the curriculum's structured activities.

#### *7) Supportive Services*

Support services are customized based on the needs of the individual participant and detailed in their ISS. Support services are designed to eliminate specific barriers to achieving success. Some the most common services provided include gas cards, childcare, bus passes, driver's education, tools for training or employment, and clothes for training or employment.

#### *8) Adult Mentoring*

Youth Career Advisors discuss the opportunity to connect with an adult mentor during the assessment process, and while checking in with youth as they progress on their plan. Currently, if a youth participant shows an interest in, or a need for an adult mentor, Youth Career Advisors will work to identify a mentorship program in their community or use their professional network and business relationships to identify a mentor. In TEGL 21-16, the Department of Labor acknowledges the challenge of finding mentors in remote areas and allows case managers to serve as mentors. The Coastal Counties area has used this flexibility, and youth participants have established mentor-mentee relationships with both Career Advisors and Life Navigators who are working with them. Moving forward, Coastal Counties Workforce Board's staff and the One- Stop Operator will investigate opportunities to support and augment the provision of high-quality adult mentoring in the region.

#### *9) Follow-up services*

Follow-up services are offered for one year after program separation and include access to all 14 service elements. Typically, youth participants in follow-up access supportive services for emergency situations to retain employment or succeed in educational programs. Youth Career Advisors inform participants of the availability of follow-up services as the young person is preparing to exit the program.

#### *10) Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling*

Youth program participants may identify the need for more intensive guidance and counseling services during their intake and assessment process, by sharing mental health or substance use

concerns, or identifying the need for intensive support or help navigating resources. To address this need, the Youth Career Advisor will refer individuals to the Life Navigator on their team. Career Advisors have worn the hat of both the workforce development specialist as well as a Case Manager providing assistance with housing, substance abuse, childcare, or other barriers. CCWI's experience has shown that these two roles should be discreet for optimal programmatic results. The Life Navigator role is similar to a general case manager, not a clinical staff position, and provides practical counseling and resources to clients. In some instances, the Life Navigator works with the client throughout the client's time with the program. Other times, the Life Navigator is a short-term intervention to address a specific barrier (e.g., housing), then fades away as the client continues work with their Youth Career Advisor. In cases where the need is for a clinical therapist, either the Youth Career Advisor or Life Navigator will make a referral to appropriate mental health specialists.

### *11) Financial Literacy Education*

Youth Career Advisors provide basic financial literacy education to clients as part of regular case management. Staff help participants set up basic checking accounts, review their pay stubs with them to help them understand payroll deductions, and connect them to free tax preparation programs in the community. Financial literacy topics are also included as part of the 'Youth Work Experience' cohort. Youth Career Advisors will also review financial aid offers from post-secondary educational institutions with participants to make sure they understand their financial responsibility in the arrangement. Youth who participate in a Work Experience are required to complete a W-4 form as well as an I-9 form for employment and tax purposes. For young people who need additional support, Youth Career Advisors connect them to financial literacy advisors through Maine Educational Opportunity Center (MEOC) or the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME).

### *12) Entrepreneurial Skills Training*

If a youth participant shows an interest in starting their own business, Youth Career Advisors can connect them with an adult mentor who is an entrepreneur or who has experience starting and/or managing a company. Youth may also be placed with an entrepreneur as part of their Work Experience and encouraged to take business classes as part of their education or occupational skills training component. Youth Career Advisors may also connect participants to community providers such as Coastal Enterprises, Inc. or New Ventures Maine who provide workshops, support, and consulting for entrepreneurs and small business owners. Moving forward, the 'Youth Work Experience' Cohort will contain Entrepreneurial Skills Training in its curriculum that trains young people in problem solving, critical thinking, public speaking and presenting, and flexibility and adaptability. These skills are transferrable across many occupations, and important for many of the careers that the youth who access CCWI's programs are interested in.

### *13) Career Counseling, LMI and Job Getting*

Career planning begins during the assessment process when youth participants complete assessment tools such as the O\*NET Career Interests Inventory or the WOWI, which help youth participants identify occupational interests or potential career goals. Youth Career Advisors also review labor

market information with participants to identify in-demand occupations, and the skills and education required for their prospective career choice. Each participant's ISS is written to illustrate short-term and long-term goals and action steps. Examples of relevant action steps are resume development, assistance with job applications, and participating in mock interviews. Many young people who come into the Youth Program have urgent financial needs but are also interested in pursuing training or other skill development. Youth Career Advisors have expertise in balancing short-term actions with progress toward long-term goals and building these individualized strategies into each participant's ISS.

#### *14) Transition to Post-secondary Education Preparation*

For youth participants planning to apply for, and enroll in post-secondary education and training, Youth Career Advisors are available to help them navigate the process. This includes helping them identify appropriate post-secondary programs, complete college applications, and access financial aid information and complete their FAFSA. Youth Career Advisors will also refer participants to community supports such as FAME for financial aid information and TRIO programs on campus for academic support.

### **Promising Practices and Plans**

#### *Youth Work Experience Cohort*

In the spring of 2020, considering COVID 19 and as a response to the corresponding limits on summer employment and work experience opportunities, the Coastal Counties area's youth Program developed a virtual cohort-style work experience for Youth Program participants. The virtual program combined work readiness training with hands on project work, all developed in line with best practices in youth development. The cohort provided an opportunity for Youth Career Advisors to engage youth in an interactive and structured way, offer work experience programming, and utilize the cohort as an event of interest and a recruitment strategy. While outreach to community partners during COVID was challenging, the enrollment deadline around a cohort, the targeted marketing materials, and the opportunity for young people to earn a wage while engaged in remote work, led to an increase in program interest. Workforce Solutions developed the curriculum to include interactive workshops that prepared young people for job acquisition and career exploration, including mock interviews with business community members and a career panel made up of professionals in careers of interest to the youth participants. After the classroom training component of the cohort, the participants transition into a work experience placement, where they are able to apply their learnings in the field, ideally in a sector of interest to the young person.

The Coastal Counties area continues to offer the *Youth Work Experience Cohort* and will adapt the curriculum and delivery structure to meet the needs of youth and health and safety regulations as they change. Additionally, the structure of ongoing cohorts allows for staff to tweak the model, and integrate new elements into the curriculum, such as entrepreneurial skills training and leadership development opportunities.

Relevant Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Promote use of work-based training:</b> partner with Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Associations, and Industry Associations, and their employer members to identify and support worker training projects (i.e., incumbent worker training, on-the-job training, and work experience) in target sectors.</li> <li>• <b>Foster integration and best practices for youth services with community partners:</b> One Stop Operator will facilitate youth specific engagement for service providers to discuss best practices.</li> <li>• <b>Prioritize cohort projects:</b> CCWI will focus on implementation of cohort projects to serve priority populations and sectors, including, but not limited to, Integrated Employment and Training cohorts to serve Basic Skills Deficient individuals, work readiness cohorts to serve youth with barriers to employment, and sector specific projects. CCWI will develop new processes for group enrollments.</li> </ul>

**C. Supportive Services**

Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA. Supportive Services provide participants of WIOA Title IB activities with key assistance beyond career and training services necessary to achieve success. Supportive services, like assistance with the cost of transportation or childcare, allow participants to successfully engage with WIOA Title IB career and training activities that are vital to entering or re-entering the workforce. Services may include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Linkages to community services;
- Assistance with transportation costs;
- Assistance with child care and dependent care;
- Assistance with housing;
- Assistance with educational testing;
- Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- Legal aid services;
- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses, protective eye gear and other essential safety equipment;
- Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in education and training programs.
- Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

Refer to Appendix A-i for the Supportive Services policy in the Coastal Counties region.

**D. Individual Training Accounts**

Pursuant to both WIOA and its implementing regulations, training services and delivery strategies will focus primarily on the issuance of Individual Training Accounts (ITA). Please refer to Appendix A-iv for the Coastal Counties Workforce Board’s ITA policy.

An individual training account (ITA) is established on behalf of a participant to purchase training services from an eligible provider they select in consultation with WIOA Title IB Career Advisor.

An ITA should not exceed two years. The CCWB has established a maximum customer financial limit, or cap, on training through ITAs which is supported by WIOA formula funds. The amount of the cap will be reviewed annually to determine if a revision is necessary to reflect current WIOA and other related funding levels (NOTE: National Dislocated Worker Grants, or other non-formula funds may allow for greater amounts for targeted dislocated workers and the ITA spending will reflect the additional amounts available for these groups.)

Pursuant to the regulations, WIOA funding is the funding of last resort. WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of their training; or require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. Programs and training providers must coordinate funds available to pay for training.

### **Eligibility for Training:**

Adult and Dislocated Worker customers are eligible for training services if:

- Assessment and counseling services have been received through Career Services or otherwise that result in an employment plan which defines:
  - the purpose of training (employment & occupational goal) and
  - the amount of the Individual Training Account, and
  - support as available and required for participation in training, and
  - the participant's interest and capacity.
- The training is selected from the CCWB/MDOL approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), should reflect jobs in high demand and growth for the occupation of choice and is consistent with Labor Market Information for employment goals.
- The average wage level for employees with this training is greater than the participant can earn without this training, and this wage level can lead to self-sufficiency. *(See Policy 2-17-#04) for definition of self-sufficiency).*
- The participant can meet the requirements for admission into the school or training program.
- The participant is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the cost of such training or assistance is insufficient to allow participation.

Priority for training services will be given to those customers who meet the Priority of Service criteria. Particular interest will be in assisting adults who are either economically disadvantaged (below the yearly LLSIL or HHS guidelines), on public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

Service provider(s) will use the following tests to make Training and ITA decisions:

1. Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
2. Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment;
3. Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
4. Is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants established under title N of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or requires WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants (20 CFR 680.230 and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(B) contain provisions relating to fund coordination.);
5. Is a member of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and is awaiting a determination? If the petition is certified, the worker may then transition to TAA approved training. If the petition is denied, the worker will continue training under WIOA;
6. Is determined to be eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) if training services are provided through the adult funding stream? and
7. Selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.

The CCWB promotes the use of Individualized Training Accounts (ITAs) to address high-demand, difficult to fill, positions in the Local Area. The WIOA Tile IB Service Provider reports out on a quarterly basis to the CCWB to report out on the number of ITAs in each priority industry.

#### **Customer Choice:**

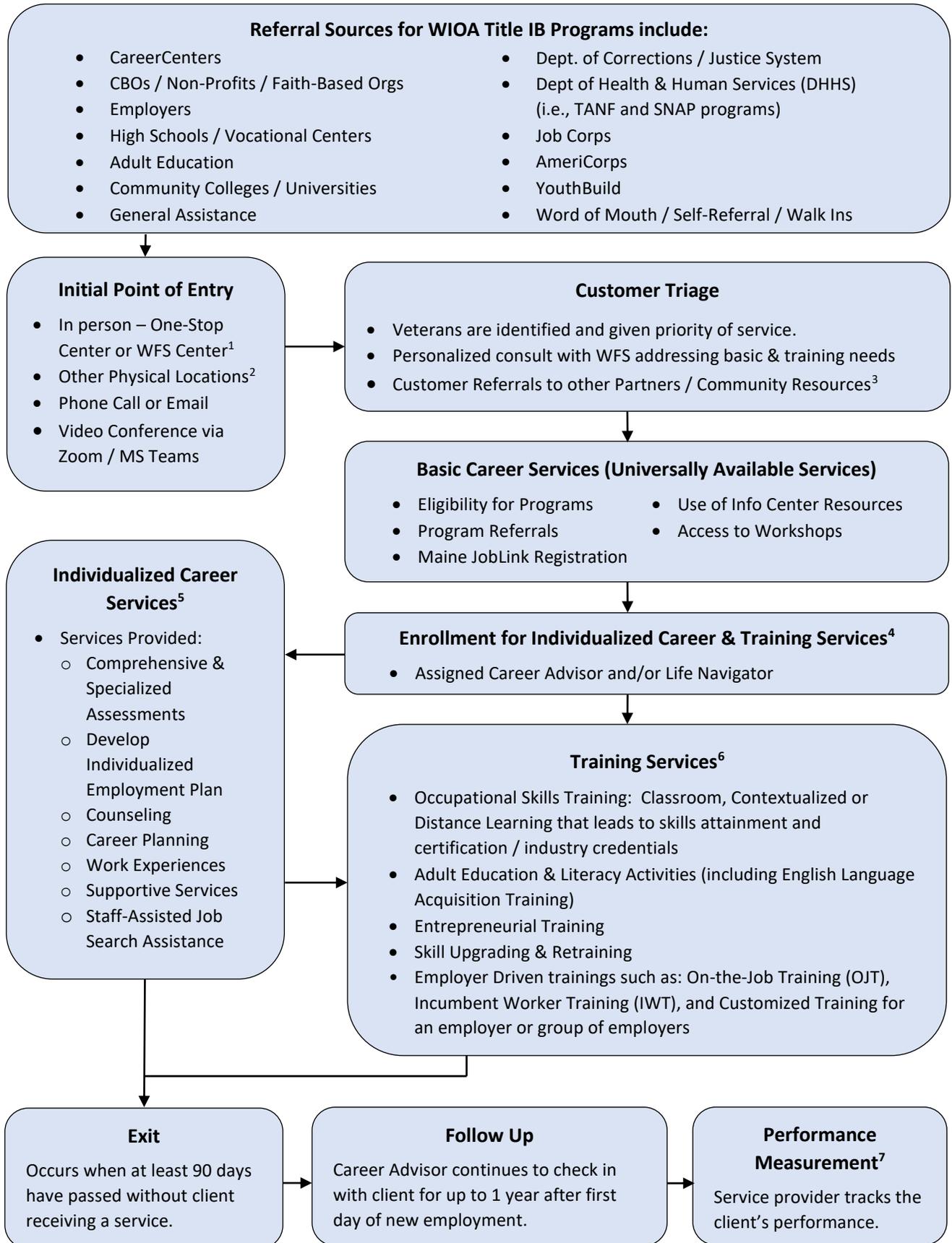
Under Title I of WIOA, training services must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible provider. In the case of ITAs, the Local Area will take several steps to maximize customer choice in the selection of training providers. To promote customer choice, CCWI and the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) have collaborated on an Eligible Training Provider Listing (ETPL). The ETPL is published on the MDOL website for customers' convenience and information. The ETPL will include performance and cost information.

Customers will be free to choose training options from any provider from the list which will lead to employment goals as outlined in their plan. Eligible customers may also receive a variety of education, training, and support services. Staff members are encouraged to leverage resources from partners to develop a more comprehensive employment plan for the participants.

## E. WIOA Title IB Flow Chart

### Participant Process for WIOA Title IB Services in the Coastal Counties Region

(see Endnotes List on next page for more detail)



## Endnotes List - For Participant Process

1. Workforce Solutions (WFS) is the region's Title IB Services provider. In-person locations include the One-Stop Center, 56 Northport Drive, Suite 202, Portland, ME, and a WFS Center located at 15 Starrett Dr., Suite F, Belfast, Maine.
2. The Workforce Solutions staff will travel to a location that is mutually convenient for the client (e.g., library, adult education, etc.).
3. WIOA service provider staff utilize the Employment Services Referral Form to refer customers to other Partners or Community Resources that may address the customers' needs outside of employment & training services (e.g., housing assistance, SNAP, TANF, etc.). Pursuant to the regulations, WIOA services are available to clients when there are no other resources available to meet the client's needs (i.e., WIOA is a program of last resort).
4. After basic career services, enrollment occurs when it is determined through staff assessment that the customer requires staff-assisted services to obtain or retain employment that is customized to the individual's need. The customer becomes a client through formal registration and enrollment in a Workforce Solutions program. The client must sign an enrollment plan with their assigned career advisor. In some cases, a life navigator may also be assigned to help the client address more intensive life barriers.
5. A client may receive only Individualized Career Services, or a combination of Individualized Career Services *and* Training. Both Individualized Career Services and Training are equally available to clients. There is no sequence of service requirements. Sequence will depend on the individual's plan.
6. Training services are provided after staff conduct client interviews/evaluation/assessment AND career planning, and determines training is needed to meet client goals. Under WIOA (20 CFR § 680.210) training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who:
  - a. Are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone.
  - b. Are in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.
  - c. Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.
  - d. Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants established under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or requires WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants (20 CFR 680.230 and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(B) contain provisions relating to fund coordination.)
  - e. Are a member of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and is awaiting a determination. If the petition is certified, the worker may then transition to TAA approved training. If the petition is denied, the worker will continue training under WIOA.
  - f. Are determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) if training services are provided through the adult funding stream.
  - g. Have selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.
  - h. Individualized Training must provide the attainment of skills and result in either certification or industry credential.
7. Service provider tracks clients' employment / wages (or in the case of Youth – education completion), in 2nd & 4th Quarters after the client exits the program. Credential Attainment & Median Earnings metrics are tracked for up to 1-year post-exit.

## V. Title II – Adult Education and Literacy Programs

### A. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Services

The Maine Department of Education is the grant administrator of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds for Maine, which it awards to local Adult Education service providers. Maine Adult Education is an education, life and career pathways system that enables adults to be prepared for post-secondary education and/or employment. Providing courses in literacy and adult basic education, high school completion, Maine college transition, career preparation, workforce training, and enrichment, Maine Adult Education has over 65 programs located throughout the state.

Adult education programs provide a range of instructional services to help adults develop the skills for further educational opportunities, job training and better employment, and to realize their full potential as productive workers, family members and citizens. Academic instruction is focused on supporting students in their effort to meet the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education created by the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education. The CCRS Standards were, in turn, adopted by the Maine Office of Adult Education.

#### Service Locations:

To access the program and course portal and find local adult education providers go to the following web link: <http://maineadulted.org/programs>

#### Eligibility:

Participants must be at least 16 years of age and no longer enrolled in high school to receive services. There are no other eligibility requirements for basic education and literacy programs.

#### Services:

Adult Education programs offer a variety of services and programs ranging from basic literacy skills to occupational certifications. Offerings vary at each location. While most grant-funded courses are free of charge some may have fees to help offset materials, supplies, licensure exams, etc. Enrichment classes are fully self-sustaining.

Below are some of the services and programs offered by Adult Education Programs in Maine:

<b>Course/Service</b>	<b>Description</b>
CASAS Assessments	Required to assess readiness for entry to academic and workforce training programs
Academic and Career Advising	Administer career assessments, assist adults in making career decisions
Maine Adult College and Career Access programming	Prepare for admission or a return to a college academic or workforce program. Administer placement testing, provide remedial classes and credit bearing College Success course
High School Completion	Preparation for adult high school diploma

High School Equivalency Test HiSET Preparation and Testing	Writing, Social Studies, Science, Reading, and Math
Adult Basic Education	Further develop math, reading and writing skills
English Language Learner Classes	English proficiency, Citizenship, and other ELL classes
Digital Literacy	Intro to digital literacy to increase digital resiliency computers, and fluency in multiple software programs. Instruction on how to use computers and digital tools to research information, apply for employment and engage in online learning
Workforce Training, Professional Skills, and Industry Recognized Credentials	Integrated Education and Training, pre-apprenticeship and workplace learning in various high demand industries such as Accounting, Office, Financial, Healthcare, and Trades
Academic / College Prerequisites	English, History, Civics, World History, Math, Science, etc.
General Interest/Enrichment	Offered locally to provide and promote opportunities for residents to engage in lifelong learning
Health & Safety	From Basic CPR to Child Development and Wellness classes

Maine Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs will:

- Conduct initial assessments using Federally and State recognized formal and informal assessment instruments to guide learners in their educational and career goals;
- Conduct post-tests to determine academic gain after at least 70 instructional hours or at program completion whenever possible;
- Use assessment results to refer adult education participants to other one-stop partner services consistent with their unique strength, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice;
- Provide updated information concerning new adult education programs, initiatives, and grants via links to the website and email announcements to Coastal Counties region one-stop partner distribution lists;
- Provide program information and data, if available, with respect to the Coastal Counties region MOU;
- Develop and deliver job training programs and services that align with the occupational and industry demands described in the Coastal Counties Regional/Local Plan;

- Provide performance data on Adult Education Service Provider WIOA-funded activities and costs as appropriate;
- Provide data on the number of participants attending partner-funded Adult Education Service Provider activities in the region; such data to include numbers: enrolled, completing and attaining high school completion, entering post-secondary or credential programs;
- Provide an up-to-date directory of adult education and career training programs; and
- Provide CASAS assessments, as well as training in test administration and analysis of results.
- Provide Adult Education and Literacy services that:
  1. Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
  2. Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that:
    - a. are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and
    - b. lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their families.
  3. Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
  4. Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in:
    - a. improving their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English; and their mathematics skills, and
    - b. acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Adult Education programs are responsive to the needs of learners through decades of service to adult education and career development. Programming needs are defined with assistance from local employers, WIOA system partners, such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Solutions and CareerCenters, school districts, community organizations, post-secondary programs, like community colleges and the university system, along with local chambers of commerce, public libraries, other partners.

The focus of adult education is to develop programming in the most effective and efficient delivery methods possible to meet the needs of students and employers, whether, for example, individual classes for English language learners, or industry training to meet an employer's needs, or collaborating with Workforce Solutions and the CareerCenter to serve under and unemployed students.

An important component to overcoming student barriers to learning is helping students access the programs Adult Education offers. Considering the number of low-income students who do not have a

vehicle in their household and may not have another reliable form of transportation, Adult Education programs might arrange for taxi vouchers or other transportation options through the Title 1 provider for low-income students. Adult education programs also have expertise in offering asynchronous and synchronous remote class modules to accommodate the schedules, transportation, and childcare barriers of many adult education participants.

Other additional support could include childcare services, like the ones offered at Merrymeeting Adult Education HiSET Learning Lab at Perryman Village in Brunswick, and during RSU 13's English Language Learning program in Rockland.

Adult Education programs throughout the region are working with Vocational Rehabilitation case workers to offer contextualized workplace instruction for individuals with low-literacy and are developing Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs to meet the identified needs of clients and area employers.

Opportunities developed for adults with barriers are prioritized with data-supported community-identified needs, through efforts like direct community outreach and delivery of services to homeless shelters, and collaboration with local employers to determine needs with targeted training.

Adult Education prioritizes programming to serve individuals with low income, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders and prisoners, homeless individuals, and English language learners. Adult Education works with other WIOA system providers to coordinate career pathways services within Maine Department of Corrections facilities, re-entry programs, and local jails.

Services provided by adult education are focused on helping students achieve their educational and career pathways goals regardless of other circumstances that impact them. Other agencies, like various local housing and social service providers help clients break down other barriers to education and employment. Workforce Solutions and the CareerCenter help students develop career pathways.

Adult Education consistently works to develop improved access to other support service agencies throughout the CCWI region through outreach and participation in advisory boards. There is a referral process in place and close collaboration throughout the region.

Adult Education offers programming for students to obtain their high school credentials and the support to enter post-secondary or certificate training programs. As the education arm of the WIOA title providers, Adult Education offers College and Career Readiness Standards for Adults (CCRS), research-based curriculum, and highly qualified and/or certified instructional staff; MDOE/MaineSTARS data-informed instruction; and a strong connection with local school districts.

Career advising may be offered by multiple One-Stop system partners in the region and there is a braiding of services that ensure the best opportunities for our population. For example, career pathways may include dual advising of students with both Adult Education and community colleges.

## **B. Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Review**

As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Maine Department of Education Office of Adult Education conducted a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) to award multi-year funding to eligible agencies for the provision of WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) Section 231. The initial grant cycle is for FY25-26 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026). Subject to continued availability of funding and demonstrated effectiveness as determined by outcomes, the Department may opt to renew the contract for two renewal periods, July 2026 1 through June 30, 2028, and July 1, 2028, through June 30, 2029.

The Maine Office of Adult Education requires AEFLA applicants to demonstrate alignment between proposed activities and the service strategies of the Local Plan. The local adult education providers have to focus on programs, activities and services that expand opportunities for education, employment, training and supports for WIOA eligible individuals. Local boards review and provide feedback on the applicants' responses for appropriate evidence of alignment with the service strategies in the Local Plan.

## **VI. Title III - Wagner Peyser Services**

### **A. Maine Bureau of Employment Services**

#### **Maine Bureau of Employment Services**

The **Maine Bureau of Employment Services (BES)** offers a wide range of free employment, workforce training, and business services to workers and employers across Maine. Services are available in person at Maine CareerCenters, where customers have free access to computers and wireless internet (Wi-Fi) for employment-related activities. Employers can also utilize CareerCenter interview and conference rooms for recruitment activities at no cost. In addition to in-person support, services are available remotely through itinerant access points and virtual platforms.

#### **Title III Wagner-Peyser**

##### **Services for Job Seekers and Career Changers**

Maine CareerCenters assist individuals seeking employment or a career change with the following services:

- Registering for and navigating Maine JobLink (MJL) accounts (creating new or updating existing accounts)
- Career guidance and counseling through one-on-one sessions
- Developing competitive résumés and cover letters
- Improving interviewing skills (available both in-person and virtually)

- Exploring new career opportunities
- Resetting MJL account passwords
- Registering for and attending workshops on job search strategies and training topics
- Finding occupational skills training and education opportunities
- Accessing an extensive library of online career resources
- Researching and understanding labor market information
- Connecting to additional employment and training support services

Customers benefit from a robust network of CareerCenter partner collaborations that provide direct and indirect referrals to maximize opportunities for employment success.

### **Services for Employers**

Maine CareerCenters provide a full range of workforce solutions for employers, including:

- Listing job openings on Maine JobLink
- Managing MJL accounts
- Searching for qualified candidates through resume databases
- Exploring recruitment strategies
- Developing effective job descriptions and job orders
- Creating and hosting customized hiring events such as general or specialized recruitment and Job Fair Services
- Marketing job openings via job boards and social media
- Recruiting specialized populations (e.g., veterans, individuals with justice involvement)
- Establishing registered apprenticeship programs
- Applying for Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC) and Federal Bonding
- Accessing comprehensive resources on human resources, workplace safety, business incentives, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), labor laws, licensing, and more
- Researching labor market trends and information
- Implementing layoff aversion strategies
- Managing downsizing events and assisting displaced employees in transitioning to new opportunities

### **Maine JobLink (MJL)**

Administered and coordinated by BES, **Maine JobLink (MJL)** is a free job bank and labor exchange system designed to connect employers with workers. MJL services are universally accessible—there are no eligibility requirements for individuals using these tools. However, employers must:

- Maintain an employer-employee relationship with workers
- Comply with all relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations
- Have active workforce needs

MJL allows job seekers to post résumés, search and apply for jobs online, and receive job referrals. Employers can post job openings, review applicant profiles, and directly contact potential candidates at no cost. Unemployment insurance claimants are required to register with MJL to fulfill job search requirements.

## Additional Benefits of MJL Usage

- Job listings posted on MJL help employers meet affirmative action requirements by facilitating recruitment from minority populations.
- Data from unfilled job postings supports the state's workforce development efforts, providing critical insights that help secure industry sector training grants and guide strategic investments in workforce programs.

## Other Services

The Bureau of Employment Services (BES) utilizes several platforms to enhance service delivery and customer access:

- My WorkSource Maine virtual one-stop platform that offers a personalized service matching tool that recommends resources based on individual needs and access to a wide array of partner services and a career exploration tool.
- LiveChat provides real-time assistance for basic CareerCenter and employment-related questions, Maine JobLink (MJL) password resets, and referrals to additional services and organizations.
- The CareerCenter Hotline serves as a conduit to workforce opportunities across BES and its partners, offering:
  - Scheduling of in-person appointments
  - Virtual triage of customer needs to better direct individuals to CareerCenter and/or partner services
- Both in-person and virtual CareerCenter workshops that are ADA-compliant and are regularly evaluated for topic relevance, current labor market trends, and attendance patterns to ensure they meet evolving customer needs.

## Staff Development and Training

BES ensures that all Wagner-Peyser employment services staff, both new hires and current team members, receive comprehensive training to meet the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and deliver quality services to job seekers, workers, and employers. Training topics include:

- Overview of Labor Exchange and Career Services delivery
- Introduction to Maine JobLink (MJL) as the state's labor exchange and case management system
- Familiarization with the Bureau of Unemployment Compensation (BUC) claims system and how to assist individuals with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims
- Career information resources, including labor market and occupational tools and career decision-making supports
- Overview of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Training Readjustment **Act** programs
- Understanding Rapid Response
- Introduction to RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment) as a joint program between BUC and BES
- Standards and procedures for service delivery at one-stop CareerCenters
- Overview of Veterans' services and required referral processes

- Outreach and services for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, including partnerships with the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)
- Overview of training programs such as:
  - Maine Apprenticeship Program
  - Competitive Skills Scholarship Program
  - Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
  - Job Corps
  - YouthBuild
- Overview of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Federal Bonding Program

### **Commitment to Collaboration and Innovation**

BES is committed to working closely with the required WIOA partners to develop strategies that:

- Align technology and data systems across one-stop partner programs
- Enhance service delivery to individuals and businesses
- Improve efficiency and accuracy in reporting on workforce performance metrics

For more information visit <https://www.maine.gov/labor/bes/>



### **B. Rapid Response**

The Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) is responsible for coordinating statewide and local Rapid Response activities, which include both Layoff Aversion and Rapid Response support services.

**Layoff Aversion** focuses on helping businesses avoid layoffs through proactive solutions, including:

- WorkShare Program: An unemployment option allowing businesses to temporarily reduce employee hours instead of laying off staff. Affected employees can collect partial unemployment benefits to offset income loss.
- Skill Upgrades and Retention Support: Providing training to upskill existing workers,

**Rapid Response** activities assist businesses and workers impacted by layoffs or plant closures by offering immediate services to promote rapid reemployment and minimize the negative effects of job loss. Services include:

- Job search skills workshops
- Resume development assistance
- Interview preparation
- Access to labor market information
- Specialized job fairs connecting displaced workers with hiring employers

Rapid Response services are coordinated through the Bureau of Employment Services (BES) central office, with statewide and local representatives conducting outreach to affected employers and workers.

### **Early Identification and Communication Systems**

Maine has developed a highly effective system for identifying and responding to potential or actual layoffs through multiple channels:

- Confidential Lists: Monitoring employers where the Bureau of Unemployment Compensation has documented three or more initial unemployment claims.
- WARN Act and Maine Severance Law Notifications: Formal notices submitted to the Dislocated Worker Unit and Bureau of Labor Standards.
- Ongoing Monitoring: Regular review of websites tracking mergers, downsizing, offshoring, and local/state press releases.
- Community Intelligence: Early rumor tracking and information sharing with economic development entities at state, regional, and local levels.

When credible information is received, Rapid Response representatives immediately contact affected businesses, gather critical layoff information, and offer layoff aversion strategies such as:

- Employee buyouts
- Skill retooling
- Access to state business support programs

The Governor's office is also notified to coordinate additional supports.

### **Customized Transition Support**

Following initial employer contact, a customized package of Rapid Response services is developed, including:

- Rapid Response orientations and workshops
- Direct training and reemployment assistance
- Job development services

In addition, Maine's Rapid Response team collaborates with local communities to establish or participate in Community Transition Teams. These teams include partners from:

- Maine Community College System
- University System
- Local elected officials
- Adult Education programs
- Local Workforce Development Boards
- Community Action Agencies

Transition Team activities may include:

- Production of resource booklets featuring community services for impacted workers
- Resource fairs offering access to housing assistance, small business support, healthcare services, and more
- Non-employment-related workshops, such as financial counseling, stress management, and health clinics

For more information, visit: [Rapid Reponse at MyWorksourceMaine.gov](https://www.myworksourcemaine.gov) or cut and paste <https://www.myworksourcemaine.gov/search?query=rapid+response> into your browser.

Employers can receive guidance on layoff and closure requirements, and workers are connected to retraining and support services. For assistance, contact your local CareerCenter or call 207-623-7981 (TTY: Maine Relay 711), or email [rapidresponse.dol@maine.gov](mailto:rapidresponse.dol@maine.gov).

### **C. Services for Unemployment Insurance Claimants**

The Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Services (BES) employs staff trained in Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility and UI issue identification during initial onboarding. Designated staff are equipped to assist individuals with:

- Filing UI claims
- Accessing and navigating their accounts through the UI portal

Additionally, Maine’s Bureau of Unemployment Compensation (BUC) offers training videos on its website, which One-Stop staff are encouraged to view regularly.

#### **UI Claimant Assistance**

Maine CareerCenter staff provide both in-person and virtual services to support UI claimants, including:

- Answering basic UI questions
- Assisting customers in creating Re-EmployME accounts to file initial and continued claims
- Helping claimants file weekly certifications via phone

#### **Reemployment Services through RESEA**

Maine delivers Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) using the state’s profiling model to identify claimants most likely to exhaust their benefits. Selection occurs in two steps:

1. Claimants must meet the state’s profiling model criteria.
2. Random selection by local American Job Center (AJC) areas for RESEA participation.

All selected claimants are required to engage in intensive RESEA services, with the goal of minimizing unemployment duration and promoting timely reemployment.

## **RESEA Notification and Compliance**

- BUC notifies selected claimants through letter, email, and Re-EmployME portal notifications.
- Claimants must attend and complete the initial RESEA session.
- Failure to comply triggers a fact-finding process to determine if UI benefits should be suspended or continued for good cause.

## **Delivery of RESEA Services**

BES staff at One-Stop Centers and affiliate sites administer RESEA by offering comprehensive reemployment services tailored to participant needs. Services include:

- Development and continuation of Individualized Reemployment Plans (IRPs)
- Personalized referrals based on needs
- Intensive case management services as needed

Participants are introduced to a broad range of career services, including:

- Assistance accessing reemployment and training services
- Career counseling and exploration of higher education options
- Common intake and eligibility assessments for WIOA programs
- Access to computer-based job search programs and applications
- Job search and placement assistance with labor market information
- Orientation to supportive services and WIOA partner programs
- Access to Maine JobLink and general internet for job search activities
- Core assessments connecting skills and abilities to job opportunities

Delivery options are flexible:

- Services are available in-person or virtually via Zoom, based on claimant preference.
- For in-person sessions, laptops and tablets are available for job search activities.

## **Comprehensive RESEA Components**

At a minimum, each RESEA participant receives:

- Unemployment compensation eligibility review, including a review of work search activities
- Relevant local labor market information, with live demonstrations of Maine's Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) website
- Enrollment in Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services
- Development or update of an Individualized Reemployment Plan (IRP)
- Relevant referrals to jobs, training, or community services
- Orientation to all CareerCenter services, including self-directed options
- Enhanced job matching and profile updates in Maine's JobLink

Participants also engage in further career services as needed, which may include:

- Access to the "Job Hunting in Maine" guide
  - Tools, tips, and strategies for a successful job search
  - Information about skill assessments and individualized job search services
  - Introduction to USDOL online tools like:
    - MySkills MyFuture™
    - O\*NET Online
    - My Next Move (Career Profiler)
  - Coordination with other workforce development programs and services
- 

### **Optional Career Services (Based on Individual Need)**

Participants may also receive:

- Referrals to workforce training (WIOA or other programs)
- Labor exchange services in high-demand industries
- Information on financial aid resources beyond WIOA
- Access to community-based supportive services
- Financial literacy education
- Career readiness activities such as resume writing and interview preparation

### **D. Services for Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers**

The Monitor Advocate System, through the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), ensures that Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) have equitable access to career services, training, skill development, and workforce protections through Maine CareerCenters. The goal is to help MSFWs improve their living and working conditions.

MDOL staff work to develop an understanding of farm work and maintain awareness and sensitivity to the social, economic, and cultural differences within agricultural communities. Migrant workers travel to Maine from Mexico, Haiti, Canada, Central America, Texas, Florida, and California, with most arriving from Mexico. Many travel with families, including small children, and most MSFWs speak Spanish or Haitian-Creole, often with limited English proficiency. Some workers speak indigenous dialects rather than Spanish.

Farm workers usually work in isolated areas during the agricultural season, adding challenges to service access. They often require help navigating services across local, state, and federal levels and may be unaware of resources related to:

- Health, dental, and eye care
- Mental health services
- Basic education and childcare
- Food and nutrition programs
- Safe and suitable housing

- Fair labor practices and wage protection
- Education and job training opportunities for stable employment

### **Service Delivery Structure:**

In addition to operating 11 CareerCenters, the Bureau of Employment Services (ES) employs:

- A State Monitor Advocate (SMA)
- A multilingual MSFW Outreach Coordinator

These staff provide direct outreach, traveling to farms and living sites (e.g., labor camps, churches, grocery stores) to deliver on-site services.

Outreach is organized around agricultural areas and seasonal needs. Maine’s agricultural season runs from June through early October, with key crops like blueberries (Washington County), potatoes, broccoli, and cauliflower (Aroostook County), and apples (Androscoggin and Oxford Counties). Off-season, several hundred MSFWs also work in wreath production and seafood processing (November–mid-December), where outreach efforts continue.

Service goals focus on helping workers achieve self-sufficiency and integration into broader employment opportunities.

### **Services Provided:**

Outreach workers ensure that workers have access to the full range of CareerCenter services, including:

- Career services and job search assistance
- Enrollment in Maine JobLink (MJL) for access to thousands of job postings
- Skills assessments and career guidance
- Referrals to supportive services and training
- Help with filing employment-related complaints
- Dissemination of information through laptops and tablets in the field

Outreach workers collaborate with organizations like the Farmworker Resources Network (FRN) to better understand and meet workers’ needs, plan resource fairs, and improve services.

At CareerCenters or virtually, workers can access:

- Self-directed and staff-assisted services
- Interpretation and translation services (written materials available in eight languages)
- Interest profiling (via O-NET Interest Profiler)
- Personalized career support such as resume writing, interview preparation, referrals to H-2A jobs, and training enrollment

### **Community and Partner Engagement:**

CareerCenter staff also engage in broader community outreach through:

- Job fairs, schools, libraries
- Partnering with agencies like PathStone, Mano en Mano, Maine Mobile Health Program, Pine Tree Legal, Maine Migrant Education Program, and Preble Street
- Promoting opportunities via social media, community bulletins, and press releases

Over 500 public and private agencies help expand networking and opportunity awareness statewide

**Staff Training:**

All staff are trained to:

- Work with individuals with unique needs (LEP, ADA accommodations, etc.)
- Assist with employment and non-employment complaints
- Conduct field visits to employers if needed
- Tailor services to meet each customer’s individual career goals

**VII. Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation Services Programs**

**A. Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

The Maine Department of Labor’s Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), are the grant administrators of WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Services program funds allotted by the U.S Department of Education. DVR and DBVI staff provide services through the Local One-Stop delivery system to individuals who have disabilities, which are a significant impediment to employment. Priority is given to individuals with the most significant functional limitations.

Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services is determined within 60 days of application based upon documentation of disability as a barrier to employment. Individuals who are not determined eligible for VR services or cannot be served because of insufficient funds are referred to other One-Stop and comparable services providers for assistance.

Based upon a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, employment plans are developed with eligible individuals, which include services provided directly by DVR/DBVI, as well as many other partners and contracted providers. Individuals that work with DVR/DBVI are in various stages of rehabilitation and adjustment to disability; they are encouraged to utilize all available resources to successfully achieve their vocational goals, including registering with the Maine JobLink when ready to search for employment.

Eligibility for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

An individual is eligible for DVR services if the individual:

- Has a physical or mental impairment which, for the individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment. Note: Substantial impediment to employment means

that a physical or mental impairment hinders the individual from preparing for, engaging in, or retaining employment, consistent with the individual’s abilities and capabilities; and

- Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment consistent with the applicant’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. VR services must be necessary to overcome disability related barriers. Lack of resources by itself does not constitute a disability-related barrier.

Eligibility for the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired Services:

An individual is eligible for DBVI vocational rehabilitation services if the individual:

- Has a significant visual impairment which, for the individual, constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment. Note: Substantial impediment to employment means that a visual impairment hinders the individual from preparing for, engaging in, or retaining employment, consistent with the individual’s abilities and capabilities; and
- Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, advance, or regain employment consistent with the individual’s unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Required VR services must be necessary to overcome disability related barriers. Lack of resources by itself does not constitute a disability related barrier.

An individual is eligible for DBVI Independent Living Services if the individual:

- Has less than 20/70 vision in the better eye with best correction or less than 20-degree fields and/or a significant functional impairment directly related to the visual limitations; and
- Blindness services are reasonably expected to significantly assist the individual to improve independent functions in family or community. Improvement in ability to function independently in family or community refers to a demonstration in functional or behavioral terms of an individual’s greater independence or maintenance of independence in such areas as self-care, activities of daily living, leisure activities, community, or orientation and mobility.

Services are individualized and based upon specific rehabilitation needs. Each individual’s employment plan is unique, and services listed below are those that might be considered for vocational rehabilitation.

<b>Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</b>
Vocational Guidance and Counseling
Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs
Medical and Psychological Evaluations
Physical Restoration Services
Deaf Services, including ASL Interpreting
Pre-employment Transition Services to Students
Vocational Exploration
Vocational Assessment
Job Readiness Assessment
Individual Employment Plan

Job Development and Placement Services
Job Coaching
Occupational Skill Training
Post-secondary Education and Training
On-the-Job Training
Apprenticeship
Assistive Technology
Referral to Supportive Services Resources
Short-term Transportation Assistance
Short-term Supportive Services
Occupational Tools & Equipment
Self-Employment Exploration and Planning
Ticket to Work Services
Benefits Counseling
Post-Employment Placement Services
Work Opportunity Tax Credit
<b>Division for the Blind &amp; Visually Impaired</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation Guidance & Counseling
Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs
Medical and Psychological Evaluations
Orientation and Mobility Instruction
Rehabilitation Teaching Services
Adaptive Technology Assessments and Services
Computer Access Training
Teacher of Visually Impaired Instruction
Low Vision Evaluation
Personal Adjustment Counseling
Reader Services
Individual Employment Plan Development
Occupational Skill Training
Post-secondary Education and Training
Apprenticeship
Job Development and Placement Services
Pre-employment Transition Services to Students
Vocational Exploration
Vocational Assessment
Job Readiness Assessment
Job Coaching
Referral to Supportive Service Resources
Short-term Transportation Assistance
Short-term Supportive Services
Occupational Tools & Equipment
Self-Employment Exploration and Planning

Ticket to Work Services
Benefits Counseling
Post-employment Services
Work Opportunity Tax Credit

## B. Vocational Rehabilitation Services for Employers

Through its Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI), the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) partners with businesses interested in the inclusion of people with disabilities to meet workforce needs and expand market share. The following services are offered:

**Staffing and Recruitment of Qualified Job Seekers with Disabilities:** BRS Business Account Managers coordinate services with employers and assist DVR/DBVI Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to identify and refer qualified individuals with disabilities for job openings based upon employer workforce needs. Through extensive career development and work-based learning with youth with disabilities, BRS also works with employers to develop the next generation of workers for their workforce.

**Job Support, Coaching and Training for Job Seekers with Disabilities:** For those who need it, DVR/DBVI engage certified community-based employment specialists to provide the assistance necessary on and off the job site for individuals with disabilities to learn and perform job tasks for successful ongoing employment.

**Workplace Accommodations:** DVR/DBVI can assist an employer with identifying reasonable changes in the workplace that enable a person with a disability to apply for a job and/or perform job duties equal to similarly situated employees without disabilities. A majority of accommodations are low cost and can include assistive technology.

**Job Retention/ Return-to-Work Services:** DVR/DBVI can provide guidance and information to an employer for existing employees who currently have, or in the future may incur, a disability. This can save the employer the cost of hiring and training new staff while retaining a valuable current employee.

**Financial Incentives:** This includes low risk participation for employers through DVR/DBVI paid work experiences, such as vocational assessment and On-the Job training, as well as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, which all assist in the placement and hire of an individual with a disability in competitive employment.

**Technical Assistance, Consultation and Training:** Based upon employer needs, this includes training on Disability Awareness/Etiquette; the Americans with Disability Act; Section 503 for Federal Contractors; and disability specific information, such as Deaf Culture.

**Linkage to Nationwide Resources:** BRS can connect employers to business leadership networks, such as Disability: IN and other Maine-based businesses that hire people with disabilities and are willing to share their experiences.

## **VIII. Services for Veterans**

### **A. Priority of Service for Veterans**

In the Coastal Counties region, WIOA One-Stop partners provide Priority of Service to all veterans and their eligible spouses, ensuring they receive specialized employment and training services through Maine CareerCenters. Disabled veterans and veterans facing employment barriers may access the full range of career services and additional specialized support programs.

The Bureau of Employment Services (BES) and WIOA Title IB Service Providers ensure Priority of Service is clearly communicated to all customers through:

- Printed materials and presentations targeting customers and employers.
- CareerCenter and MDOL websites.
- Outreach and proactive recruitment strategies focusing on veterans.
- Notification statements regarding veterans' rights added to complaint procedures and intake forms.
- Opportunities for veterans to declare their status at intake.
- Maine JobLink (MJL) notifications that alert eligible veterans to job opportunities before other registrants.
- Written policies ensuring covered individuals are identified early and receive service priority.

Eligibility is outlined in policies and procedures that ensure veterans and eligible spouses:

- Meet statutory program eligibility requirements.
- Receive service priority where funding is limited.
- Are targeted through outreach if they belong to special veteran populations (e.g., Special Disabled Veterans, Campaign Badge Veterans).

#### **Eligibility Definitions:**

Eligible Veteran (38 U.S.C. § 4211(4)) includes individuals who:

- Served active duty over 180 consecutive days with honorable discharge.
- Were discharged for a service-connected disability.
- Served on active duty under certain military call-up provisions during war/campaigns and discharged honorably.
- Were discharged under sole survivorship.

Eligible Person (38 U.S.C. § 4101(5)) includes spouses of:

- Service members who died of a service-connected disability.
- Service members missing in action, captured, or detained for more than 90 days.
- Veterans permanently and totally disabled due to service-connected disability.

(Important: An eligible person must meet these definitions independently; eligibility is not transferable through marriage unless explicitly stated.)

## **Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP)**

DVOPs provide one-on-one career services to eligible veterans and eligible persons with identified employment barriers, including:

- Job search assistance
- Career exploration and planning
- Labor market information
- Resume and cover letter creation
- Interview preparation

DVOPs work with veterans to develop employment plans based on individual needs and readiness. For veterans with multiple barriers, planning may be more intensive.

Once work-ready, veterans are connected with Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) for job placement.

### **B. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs)**

LVERs focus on building relationships with employers to create job and training opportunities for veterans. Their core duties include:

- Conducting employer outreach and advocacy for veteran hiring.
- Promoting veterans as highly skilled candidates.
- Facilitating connections between employers and veterans.
- Coordinating and participating in job fairs and hiring events (in-person and virtual).
- Promoting veteran participation in programs like On-the-Job Training (OJT), Apprenticeship, GI Bill OJT, CSSP, and WIOA.
- Monitoring federal contractor job listings for proactive veteran placements.
- Documenting all employer outreach activities in Maine JobLink.

### **Key Initiative: Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign**

- A signature initiative supporting veteran employment.
- Goal: 100 veterans hired in 100 days with 100 employers.
- Since 2015, connected over 1,900 employers with 2,200+ veterans.
- Recognized nationally as best practice.

### **Summary of Veteran Target Populations**

To qualify for DVOP services, eligible veterans or persons must also have one or more employment barriers, such as:

- Service-connected disability or special disabled veteran status
- Recently separated (within 3 years)
- Homelessness
- Justice-involvement
- Economic or educational disadvantage

- Single-parent household
- Age between 18–24
- Transitioning service member (TAP participant)
- Family caregiver of wounded, ill, or injured service members

## **IX. Accessibility**

### **A. Cooperative Agreements**

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board does not have cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA sec.107(d)(11)) between the Local Workforce Development Board or other local entities described in WIOA sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.)

### **B. ADA & Section 188 Compliance**

**Compliance through Monitoring:** Consistent with WIOA requirements, Local Board staff will annually assess (or require proof of assessment by partners, as appropriate) the physical and programmatic accessibility, in accordance with section 188, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), of Title IB Services in the Local Area.

**Compliance through Certification:** In accordance with 20 CFR 678.800, Local Workforce Development Boards must assess at least once every 3 years the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery systems using the criteria and procedures developed by the State Workforce Development Board. This includes providing physical, virtual, communicative, and programmatic accessibility as evidenced by the One-Stop certification process. The Certification process in the Coastal Counties region requires that all One-Stop comprehensive and affiliate centers complete the following requirements:

1. **ADA Review:** For accessibility compliance, the State of Maine’s American Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility Coordinator conducted an ADA review of the One-Stop Comprehensive Center and each affiliate center in the Coastal Counties region. ADA compliance is a certification principle.
2. **Section 188:** The One-Stop Comprehensive Center and each affiliate center in the Coastal Counties region completed a 188 Compliance Review and submitted it to the Certification Review Team for review. The Certification Review team is comprised of leadership representatives from the Maine Department of Labor, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the WIOA Title IB Service Provider.

The One-Stop Comprehensive Center and the five affiliate centers in the Coastal Counties region all achieved certification in April 2024.

**Compliance through Universal Access:** Universal access is full availability of services, products, environments, systems, and communications by all qualified or eligible individuals. When combined with client-centered design, the one-stop system is welcoming and usable by the most diverse range of people possible. In order to provide inclusive access to the one-stop system, the system’s partners should pay attention to the various functions they perform, including strategic planning, outreach, consultation with

community groups and schools, operational collaboration among the partners, training, registration, intake, assessment, orientation, events, supportive services, referrals, and service delivery. It is the policy of Maine's one-stop system that programs, services, aid, and benefits are designed to be accessible to all qualified/eligible users. Physical space, hours of service, web-based communications and services, and events are included. A policy or procedure should be modified if it presents a barrier to access. Modification in order to provide access might not require a permanent change, but it may indicate a need for revision or redesign to improve access for all. Every reasonable action shall be taken to ensure that all persons are given maximum opportunity such as:

- Applicants and participants of employment and training programs provided by the Maine one-stop system;
- Members of councils and boards formed in association with WIOA and other employment and training programs;
- Applicants for employment and employees in the administration and operation of the services provided by the one-stop system required partners; and
- Recipients of procurement contracts for the purchase of goods and services.

The Maine State Workforce Board has implemented the "Accessibility, Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Policy", which can be viewed at [https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY17-01\\_NonDiscrim-Accessibility.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/swb/laws/policies/PY17-01_NonDiscrim-Accessibility.pdf), that codified the State's commitment to universal access and non-discrimination. Going beyond compliance with accessibility requirements, it seeks to provide universally accessible services. CCWI monitors the WIOA Title IB Service Provider for adherence with this policy.

**Compliance through Notice and Communication:** Consistent with the U.S. Department of Labor, Civil Rights Center's (CRC), guidance on complying with Sec. 188 and the ADA's Title II mandates, our Local Board workforce delivery system is responsible to ensure that both appropriate initial and continuing notice that our Area does not discriminate on the basis of disability occurs. (29 CFR Part 37).

CCWI ensures such notice is promoted on outreach notices and communications regarding CCWI's available workforce development services/programs. Such notice will be provided by CCWI on all Local Area materials to persons who are: registrants, applicants, eligible applicants/registrants; participants; applicants for employment and employees; unions or professional organizations that hold collective bargaining or professional agreements with the recipient; WIOA Title I subrecipients; and members of the public, including those with impaired vision and hearing. (29 CFR 37.29(a)).

In addition, CCWI's recruitment/outreach brochures and other materials indicate that the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity is an "equal opportunity employer/program" and that "auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities." (29 CFR 37.34(a)).

**Compliance through Contractual Assurances:** CCWI's staff regularly review obligations of their subrecipients and contractors to ensure that all federal "assurances," required by law, are incorporated into each grant, cooperative agreement, contract, or other arrangement. Such assurances include the obligation not to discriminate on the basis of disability under Section 188 of WIOA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, in addition to with 29 CFR Part 37 and 29 CFR Part 32, as appropriate.

### **C. Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

In accordance with 20 CFR 678.800, the Comprehensive One-Stop and Affiliate sites in the Coastal Counties region work to ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities to participate in all programs and services offered in the local area. This includes providing physical, virtual, communicative, and programmatic accessibility as described in the Coastal Counties Workforce Development System Memorandum of Understanding and as evidenced by the One-Stop certification process.

As core partners in the Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc., (CCWI), area, the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) actively participate as part of the One-Stop Operator's CORE teams to support the integration of services for individuals with disabilities. BRS DVR/DBVI staff assist with the coordination of services on behalf of DVR/DBVI customers but also provide technical assistance, training, and consultation to other area partners to ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of the one-stop centers for all customers with disabilities.

Individuals who have significant disability-related impediments to employment are also able to access Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services through the Coastal Counties region. As part of the Maine Department of Labor's (MDOL) Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) operate within the area Wagner-Peyser CareerCenters to provide a range of individualized rehabilitation services for job seekers with disabilities. BRS is also included in the current infrastructure cost sharing agreement for the region and will work toward providing on-site services at the Comprehensive One-Stop Center in Portland. DVR and DBVI are the federally designated state units to administer the public Vocational Rehabilitation programs in Maine.

Eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services is determined within 60 days of application upon documentation of disability as a barrier to employment. Based upon a comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation needs, employment plans are developed with eligible individuals, which include services provided directly by DVR/DBVI, as well as many other partners and contracted providers. Individuals that work with DVR/DBVI are in various stages of rehabilitation and adjustment to disability. They are encouraged to utilize all available resources to successfully achieve their vocational goals, which includes the many other programs and services offered throughout the Coastal Counties region.

CCWI is committed to continuing to develop best practices for serving individuals with disabilities and promoting universal access across partners. CCWI and all one-stop partners will need to move this work forward as a system. This will entail coming together in smaller groups to develop implementation approaches after the CCWB Local/Regional Plan has been finalized.

## **X. Disbursal of Funds and Procurement**

### **A. Disbursal of Grant Funds**

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI), is a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity founded in 2002 to administer and oversee the delivery of the workforce system's services for the Coastal Counties Workforce Board Region in Maine (i.e., York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, Waldo and Knox counties). CCWI is the entity determined by, and working on behalf of, the Region's Workforce Board and Chief Elected Official (CEO) to oversee programs, disburse grant funds while ensuring that the CEO's responsibilities under federal workforce development law and federal funding are met. As the administrative entity for the Region, CCWI undertakes the administration of all required workforce development responsibilities for regional programs such as service delivery, reporting, monitoring, and both the execution and administration of contracts with our funders and service providers. CCWI also pursues funding opportunities (e.g., federal discretionary grants) to bring additional resources to our region. Importantly, CCWI also develops and directs the Region's workforce development policies and regional strategies. As the regional convener, and through partnerships with other local, state, and federal agencies, education, and economic development organizations, CCWI strives to provide access to jobs, skill development, and business services vital to the social and economic well-being of our communities.

### **B. Process Used to Award Subgrants and Contracts**

Pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB's) final guidance on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements (2 CFR Part 200), including USDOL's exceptions codified at 2 CFR Part 2900, CCWI revised its Financial Policies to reflect the new OMB mandates. This includes CCWI's procurement policies and procedures.

As a result, all CCWI procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the federal and agency standards. Moreover, while CCWI conducts its procurement functions, situations that are considered to be restrictive of competition are avoided. Any contractors that aided CCWI in developing or drafting specifications, requirements, statements of work, or invitations for bids or requests for proposals are excluded from competing for such procurements.

#### **Subaward versus Contract Determinations:**

The distinctions between subawards and procurements are guided by the Federal Acquisition Regulations, OMB Uniform Guidance 2 CFR Part 200 CCWI's policy. These distinctions include the purpose of the distribution of funds to a subrecipient and the necessity to flow-down the terms and conditions of the award from the organization (i.e., CCWI) initially receiving the funds.

A procurement process (consistent with CCWI thresholds) is generally used when CCWI buys goods or services for the benefit of a project. In this instance, the activity is a procurement, and the entity receiving the funds is a "contractor."

The subaward process is used when CCWI passes-through a portion of the sponsored award to another entity for the purpose of programmatic effort on a project. Subawards to subrecipients are not considered procurement actions under federal law. As a result, subawards do not require competitive procurement. However, CCWI may at its discretion select to invoke requests for proposals (RFP) procedures for any project it deems appropriate.

All of the terms and conditions that are part of the primary award must be included in the subaward document. Acceptance of these terms by an authorized signatory of the receiving entity is required. Pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.93, a subrecipient is defined as a non-Federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program. The entity receiving the funds is a “subrecipient.”

**Required Solicitation of Quotations from Contractor:**

All procurement transactions must be conducted in a manner providing full and open competition consistent with the standards of this section and avoid any situations that are considered to be restrictive of competition, as noted in 2 CFR § 200.319(a).

CCWI will not use statutorily or administratively imposed state, local, or tribal geographical preferences in the evaluation of bids or proposals, except in those cases where applicable federal statutes expressly mandate or encourage geographic preference, unless contracting for architectural and engineering (A/E) services. For A/E services, CCWI may use geographic location as a selection criterion, but will leave an appropriate number of qualified firms, given the nature and size of the project, to compete for the contract.

Procurement types are grouped into three categories:

1. **INFORMAL:**
  - a) **Tier One (micro-purchase):** Purchase decisions that result in an aggregate cost of \$10,000 or less for labor, equipment, supplies, or services purchased, leased, or contracted for may be awarded without soliciting competitive quotations if CCWI considers the price to be reasonable. To the extent practicable, CCWI will distribute these “micro-purchases” equitably among qualified suppliers.
  - b) **Tier Two (small purchase):** Purchase decisions between \$10,000 and \$50,000 for labor, equipment, supplies, or services purchased, leased, or contracted for shall be made only after receiving, whenever possible, written quotations from at least two (2) contractors.
2. **FORMAL:** All Purchase decisions for goods or services exceeding \$50,000 or more shall be made by obtaining competitive proposals. For all formal procurements, procurement records and files shall be maintained the include all of the following:
  - The basis for contractor selection
  - Justification for lack of competition when competitive bids or offers are not obtained
  - Substantiation for award cost or price

*NOTE: CCWI may at its discretion select to invoke requests for proposals (RFP) procedures for any threshold amount as deemed appropriate.*

Solicitations for services (requests for proposals) should provide for all of the following:

- a) A clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product, or service to be procured. In competitive procurements, such a description shall not contain features which unduly restrict competition.

- b) Requirements which the bidder/offeror must fulfill and all other factors to be used in evaluating bids or proposals.
  - c) A description, whenever practicable, of technical requirements in terms of functions to be performed or performance required, including the range of acceptable characteristics or minimum acceptable standards.
  - d) The specific features of "brand name or equal" descriptions that bidders are required to meet when such items are included in the solicitations.
  - e) A description of the proper format, if any, in which proposals must be submitted, including the name of the CCWI person to whom proposals should be sent.
  - f) The date by which proposals are due.
  - g) Required delivery or performance dates/schedules.
  - h) Clear indications of the quantity (i.e., requested and unit(s) of measure.
3. NON-COMPETITIVE: Procurement by noncompetitive proposals (sole sourcing) may be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:
- The item is available only from a single source.
  - The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation.
  - The federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-federal entity; or
  - After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.

Justification for lack of competition (sole sourcing) will be maintained.

**Risk Mitigation and Assessment Responsibilities:**

Pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.331 et seq., when CCWI functions as a Pass Through Entity (PTE) for federal awards, the agreement must clearly identify the agreement as a subaward. The following shall also apply:

1) Must provide the following information at the time of the subaward and, if not available, provide the best available information:

- Federal award identification
  - Subrecipient's name and DUNS number (must match the registered name in DUNS)
  - Federal award identification number and date
  - Subaward period of performance, start and end dates
  - Amount of Federal funds obligated, and total amount of Federal funds obligated to the subrecipient
  - Total amount of the Federal award
  - Federal award project description
  - Name of Federal awarding agency, PTE, and contact information for the awarding official
  - CFDA number and name for each payment at the time of disbursement
  - Identify whether the award is for Research & Development (R&D)
  - Indirect Cost Rate (ICR):  Approved federally recognized ICR or,  Rate negotiated between the PTE and subrecipient or,  A de minimis ICR

- 2) Must identify all requirements imposed by the PTE on the subrecipient, including regulatory, statutory, and agreement-related requirements.
- 3) Must identify all additional requirements imposed by the PTE, including financial and performance reporting.

In such cases, monitoring of subrecipients must include:

- Review financial and programmatic reports
- Follow-up and ensure that the subrecipient takes timely and appropriate action on all deficiencies pertaining to the Federal award through audits, on-site reviews, and other means
- Issue management decision for audit findings
- AUPs performed in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS)

As PTE, CCWI must evaluate each subrecipient's risk of noncompliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the subaward for purposes of determining the appropriate subrecipient monitoring. Criteria "may" include the following:

- A subrecipient's prior experience
- Results of previous audits
  
- The experience of subrecipient's personnel or new or changed systems
- The extent and results of Federal monitoring.

CCWI will also institute the following protocols to promote risk mitigation:

- For each subrecipient, CCWI will document the determination/justification of their status as a subrecipient or contractor
- Review subaward agreements to ensure that ALL requirements imposed on the subrecipient (including closeout requirements) and ALL data elements are included
- Coordinate with audit contractor to ensure that a "risk assessment" is conducted
- Ensure processes are in place that identify the total amount of Federal funds expended by each subrecipient
- Review subrecipients Single Audit and ensure process is in place to follow up on identified deficiencies

**XI. Program Performance & Accountability**

**A. WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance**

WIOA includes common performance measures, or “primary indicators of performance,” for its six core programs (Title I Youth program, Title I Adult program, Title I Dislocated Worker program, Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program, Title III Employment Service, and Title IV Rehabilitation Services program). WIOA requires that States must work with Local Workforce Development Boards to establish performance goals for WIOA Title I programs. The Local Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Officials, and the Governor must negotiate and reach an agreement on local levels of performance. In negotiating the local levels of performance, the Local Workforce Development Board, the Chief Elected Officials, and the Governor must adjust to the expected economic conditions and the expected characteristics of participants to be served in the local area.

The table below provides an overview of the six primary indicators of performance. Please refer to Appendix B for the Local Area Performance Measures for Program Years 2024 and 2025.

<b>Primary indicators of performance:</b>		
1	<b>Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit:</b>	The percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.
2	<b>Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit:</b>	The percentage of participants enrolled in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For youth program participants this also includes the percentage in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.
3	<b>Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit:</b>	The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
4	<b>Credential Attainment:</b>	The percentage of participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding on-the-job training and customized training) who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma or its equivalent, during participation in the program or within one year after exit from the program.
5	<b>Measurable Skill Gains (MSG):</b>	<p>The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains. Measurable skill gains are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards a recognized credential or employment. It is expected that every participant enrolled in education or training will have an MSG goal established in Maine Job Link.</p> <p>The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a</p>

		recognized credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains. Measurable skill gains are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards a recognized credential or employment. It is expected that every participant enrolled in education or training will have an MSG goal established in Maine Job Link.
6	<b>Effectiveness Serving Employers:</b>	WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the Departments to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers for Core WIOA Partners. MDOL has selected the following two approaches designed to gauge critical workforce needs of the business community: 5) Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers; 6) Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time

**B. Performance Accountability**

Coastal Counties Workforce Board serves as a strategic leader and convener of local workforce development system stakeholders for the purpose of providing strategic and operational oversight and collaboration to develop a comprehensive and high-quality workforce development system in the local area and planning region. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board assists in the achievement of the State’s strategic and operational vision and goals as outlined in the State Unified Plan and works to improve the quality of services, customer satisfaction, and effectiveness of the services provided. Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) continuously monitors performance and uses performance data to inform local strategic planning, continuous improvement, and to oversee the WIOA Title IB programs. CCWI then reports on performance quarterly at Coastal Counties Workforce Board (CCWB) meetings so that performance may be shared with the public and any performance-based interventions may be discussed, if necessary. CCWI also dedicates one CCWB meeting a year to present performance outcomes. All attendees receive a PowerPoint presentation of the performance outcomes for the year.

Strategic Planning and Continuous Improvement

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board is a high-performing local area. The local planning process and plan are data-driven and the policy decisions at the local level are evidenced-based. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board uses labor market data to develop and implement the local plan, taking care to steer resources into programs and services that are relevant to the needs of the region’s relevant labor market and high-wage industry sectors. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board reviews program performance on a quarterly basis at board meetings to allow the board (comprised of 51% business) to guide the direction of Local Area activities. The Coastal Counties Workforce Board examines data from a variety of sources to help inform strategies. This may include feedback from businesses; labor market information; program performance outcomes; workforce and educational indicators; and other information relevant to the Local Area.

### Oversight of WIOA Title IB Programs

Each subrecipient of funds under Title I of WIOA must conduct regular oversight and monitoring of its WIOA programs and those of its subrecipients and contractors in order to:

- Determine that expenditures have been made against the proper cost categories and within the cost limitations specified in the Act and the regulations in this part;
- Determine whether there is compliance with other provisions of the Act and the WIOA regulations and other applicable laws and regulations;
- Assure compliance with 2 CFR part 200; and
- Determine compliance with the nondiscrimination, disability, and equal opportunity requirements of WIOA Section 188 (20 CFR § 683.410 (a))

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI), is responsible for annual programmatic and fiscal monitoring conducting to ensure compliance with WIOA federal, state, and local regulations and for providing technical assistance as necessary and appropriate. CCWI conducts regular program monitoring in order to ascertain if/when to conduct performance based intervention. In order to promote continuous improvement, CCWI conducts ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring of its WIOA Title IB provider throughout the year. CCWI utilizes monthly meetings with the WIOA Title IB management team at the Service Provider to review fiscal and programmatic performance and compliance. This allows CCWI staff to provide feedback and technical assistance in real time to the Service Provider.

Additionally, CCWI conducts annual program and fiscal monitoring each year. Annual subrecipient monitoring includes intensive file reviews to ensure that adequate documentation of eligibility, participant services, and performance outcomes are in place. Program staff interviews are utilized to gauge whether program design and delivery is being conducted according to requirements and local area plans and participant interviews are conducted to gain insight into the participant's perspective and satisfaction with the service being provided. Service providers are required to upload all validation and eligibility documentation, eliminating the need for paper files. This allows staff to conduct file reviews through on an ongoing basis.

### One-Stop Certification

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) envisions high-quality one-stop centers/affiliate sites that are business-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. One-stop centers/affiliate sites are designed to serve job seekers and workers by increasing access to and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services that help them overcome barriers and succeed in the labor market and secure high-paying jobs.

WIOA requires all one-stop centers/affiliate sites to meet certification requirements, including assessments of their effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. The certification process is important to setting a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in one-stop centers across Maine. The certification criteria allow the state to set standard

expectations for customer-focused, seamless services from a network of partners that will help individuals overcome barriers to becoming and staying employed. It is the responsibility of Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) to establish regional criteria and procedures for certification to ensure a level of quality and consistency of services in one-stop centers/affiliate sites throughout the Coastal Counties region. CCWI must initially certify and subsequently recertify the one-stop centers/affiliate sites in their area, using the criteria outlined in the Maine State Unified Plan, as well as regional criteria. The One-Stop Comprehensive Center and the five affiliate centers in the Coastal Counties region achieved certification in April 2024. The certification process is to be completed no less than once every three years for each one-stop center/affiliate site. Refer to section VIII-B for more information on One-Stop Certification.



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Supportive Service Policy for WIOA</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To transmit Coastal Counties Regional policy on supportive service
<b>Statutory Authority:</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) H.R. 803; Pub. L. 113-128: (14), (37), (44), (45), (84), (85), (101), (102), (111); WIOA Final Rule: (327-328); (331); (399); (420-422); 20 CFR 680.900 – 680.940
<b>Action:</b>	WIOA Service providers are required to adhere to all policies and guidelines set forth in the policy below.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	May 1, 2008
<b>Revision Date(s):</b>	February 2, 2010; September 11, 2014; September 10, 2015; March 2, 2017; March 14, 2019; March 11, 2021
<b>Expiration Date:</b>	Indefinite

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Support Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers are defined in WIOA sec. 3(59) and 134(d)(2)(3). They include services such as transportation, childcare, dependent care, and housing that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA Title I.

Support Services for Youth are further defined for Youth in WIOA 20 CFR §681.570.

Supportive services are based upon necessity to successfully complete the employment, education and training goals established in the participant's employment plan, availability of funds and are for expenses that are not available from another publicly available source (i.e., General Assistance (GA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), etc.). There is a \$750 cap on support services per individual.

**Note:** This Local Area does not provide Needs-Related Payments.

Under this policy, the following shall apply:

Support services may only be provided to Adult and Dislocated workers who are:  
 Participating in career or training services, as defined in WIOA Section 134(c)(2) and (3), and  
 Unable to obtain supportive serves through other programs providing such services (WIOA Section 134(d)(2)(B))

**Note:** Support services may be provided to Youth in follow-up services.

Support services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in career service or training activities (see WIOA Section 134(d)(2)(A) and WIOA Section 3(59)).

When more than one service option exists, WIOA program providers are only to pay for the least expensive appropriate support service option provided that is accessible to the participant.

The support service must be included in the participant's Basic Employment or Training Plan. If a support service need is unexpected the employment counselor shall indicate the change in case notes in the client file. Supporting documentation paperwork is necessary to be filed in the chart; the service should be documented in case notes and must be necessary to participate in career services or training activities. Items required for "training" (e.g., tools, uniforms, work boots/shoes, books) may be covered under "Training" expenses and not under Supportive Services.

**Note:** For Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, follow-up career services are not a qualifying service for the receipt of supportive services; therefore, an individual who is only receiving "follow-up" services may not receive supportive services. Individuals identified as needing ongoing supportive services must still be participating in career services (other than follow-up), training activities, or both to continue to receive supportive services. Supportive services also may not be used to extend the date of exit for performance accountability purposes. Supportive services, like follow-up services, do not make an individual a participant or extend participation.

**Transportation:**

Service providers may choose to utilize mileage reimbursement or gas cards to support travel to training, employment (retention) and/or specific job prospects (i.e., interview, orientation, job shadowing, etc.). Provider policies regarding the formula for the issuance of gas cards or reimbursement shall be evident and receipts for gas cards or reimbursement shall be clearly documentable in case files. Bus, ferry, and shuttle tickets are also allowable transportation costs. Taxis are also an allowable transportation cost when necessary.

Vehicle repairs only for required State Safety deficiencies, i.e., repairs for failure of State inspection, are allowed. If tires are needed to pass inspection, only all-season tires will be allowed. Itemized written estimates must be documented in the file. Quotes for the repairs must have an authorized mechanic sign off. Furthermore, if repairs are needed, the participant must obtain at least two quotes for service repairs (in extenuating circumstances, this requirement can be waived by the Program Manager at the service provider); the least expensive estimate will be paid for. Registration and proof of insurance must be with the primary customer. A valid driver's license is also required. Note: This policy may cover costs even if the primary customer is unable to drive but has obtained a "driver" for their vehicle.

**Childcare:**

Support for childcare for WIOA participants will be based on current Maine Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Market Rates. In order to provide supportive services for childcare with WIOA funds, the Service Provider must confirm that an application has been submitted for the Maine State Childcare Subsidy program. Supportive services for childcare may only be provided as the funding of last resort and supportive services may not exceed four weeks. Supportive services for childcare are not subject to the annual \$750 cap for supportive services. Exception: There will not be payment to family members. However, on a case-by-case basis, and in consideration of circumstances, i.e., geographic location, financial circumstances, the service provider may request a waiver to Program Director at service provider to make payment to extended family members that are not the parents or siblings of the child.

**Clothing/Uniforms:**

Such items will be documented as necessary to obtain employment. Uniforms required as part of a training program will be considered a "training" expense.

**Safety Equipment:**

Such equipment may be covered if it is required by an employer and meets appropriate safety standards in order to obtain employment. Examples include boots, safety glasses, helmet, etc. If employers, as part of the

normal course of hiring, usually supply the safety equipment, then the equipment will not be purchased for the participant as he/she should be treated the same as other new hires.

**Tools:**

If the tools are required by the employer to successfully obtain employment, a valid job offer from the employer must be verified prior to purchase. If employers, as part of normal course of hiring, usually supply tools, then tools will not be purchased for the participant as he/she should be treated the same as other new hires.

**Medical:**

Medical support services must be a requirement of a training course, employment related or required for admission into training. No-cost clinics and General Assistance must be considered prior to expending funds on medical services. Support may include eyeglasses, eye exams, physicals, inoculations, etc. Prescription drugs are not an allowable expense.

Mental Health/Substance abuse treatments are not covered. Staff will make referrals to appropriate agencies.

**Employment and Training related Application, Test and Certification Fees:**

Credential Evaluation Services: In the event a WIOA participant has obtained educational credentials from a foreign country/jurisdiction, WIOA support services may be used to pay reasonable costs associated with credential evaluation, if credential evaluation is a necessary part of the participant's individual service strategy plan. Such credential evaluation must sufficiently provide U.S. equivalent(s) for the credential(s) at issue so that educational institutions e.g., universities, licensing boards and employers in the U.S. can understand and recognize credentials earned outside of the U.S.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): The TOEFL is an English language proficiency test for non-native English language speakers wishing to enroll in U.S. universities. The test is accepted by many English-speaking academic and professional institutions. On a case-by-case basis, provided the TOEFL is necessary for a participant to obtain employment i.e., part of their individual service strategy plan, then TOEFL costs may be covered by WIOA.

Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications not covered by Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

**Miscellaneous Emergency:**

Emergency needs are items not previously covered under this policy. Any requests in this category will be approved only at the Program Management level of the service provider. Documentation must be clear, supporting the need ultimately establishing that the item is required so as to enable the participant to continue his/her activity in the program and/or obtain or retain employment. For emergency vehicle repairs, please refer to the Transportation policy for guidance on required documentation and estimates. This category may cover items such as short-term housing (for purposes of emergency/safety only). Insurance coverage costs are not to be purchased.

On a case-by-case basis, CCWI will decide whether to apply the WIOA support service policy to other grant funding opportunities.

NOTE: It is not allowable for support service payments to be made on past debt. See CCWI's policy on payments on debt (09-15-02).

**LWIB Approved: March 11, 2010; September 11, 2014; September 10, 2015; March 2, 2017; March 14, 2019; March 11, 2021**



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Priority of Service</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To transmit Coastal Counties' policy on priority of service for WIOA programming
<b>Statutory Authority:</b>	WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E); 20 CFR 279.560(b)(21); 20 CFR 680.600 – 680.660; WIOA – Final Rule: (285)
<b>Action:</b>	WIOA Service providers are required to adhere to all policies and guidelines set forth in the policy below.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	03/02/2017
<b>Revision Date(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Expiration Date:</b>	Indefinite

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**Background:** With limited funds allotted for services in the Coastal Counties Region, WIOA and its subsequent regulations require state and local boards to create policy regarding the provision of service priority for career and training services. The following guidance is issued with both the state and local plan in consideration.

CCWI, in line with State policy, adopts the language of the State Workforce Development Board policy number PY15-03.

**Policy:** Per WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), with respect to provision of individualized career services and training services funded with WIOA Title I -Adult funds, priority of service must be given to:

- a. Recipients of public assistance;
- b. Other low-income individuals; and
- c. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority of service does not apply to the dislocated workers or youth populations.

**Veterans:** Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL) funded programs among all participants. This requirement remains the same, is not affected by the passage of WIOA, and must still be applied in accordance with guidance previously issued by the U.S. Department of Labor and Maine Department of Labor - Policy PY15-23

**First Priority:** will be provided to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient in the local area who are covered persons with respect to veterans' priority. *(Per 20 CFR 683.230, when past income is an eligibility determinant for a veteran, any amounts received as military pay or allowances by any person who served on active duty and certain other specified benefits must be*

*disregarded for the veteran and for other individuals for whom those amounts would normally be applied in making an eligibility determination for the purpose of determining if the veteran or covered person is a low-income individual.)*

**Second Priority:** will be provided to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient who are not covered veterans;

**Third Priority:** will be covered persons with respect to the veterans' priority, those covered persons not considered to be recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient - who meet one or more of the barriers to employment identified as a priority by the local area, as defined in local board policy.

**Fourth Priority:** will be with respect to non-veterans, who are not recipients of public assistance, low income, or basic skills deficient but who meet one or more of the barriers to employment identified as a priority by the local area, as defined in local board policy.

**Fifth Priority:** As Maine's labor market continues to tighten, the Local Board has identified populations in the local area who are not low-income, basic skills deficient, or recipients of public assistance, but who are individuals documented as having other barriers to employment including lack of educational or occupational skills. These include employed workers, incumbent workers, individuals with disabilities, New Mainers i.e., immigrants, out-of-school youth, and older workers.

These populations may require supportive services in addition to educational and occupational skills training including English language programs, transportation, developmental education, work readiness, and other employment supports.

For the purpose of establishing income eligibility for priority of service, people with disabilities are considered a household of one. As outlined in WIOA Section 3(36)(A)(vi), a person with a disability can be considered a low-income individual under the priority of service if the individual's own income meets the income requirement described in WIOA Section 3(36)(A)(ii), even if the individual is a member of a family whose income exceeds the poverty line or is 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level.

**LWIB Approved: March 2, 2017**



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Youth Services for Formula WIOA Programs</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To transmit Coastal Counties Workforce Board’s policy on Youth Services
<b>Statutory Authority:</b>	29 USC §3102(18)(24)(27)(36)(46)(71); §3161-3164; 20 CFR §681.200 - §681.220; §681.250; §681.270; §681.280; §681.300 - §681.310; §681.410; §681.460 – §681.470; §681.490 - §681.560 -§681.570; §681.580 - §681.600; §681.650; Maine Department of Labor Policy PY16-05
<b>Action:</b>	WIOA Service providers are required to adhere to all policies and guidelines set forth in the policy below.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	9/14/17
<b>Revision Date(s):</b>	12/14/23
<b>Expiration Date:</b>	Indefinite

The goal of the Coastal Counties Local Board is to provide comprehensive wrap-around services for all WIOA youth activities within the region including outreach, intake and eligibility, assessment, plan development, job placement and follow-up services through the local CareerCenters and Workforce Solutions Centers consistent with both WIOA, WIOA regulations and regional needs in addition to direction disseminated through TEG’s and MDOL policies.

#### **I. Youth Barriers:**

In addition to school status, age, and wage eligibility criteria, all youth receiving services must meet the definition of either “in-school” or “out-of-school” youth as outlined in WIOA, 29 USC 3164(a)(1)(A)(B) and (C) and its regulations, 20 CFR §681.210, §681.220, and §681.250. For purposes of this policy, the terms of each are outlined below:

- A. **In-School Youth (ISY):** An ISY is an individual who is attending school (as defined by State law); not younger than age 14 or older than age 21 (unless the individual has a disability and is attending school under State law); a low-income individual; and one or more of the following apply:
- 1) Basic skills deficient;
  - 2) An English language learner;
  - 3) An offender;
  - 4) A homeless individual aged 14 to 21 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2(6)), a homeless child or youth aged 14 to 21 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), or a runaway;
  - 5) An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;

- 6) An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
- 7) An individual with a disability; or
- 8) An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Note: In addition to meeting the basic criteria i.e., low-income test, an in-School Youth must meet one of the above 8 criteria unless they require additional assistance (see section C below).

WIOA defines a low-income individual to include an individual who receives (or is eligible to receive) a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

- B. **Out-of-School Youth (OSY):** An OSY is an individual who is not attending any school (as defined by State law); not younger than age 16 or older than age 24; and one or more of the following:
- 1) A school dropout;
  - 2) A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter (as defined by the local school district);
  - 3) An offender;
  - 4) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
  - 5) A homeless individual aged 16 to 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2(6)), a homeless child or youth aged 16 to 24 who meets the criteria defined in sec. 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)) or a runaway;
  - 6) Individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement;
  - 7) An individual who is pregnant or parenting; or
  - 8) A youth who is an individual with a disability;
  - 9) A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.

Unless specified, youth meeting one of the above 7 criteria do not have to meet the low-income test. However, the low-income test applies to Out-of-School Youth who are either:

- 1) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and
- 2) Is basic skills deficient or an English language learner or
- 3) Who requires additional assistance (as defined below) to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

NOTE: Minimally, the WIOA Youth service provider shall spend at least 75% of youth funds on out-of-school youth.

- C. **Requires Additional Assistance:** Coastal Counties Workforce Board’s definition of “*requires additional assistance*” is as follows: youth with an immediate family member who is incarcerated; youth dealing with substance abuse issues or parents who have had a history or currently have issues with substance abuse; youth who live in rural areas with lack of resources, including transportation. In the case of In-School Youth, not more than five percent of the newly enrolled in a given program year may be eligible solely based on the “*requires additional assistance*” barrier (without meeting the low-income criteria) to “complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” criterion.

**D. Documentation:** in order to substantiate the above barriers, the Board requires the WIOA Youth service provider to keep record, both in paper and electronic case files, by using the chart below:

Barrier	Documentation
1. Youth with immediate family member who is incarcerated	Public court records; Self-attestation
2. Youth dealing with substance abuse or immediate family members who have had a history or currently have issues with substance abuse	Documentation from mental health or rehabilitation facility; Self-attestation
3. Youth who have a lack of resources, both community based and individual  For purposes of this section, "lack of resources" means less than sufficient amount of financial and community resources to aid the individual in finding and/or keeping employment.	Record of address; Self-attestation

**II. Outreach:**

Youth Employment Counselors’ primary duties include providing direct support to both internal and external youth program activities. Youth enrollments will reflect youth being served throughout the entire geographic area of the region. Efforts will be made by Service Provider(s) throughout their service delivery area to ensure youth are made aware of services and to recruit youth participants. Outreach is conducted through presentations to community partners that include but are not limited to secondary schools, alternative schools, business community, Adult Education, juvenile justice facilities/staff, social service agencies serving youth with barriers (i.e., homeless shelters, housing authorities, YouthBuild, etc.) Additionally, youth are recruited from the Information Centers found in CareerCenters and Workforce Solutions Centers.

**III. Partnership Agreements:**

The Workforce Solutions Centers will continue to build working partnerships with community-based youth serving programs. The Youth Services Team will meet regularly and reach out to the entire region to include partners and providers who serve, refer, and employ youth and young adults. Collaboration Agreements with a variety of youth serving programs such as the Greater Portland Workforce Initiative, Portland Jobs Alliance, Southern Maine Youth Transition Network (SMYTN), Long Creek Youth Development Center, CA\$H Coalition of Greater Portland, and others will continue as the mechanism to reflect these partnerships. Youth services follow statewide agreements that are developed through MDOL and other state departments in addition to more localized letters of support/agreements.

By developing "systemic" agreements with other major programs, the Board will create a sustainable capacity in the region to deliver coordinated services to a larger segment of the eligible youth population without duplication.

**IV. Designated Staff Approach:**

Designated staff members work with eligible youth populations to provide services that are comprehensive and fully integrated. Youth have access to all services found at the CareerCenters/Workforce Solutions Centers and work directly with youth designated staff for intensive case management and goal setting.

#### **V. Out-of-School Youth Focus:**

In accordance with WIOA 29 USC §3164(a)(4), Coastal Counties focuses on providing services to out-of-school youth. This Area follows and adopts the ETA vision that, “[f]or any program year, not less than 75 percent of the funds allotted under section 127(b)(1)(C)...shall be used to provide youth workforce investment activities for out-of-school youth.”

This Area’s Workforce Board believes that out-of-school youth are at a higher risk than in-school youth and as such, greater focus on this out-of school population is critical. WIOA youth programming can be the resource to re-engage the disengaged youth in our region. Although on a limited basis, in-school youth are, however, eligible for services and are also enrolled with an emphasis on serving youth attending alternative secondary schools.

#### **VI. Work Readiness:**

To make services comprehensive in nature, youth also have the opportunity to develop work readiness skills that are crucial for success in the workforce. Youth will participate in work readiness training provided by the youth staff in groups or individually dependent on the youth’s needs and timing for entering the system.

Work readiness training combined with paid and unpaid work experiences, On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeship, Occupational Skills Training, and/or Post-Secondary Training will prepare youth to achieve long term economic self-sufficiency through work. Youth will have access to state recognized Work Readiness Credentials as appropriate.

#### **VII. Comprehensive Services:**

Youth plans are comprehensive and include basic skills assessments, work readiness skills, and training needs. These goals will be achieved through one or more of the activities listed above. Youth also have access to mentoring, tutoring, support services, alternative education, leadership development, summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning, follow-up services, alternative secondary school services, and comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals as appropriate. These activities are available on site or through community partnerships throughout the area. For activities not directly provided by the WIA Service Provider, Youth are referred to appropriate services available through other entities.

#### **VIII. Youth Program Elements:**

In accordance with WIOA and “...to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participant,” the Coastal Counties WIOA service provider(s) shall offer or provide elements of programming consistent with the following:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or for a recognized postsecondary credential;
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education;
4. Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area;

5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
6. Leadership development opportunities;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring;
9. Follow-up services;
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling;
11. Financial literacy education;
12. Entrepreneurial skills training;
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupational available in the local area;
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

**IX. Follow-up Services:**

Once a youth participant has formally “exited” from the youth program, follow-up services shall be provided for at least “...12 months unless the participant declines to receive follow-up services or the participant cannot be located or contacted.” Follow-up services must include more than one contact attempt, and all outcomes thoroughly documented in the case file and Maine Job Link. Follow-up services may include: supportive services; adult mentoring; financial literacy education; services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area; activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training; other services that align with their individual service strategy.

**X. Work Experience Priority:**

Minimally, at least 20% of funds allocated to Youth programming will be spent on paid and unpaid work experiences. The definition of work experience is as follows: “...planned, structured learning experience[s] that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experiences may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate... work experiences must include academic and occupational education.” (20 CFR §681.600).

**XI. Information and Referrals:**

The Coastal Counties Workforce Board requires that the WIOA service provider(s) advise each participant on the full array of services available through the local board and other one-stop partners. This includes co-enrollment opportunities and referral to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve the participant either on a sequential or concurrent basis. Moreover, for those individuals who are deemed ineligible to receive WIOA services, service provider(s) shall refer the individual for further assessment, as necessary, to appropriate programs to meet the basic skills and training needs of the applicant.

**XII. Involvement of Parents/Guardians and Members of the Community:**

Parents/guardians are highly encouraged to actively participant in the youth’s service strategy and program delivery as deemed appropriate by the youth’s career counselor.

For individuals seeking to be involved in the design and implementation of local youth programming, the Coastal Counties Workforce Board actively seeks membership to the Youth Standing Committee. For those interested, please contact Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. for more information regarding becoming an active member. Furthermore, community members are encouraged to act as mentors and tutors and to provide input on program design during open Board meetings.



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Individual Training Account Policy for WIOA</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To transmit Coastal Counties Regional policy on Individual Training Accounts
<b>Statutory Authority:</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 2014(WIOA) §§: 134 (c-d) 20 CFR Part 680 §§: 680.210 – 680.310, 680.340, 680.400 – 680.410 and Part 681 § 681.550
<b>Action:</b>	WIOA Service providers are required to adhere to all policies and guidelines set forth in the policy below.
<b>Effective Date:</b>	July 1, 2007
<b>Revision Date(s):</b>	March 10, 2010; August 16, 2011; October 5, 2012; March 14, 2013; September 12, 2013; March 11, 2021
<b>Expiration Date:</b>	Indefinite

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Pursuant to both WIOA and its implementing regulations, training services and delivery strategies will focus primarily on the issuance of Individual Training Accounts (ITA).

#### **I. Definition:**

An individual training account (ITA) is established on behalf of a participant to purchase training services from an eligible provider they select in consultation with their Payments from ITAs may be made in a variety of ways, including the electronic transfer of funds through financial institutions, vouchers or other appropriate methods. Payments may be made incrementally, through payment of a portion of the cost as different points in the training course.

#### **II. Limits:**

An ITA should not exceed two years. The CCWB has established a \$4,000 maximum per individual customer financial limit on training through ITAs which is supported by WIOA formula funds. (NOTE: National Dislocated Worker Grants, or other non-formula funds may allow for greater amounts for targeted dislocated workers and the ITA spending will reflect the additional amounts available for these groups.) WIOA funding is the funding of last resort. WIOA funding for training is limited to participants who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of their training; or require assistance beyond that available under grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. Programs and training providers must coordinate funds available to pay for training. In extenuating circumstances, the service provider may request a waiver from

CCWI management regarding the \$4,000 maximum limit. The amount of the cap will be reviewed annually to determine if a revision is necessary to reflect current WIOA and other related funding levels.

### III. Eligibility for Training:

Adult and Dislocated Worker customers are eligible for training services if:

- Assessment and counseling services have been received through Career Services or otherwise that result in an employment plan which defines:
  - the purpose of training (employment & occupational goal) and
  - the amount of the Individual Training Account, and
  - support as available and required for participation in training, and
  - the participant's interest and capacity.
- The training is selected from the CCWB/MDOL approved Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), should reflect jobs in high demand and growth for the occupation of choice and is consistent with Labor Market Information for employment goals.
- The average wage level for employees with this training is greater than the participant can earn without this training, and this wage level can lead to self-sufficiency. *(See Policy 2-17-#04) for definition of self-sufficiency).*
- The participant can meet the requirements for admission into the school or training program.
- The participant is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the cost of such training or assistance is insufficient to allow participation.

Priority for training services will be given to those customers who meet the Priority of Service criteria. Particular interest will be focused on assisting adults who are either economically disadvantaged (below the yearly LLSIL or HHS guidelines), on public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

Service provider(s) will use the following tests to make Training and ITA decisions:

1. Is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone;
2. Is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment;
3. Has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
4. Is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including such sources as State-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants established under title N of the Higher Education Act of 1965, or requires WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants (20 CFR 680.230 and WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(B) contain provisions relating to fund coordination.);
5. Is a member of a worker group covered under a petition filed for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and is awaiting a determination? If the petition is certified, the worker may then transition to TAA approved training. If the petition is denied, the worker will continue training under WIOA;
6. Is determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) if training services are provided through the adult funding stream? and

7. Selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.

#### **IV. Customer Choice:**

Under Title I of WIOA, training services must be provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible provider. In the case of ITAs, the Local Area will take several steps to maximize customer choice in the selection of training providers. To promote customer choice, CCWI and MDOL have collaborated on an Eligible Training Provider Listing (ETPL). The ETPL is published on the MDOL website for customers' convenience and information. The ETPL will include performance and cost information.

Customers will be free to choose training options from any provider from the list which will lead to employment goals as outlined in their plan. Eligible customers may also receive a variety of education, training, and support services. Staff members are encouraged to leverage resources from partners to develop a more comprehensive employment plan for the participants.

#### **V. Waivers:**

On a case-by-case basis and as may be deemed appropriate by Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI), requests for waivers regarding the eligible training provider list may be issued. Such waivers are exceptions to the general requirement that all contractors must be registered with ETPL. Service Provider management staff may request a waiver utilizing CCWI issued forms in addition to submitting any supplementary information appropriate for such a review.

#### **VI. Individuals Training Accounts for Youth**

The Service Provider may utilize Individual Training Accounts for enrolled out-of-school Youth participants. In-school youth are ineligible for ITAs but can be co-enrolled into Adult or Dislocated Worker programming, as eligible, in order to utilize ITAs and training services, as appropriate pursuant to section III above.

Local Area Performance Measures Template

Coastal Counties Workforce Development Board

Local Performance Measures	PY 2024	PY 2025
<b>Adult Program</b>		
Employment 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	72%	72.5%
Employment 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. after exit	69%	70%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	\$7,500	\$7,600
Credential Attainment Rate	66%	67%
Measurable Skill Gains	51%	52%
<b>Dislocated Worker Program</b>		
Employment 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	75%	75.5%
Employment 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. after exit	77%	77.5%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	\$9,000	\$9,100
Credential Attainment Rate	64%	65%
Measurable Skill Gains	57%	57.5%
<b>Youth Program</b>		
Employment or Education 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	68.5%	69%
Employment or Education 4 <sup>th</sup> Qtr. after exit	68%	69%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Qtr. after exit	\$4,800	\$4,900
Credential Attainment Rate	57%	57.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%	52%

Local Board Chair

\_Carrie Murphy\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ / 9/3/2024  
Printed Name Date

Chief Elected Official

\_Charles Crosby III\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_ / 9/3/2024  
Printed Name Signature Date