

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

H.P. 736 - L.D. 1117

**An Act to Strengthen Maine's Workforce Through Certified
Preapprenticeship Training Programs**

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §3213, sub-§6, as enacted by PL 2021, c. 705, §12, is amended to read:

6. Funding. As funds are available, the Maine Apprenticeship Program, through the department and in consultation with the Maine Apprenticeship Council, as considered appropriate and permissible by the department, shall make available grants to support certified preapprenticeship training programs under this section. A certified preapprenticeship training program shall use the grants to provide meaningful support and stipends to facilitate enrollment and participation in the program. Support may include funding for child care, transportation, training materials, membership fees and costs, tools and personal protective equipment and reimbursement of other expenses that may be incurred by ~~a student~~ an individual to facilitate the ~~student's~~ individual's attendance and participation in the certified preapprenticeship training program; funding for assistance to address obstacles to and to identify and access services necessary for successful participation in the certified preapprenticeship training program; and funding for facilitating an individual's readiness to commence on-the-job learning in a registered apprenticeship program. Stipends may include cash payments. In allocating grants among certified preapprenticeship training programs, the Maine Apprenticeship Program shall ~~give priority to programs that have demonstrated successful enrollment of students from historically marginalized communities.~~ allocate at least 51% of total grant funding to support certified preapprenticeship training programs that have:

A. Demonstrated successful engagement and enrollment of and completion by individuals from historically marginalized communities and successful placement and enrollment of and completion by individuals from historically marginalized communities in registered apprenticeship programs;

B. Consistently placed individuals in registered apprenticeship programs that result in a total package value of no less than \$35 per hour upon graduation from the registered apprenticeship program, based on Maine Apprenticeship Program evaluations as

required pursuant to section 3204, subsection 2. On January 15, 2026 and each January 15th thereafter, the minimum total package value amount under this paragraph must be increased by the increase, if any, in the cost of living. The increase in the cost of living is measured by the percentage increase, if any, as of August of the previous year over the level as of August of the year preceding that year in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, CPI-W, for the Northeast Region, or its successor index, as published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics or its successor agency, with the amount of the minimum total package value increase rounded to the nearest multiple of 5¢; and

C. Demonstrated the provision of strong, comprehensive support services essential to ensure success, either through the use of funds provided under this subsection or through workforce funds provided by a different source.

Certified preapprenticeship training programs that cannot produce proof that graduates are employed in the field of their preapprenticeship after a period of 6 months following successful completion of their certified preapprenticeship training program or are represented by a labor organization are ineligible for grants under this subsection.

Funding for grants to support preapprenticeship training programs must be awarded to certified preapprenticeship training programs with strong direct entry links with registered apprenticeship programs through a competitive process administered by the department through the Maine Apprenticeship Program and to certified preapprenticeship training programs that train individuals for priority sectors for high-wage, in-demand jobs.

Funding for grants to support certified preapprenticeship training programs may also be used for program development, support and staffing for grantees.

Sec. 2. Department of Labor; study. The Department of Labor shall, within existing resources, conduct a study reviewing certified preapprenticeship training programs and registered apprenticeship programs in the State and in other states. The study must include an analysis of the programs reviewed, including but not limited to the funding methods of the programs. The department shall invite relevant stakeholders to participate in the study. The department shall report its findings, including any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor by December 3, 2025. The joint standing committee may report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature based on the report.