



Annual Report

April 1, 2026

Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
13 State House Station
Cross Office Building, Room 215
Augusta, Maine 04333-0013



April 1, 2026

Executive Summary

The mission of JMG is to identify students who face barriers to education, and to guide each one on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career, and productive adulthood.

The vision of JMG is to be a champion for all Maine students who face barriers to education.

JMG partners with public education and private businesses to offer results-driven solutions to ensure all Maine students graduate, attain post-secondary credentials and pursue meaningful careers.

As we venture into the upcoming academic year, which will undoubtedly be groundbreaking, it's important to reflect upon recent milestones in the story of our organization, as we prepare to create a new chapter in JMG's history.

In **2018** and **2019**, we celebrated our 25th anniversary, and began the process of updating our language, competencies and practices to ensure an exemplary experience with the utmost relevance for our students. We knew post-secondary and career pathways were rapidly changing, with more diverse choices emerging and an urgent, growing need to develop Maine's future workforce. We combined in-depth research, backed by decades of JMG's field experience and expertise, to develop the best-in-class framework for Maine and for the nation.

In **2020** and **2021**, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we pivoted to meet the critical and complex needs of our students, employees, and their families. Amid social and economic upheaval, we strengthened our support networks, prioritized equity, and leaned into partnerships to expand the reach of JMG beyond our student rosters. We were swift in our action to be responsive statewide, offering financial relief, access to technology, food delivery, and many other direct supports. It was a period defined by resilience and deepened relationships.

In **2022**, our focus was on the once in a generation opportunity to launch the Maine Career Exploration Badge through the use of federal COVID relief funds. Ultimately, more than 5,000 students will have been empowered through meaningful workforce experiences and a \$500 academic award. Our collaboration across federal and state government, public education, Maine employers, and community partners is unprecedented and we truly "moved the dial".

In **2023**, halfway through the Maine Career Exploration Badge initiative, we expanded our continuum of support to full scale and reclaimed our role as "Maine's most sought-after workforce development organization". The time was right to turn our attention back to the work we had started in 2018. We recognized that what had begun as a vision to reimagine how we best prepare students for meaningful futures in a changing world had become a reality through the creation of our new model.

In **2024**, backed by the successful execution of the Maine Career Exploration Badge, JMG's first ever "Credential", we began the pilot phase of JMG's new model, the **Maine Career Exploration Model**—a competency-based framework grounded in micro-credentials and skill development. This model signaled a new era of learning and earning, aligned with workforce realities and responsive to the lived experiences of students. Strategic investments in infrastructure and design positioned JMG to pilot, refine, and validate this forward-thinking model statewide and on a national level.

As we reflect upon the focus and impact of each year, it's easy to see the "cause & effect" within this story. Each academic year has built upon the one before it, not only sustaining our mission but boldly expanding its reach and impact. Now, we find ourselves in **2025** — another breakthrough year, which is a direct result of deliberate choices, innovative thinking, and our unwavering commitment to Maine students.

JMG is a student-centered, results-driven organization that has continued to ground our service in the most up-to-date, relevant practices and guidance for all Maine students. **Micro-credentials** are one of the most powerful tools we have to meet the needs of our students in an evolving educational and workforce landscape. The traditional pathways of learning are no longer sufficient to meet the diverse needs of learners or the demands of employers. Micro-credentials, or short, focused credentials that validate specific skills, are emerging as a critical component of lifelong learning and workforce readiness.

In January of 2026, JMG had its first transfer in leadership in over 20 years. JMG's Executive Vice President, Kimberley Acker Lipp, stepped into the role of CEO for JMG. This transition of leadership will lead to a newfound commitment to building a future defined by belonging and possibility. In classrooms, workplaces, and communities, JMG will challenge outdated systems, embrace new ideas, and harness technology to build a future where opportunity is accessible to all.

Part of this strength in partnership lies within the consistency of our JMG student outcomes.

- 93% of students who were rostered in a JMG Program for the Class of 2024 graduated from high school within four years.
- 80% of JMG high school seniors for the Class of 2024 engaged in a career-focused job, postsecondary education, or a combination of the two on a full-time basis, or in the military, one year after high school graduation.
- 61% of JMG students who enrolled in the College Success Program in the 2019-20 cohort attained a Degree or COV within six years of their initial enrollment in CSP.

As we progress through this next academic year, JMG will develop benchmarks around micro-credential attainment that will uphold the integrity of the skills the micro-credentials represent, as well show the impact this new asset will have across our state.

JMG's story is one of evolution—fueled by purpose, shaped by partnership, and driven by outcomes. With the transition in leadership, and the continued expansion of our Maine Career Exploration Model, we are not just preparing students for the future—we are helping shape it.

Sincerely,



Kimberley Acker Lipp
President & CEO, JMG



Matt St. John
Executive Vice President, JMG

ABOUT
JMG

JMG[®]

Our Model. Our Mission.

Guiding Maine Students.

Growing Maine's Workforce.



Skills.

Credentials.

Pathways.

Success.



WHO WE ARE

Mission

The mission of JMG is to identify students who face barriers to education and to guide each one onto a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career, and productive adulthood.



Vision

The vision of JMG is to be a champion for all Maine students who face barriers to education.

XYZ Statement

what we do (X), who we do it for (Y), and why it matters (Z)

JMG partners with public education and private businesses to offer results-driven solutions to ensure all Maine students graduate, attain postsecondary credentials, and pursue meaningful careers.

OUR CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT



WHAT SETS US APART

JMG is the only educational nonprofit in Maine that provides academic and career exploration programming to more than 13,000 Maine students annually. Serving students from 6th grade through age 24, JMG's nearly 150 programs are embedded in public schools, career and technical education centers, and on every campus in the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System. Across these middle school, high school, and college programs, JMG Specialists deliver direct support focused on academic success, career readiness, leadership development, and postsecondary transition.

JMG is building Maine's future workforce by reimagining how students access and succeed in education and careers. Through deeper partnerships with schools and employers, we're creating more intentional on-ramps to post-secondary and career pathways, expanding opportunity, and ensuring every student has a chance to reach their full potential. Grounded in decades of experience with competency-based education, JMG is launching the Maine Career Exploration Model: a new approach that allows students to demonstrate what they've learned, earn meaningful credentials and micro-credentials, and make their skills visible in a way that matters.

OUR STUDENTS

Who We Support

Our core middle school, core high school, and College Success programs provide competency-based education through a continuum of support to students. Students who are enrolled in a JMG core program face at least one barrier (B#).



B1 - Students from economically disadvantaged households.

B2 - Students who are or have been in the foster care system.

B3 - Students with disabilities, including physical, cognitive, intellectual, emotional, or learning.

B4 - Students who face inequities due to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, personal, and social circumstances.

B5 - Students who consistently underperform academically or exhibit a sudden drop in grades.

B6 - Students identified by the school's JMG Advisory Committee as facing significant barrier(s) who can benefit from the JMG core program.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT & ROSTERS

Recruitment

Recruitment happens throughout the school year, not just during course selection time! Recruiting tools include Advisory Committee, current or former JMG students, and applications.

Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is made up of a principal, guidance counselor, special education teacher or director, teacher, and others. Its purpose is to support and assist the Specialist(s) with the processes of Student Selection, Recruitment, and Retention.



Rosters

A roster is a list of students who are enrolled in a JMG class (core students) or with whom a Specialist is checking in once a month (follow-up students). Those students are linked to the Specialist, rather than to a particular school or program.

Commitment Forms

Commitment Forms are signed by students to confirm their enrollment in a JMG core program and understanding of program expectations.

JMG PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

PROGRAMS

Core Middle School (MS)

These programs introduce students to foundational competencies through project-based learning, early career exploration, and skill development that prepares them for high school success.

Core High School (HS)

These programs provide sustained, relationship-based support to help students demonstrate transferable skills, earn credentials, and prepare for postsecondary education and meaningful careers.

Hybrid, Plus (MS/HS)

These programs serve students across multiple grade levels or settings, offering flexible delivery models that maintain the core focus on skill development and academic and career readiness.

High School Completion (HSC)

The HSC program supports students who have disengaged or are at risk of not graduating and provides targeted re-engagement to help students earn a high school diploma and plan next steps.

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Embedded within CTE centers, these programs help students align technical learning with core competencies, supporting both credential attainment and successful transitions after graduation.

College Success Program (CSP)

Located on college campuses, CSP provides coaching, resource navigation, and persistence support to help students complete postsecondary education and transition to career-focused employment.

INITIATIVES

Aspire River Hawks (Skowhegan)

A PreK–12 initiative connecting students to career pathways through mentoring, community projects, and exploration.

Witches Aspire (Brewer)

A district-wide model offering students early exposure to postsecondary and career opportunities.

MELMAC

A grant-funded initiative promoting postsecondary readiness and aspiration through early awareness and engagement.

Playbook Initiative (Maine Celtics)

A middle school program fostering inclusion, empathy, and action through peer-led sessions on bias and belonging.

Maine Career Exploration Badge

A credential, funded through ARP and sunset in December 2026, that recognizes student readiness for career pathways by validating key competencies.

Maine Youth Transition Collaborative

A statewide network focused on improving outcomes for youth transitioning from foster care to adulthood.

Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)

Flexible, out-of-school experiences that connect academic learning with real-world career exploration.

HOPE & PaS Programs

Higher Opportunities for Pathways to Employment & Parents as Scholars provide postsecondary support for parenting individuals.

Opportunity Passport®

A matched-savings and financial literacy program supporting long-term economic well-being for young people.

Workforce Liaisons

Workforce Liaisons connect students with employers across Maine to support career exploration and work-based opportunities.

2025-2026 PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Brewer Community School
Bucksport Middle School
China Middle School
Durham Community School
Freeport Middle School
Gardiner Regional Middle School
James F. Doughty School
Lewiston Middle School
Messalonskee Middle School
Mt. View Middle School
Nokomis Regional Middle School
Philip W. Sugg Middle School
Ridge View Community School
Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School
Sanford Middle School
Skowhegan Area Middle School
South Portland Middle School (2)
Troy Howard Middle School
Vassalboro Community School
Warsaw Middle School
Waterville Jr. High School
Windham Middle School
Winslow Junior High School

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Bangor High School
Bangor High School Completion
Belfast Area High School
Biddeford High School
Bonny Eagle High School
Brewer High School
Bucksport High School
Calais Area High School
Caribou High School
Carrabec High School
Cony High School
Deering High School
Deering High School Completion
Dexter Regional High School
Dirigo High School
Edward Little High School
Edward Little High School Completion
Ellsworth High School
Erskine Academy
Fort Fairfield Middle/High School
Fort Kent Community High School
Foxcroft Academy
Freeport High School
Gardiner Area High School
Gorham High School
Hall-Dale High School

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS CONT.

Hampden Academy
Hodgdon High School
Houlton High School
Lawrence High School
Leavitt Area High School
Lewiston High School
Lewiston Regional Tech Center (3)
Lisbon High School
Machias Memorial High School
Madison Area Memorial High School
Maine Central Institute
Maranacook Community High School
Mattanawcook Academy
Medomak Valley High School
Messalonskee High School (2)
Monmouth Academy
Morse High School
Mountain Valley High School
Mt. Ararat High School
Mt. Blue High School
Mt. View High School
Narraguagus Jr./Sr. High School
Nokomis Regional High School
Oak Hill High School
Oceanside High School
Old Town High School
Orono High School
Penquis Valley High School
Piscataquis Community Sec. School
Poland Regional High School
Portland High School
Presque Isle High School
Richmond High School
Sanford High School
Searsport District High School
Skowhegan Area High School
South Portland High School (4)
Spruce Mountain High School
Telstar High School
Thornton Academy
Washington Academy
Waterville Senior High School (2)
Waterville Senior High School Completion
Westbrook High School
Windham High School
Windham High School Completion
Windham High School MELMAC
Winslow High School
Winslow High School MELMAC
Woodland Jr./Sr. High School
Yarmouth High School

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Bath Regional Career & Technical Center
Caribou Technology Center
Capital Area Technical Center
Foster Career & Technical Education Center
Portland Arts & Technology High School
Region 10 Technical High School
Somerset Career & Technical Center

COLLEGE SUCCESS PROGRAMS

Maine Community Colleges

Central Maine Community College
Eastern Maine Community College (2)
Kennebec Valley Community College (2)
Northern Maine Community College
Southern Maine Community College (3)
Washington County Community College
York County Community College

University of Maine Campuses

University of Maine
University of Maine at Augusta
University of Maine at Farmington
University of Maine at Fort Kent
University of Maine at Machias
University of Maine at Presque Isle
University of Southern Maine

Private Colleges & Universities

Thomas College

INITIATIVES

Aspire River Hawks (Skowhegan)
Witches Aspire (Brewer)
Playbook Initiative (Maine Celtics)
Maine Career Exploration Badge
Maine Youth Transition Collaborative
Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)
HOPE & PaS Programs
Opportunity Passport®
Workforce Liaisons



MAINE CAREER EXPLORATION MODEL

The Maine Career Exploration Model is JMG's comprehensive approach to skill development, career readiness, and postsecondary success. Designed to guide students from middle school through high school, this model provides a structured pathway to build and demonstrate essential skills, ensuring they are prepared for future education and careers.

Built around **JMG's 30 Competencies**, the model introduces middle school students to **foundational skills** through structured learning experiences that strengthen communication, teamwork, digital literacy, leadership, network building, and financial literacy. By engaging in hands-on activities, students develop key competencies and demonstrate **Evidence of Learning (EoL)**, reinforcing their growth and readiness for the next stage of their academic journey.

For **middle school students**, learning begins with a structured approach to skill-building. Each student receives a workbook to track their progress as they complete each of the **30 Skill Builders**, interactive learning experiences designed to reinforce key competencies. Upon demonstrating Evidence of Learning, they earn a **Skill Patch**, presented as a sticker, to place in their workbook, providing tangible recognition of their achievements and reinforcing their growth along the way.

As students progress into high school, the focus shifts to **validating and showcasing their competencies**. Demonstrating Evidence of Learning allows students to earn recognized credentials, further distinguishing their achievements and signaling their preparedness for future opportunities.



The credentials and micro-credentials within JMG's Maine Career Exploration Model are meant to act as a primer for the world of postsecondary **Credentials of Value**.

For high school students, demonstrating Evidence of Learning in each of the 30 Competencies earns a **Micro-credential**, awarded as a **digital badge**. These competencies cover a wide range of transferable skills, including professionalism, communication, financial literacy, and leadership. Successfully completing all Micro-credentials within a category results in a **Credential**, also awarded as a **digital badge**, further distinguishing their achievements.

Through applied learning and **skill verification**, students build confidence, develop a strong foundation for lifelong success, and graduate with a **digital portfolio of verifiable skills**. The JMG Maine Career Exploration Model ensures students leave high school with proof of their abilities, a clear path forward, and the tools needed for meaningful careers and continued education.

SYSTEMS & PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT OUR WORK

GenUS

LEARNING EXCHANGE



JMG’s model is supported by the **GenUS Learning Exchange**, a digital platform built on Canvas, a leading *learning management system* (LMS) used by K–12 schools, colleges, and universities across the country. As an LMS, Canvas provides students with structured access to learning content, interactive assignments, and progress tracking, all in one place. Internally, JMG uses Canvas to design and deliver credentialing experiences.

Through the GenUS Learning Exchange, students engage in meaningful credentialing experiences that culminate in metadata-backed digital badges. These credentials can be shared on LinkedIn, included in resumes and college applications, and added to career portfolios. Each credential represents a verified demonstration of skill, ensuring students leave JMG programs with evidence of their learning that they can carry into the future.

The GenUS Learning Exchange is JMG’s platform for developing, demonstrating, and validating competencies and transferable skills.

HOW WE TRACK OUTCOMES

Salesforce

JMG uses Salesforce as a secure, cloud-based system to manage all aspects of a student’s experience. **Specialists document demographic information, identified barriers, program engagement, and progress toward credentials in one centralized location, creating a complete view of each learner.** Data from the GenUS Learning Exchange, JMG’s credentialing platform built on Canvas, is also downloaded and incorporated into Salesforce to capture credential attainment alongside other key student outcomes.

Customized dashboards and reports allow staff and leadership to monitor outcomes, such as credential completion, high school graduation, and postsecondary enrollment, and identify where support is most needed. This system strengthens data integrity, improves visibility, and informs how we evolve our programming.

At the organizational level, JMG measures success through key indicators of student engagement, pursuit of learning, persistence toward goals, and the attainment of Credentials of Value and career-focused employment. These outcomes help ensure our work remains aligned with our mission and responsive to the needs of students and Maine’s future workforce.

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Capturing Student Outcomes

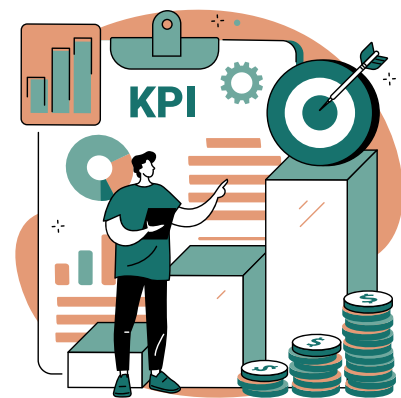
JMG captures outcomes for all rostered students **three times** each academic year: **January, June, and September**. This cyclical approach provides timely snapshots of student progress and helps identify their trajectory for the upcoming semester.

We report outcomes across three student rosters:

Current – Students actively ROSTERED in JMG programs

Follow-Up – Students in their first year after previously being rostered in a JMG program

Tracking High School Graduation – Students who are rostered and progressing toward graduation



Importance of Tracking HS Graduation (or 4 Year Grad Report)

We utilize this data to show our Organizational Outcome that 90% of students who complete a core JMG class at any time in high school will graduate from high school within four years.

Once a student is rostered in a JMG program, we track their progress towards graduation, even if they only participate in JMG for a semester or once in their high school career. This is updated three times a year.

Collecting this data provides a snapshot of each student's progress in the program and helps identify their expected path for the next semester.

Outcomes include:



Next Semester School or Program



Next Semester Enrollment Status



Next Semester Specialist



Current Employment

Organizational outcome metrics working to obtain



60% of JMG rostered students will earn three micro-credentials annually.



90% of JMG rostered high school students will graduate on time.



80% of JMG graduating seniors will successfully transition to postsecondary education or a career-focused job within one year of high school graduation



60% of JMG College Success students will earn a postsecondary degree or Credential of Value (COV) within 6 years.

Why This Matters

Capturing student outcomes allows JMG to measure impact, strengthen program design, secure sustainable funding, and continuously improve how we serve students.

HOW WE SUPPORT TRANSITIONS & FOLLOW UP

Bridging

In our continuum of support, we also ensure a soft handoff when a student transitions from our program to another school or specialist. We let the student know who the next JMG specialist is, set up a virtual or in-person meeting, and document the interaction in Salesforce as a note. This intentional transition process helps students feel seen and supported, especially during moments of change.



Follow Up

JMG's follow-up service during the first year after high school is a crucial element of support for our students. Follow-up is provided to graduates and nongraduates who had JMG as a senior in our Core, Career and Technical Education, or High School Completion programs.

Regular check-ins may include phone calls, texts, emails, or in-person meetings, whatever best supports the student's path forward.



Narratives

When entering monthly information about the student, a narrative will be entered into Salesforce. Narratives also help track patterns across time and identify areas where additional support may be needed.



Notes

These are often utilized for bridging communication to the next Specialist and to capture important information that others should be aware of. Notes also create continuity in support by preserving key context as students move through different programs or transitions.



Employer Records

When a student is employed, we enter details about their employment into the Employer Record. This information contributes to outcome reporting and helps JMG understand student employment trends.

JMG STRUCTURE

Executive Team

Leads JMG's strategic direction, organizational sustainability, and statewide partnerships, ensuring all work aligns with mission and vision.

Central Office

Based in Augusta, the central office supports all operations, including finance, data, development, communications, Human Resources (HR), and organizational infrastructure.

Regional Directors

Supervise Specialists within their divisions, lead training and implementation, conduct site visits and evaluations, and serve as primary contacts for school partners.

Divisions

JMG's programs are organized into divisions to align with leadership oversight. Each division is managed by a Regional Director or Supervisor who provides supervision, coaching, and support to the Specialists and team members within that structure.

Specialists

Specialists deliver JMG programming in middle schools, high schools, CTE centers, and on college campuses. They support students in developing and demonstrating transferable skills through one-on-one instruction, group facilitation, and credentialing experiences.

HOPE & PaS Staff

Staff supporting Maine Department of Health and Human Services' programs, Higher Opportunities for Pathways to Employment and Parents as Scholars, who provide individualized guidance and coaching to income-eligible parenting individuals pursuing postsecondary education.

Aspire Team

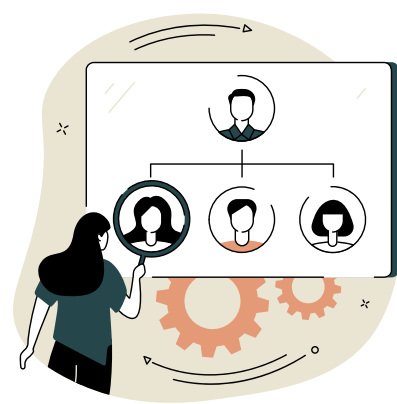
The Aspire team supports school-wide initiatives focused on early exposure to career pathways and postsecondary opportunities, beginning in the earliest grades.

Workforce Liaisons

Workforce Liaisons engage employers and community partners across Maine to connect students with career exploration and work-based learning opportunities.

Instructional Design Team

This team contributes to the design of instructional tools and resources that align with JMG's Maine Career Exploration Model and the GenUS Learning Exchange.



SITE VISITS & OBSERVATIONS FOR SPECIALISTS

Initial Site Visit

The first scheduled visit from your Director or Supervisor. At this visit, we go over the Crisis Policy, check in on how the year has started, and share important updates.



Formal Site Visit/Observation

This observation is written into your evaluation. Your Director or Supervisor will observe a full class meeting or similar event based on your role, as well as meeting with your administrator, advisory committee members, students, and others. Your director will provide support and coaching feedback.

STAFF TOOLS & SYSTEMS

Canva

Not JMG affiliated but a great tool you can access to create event flyers, presentations, videos, and more. When using the JMG logo, please be sure to follow our Style Guide & Toolkit.

Gorilla Expense

Software used to submit expense and mileage reports for supervisor and finance team approval.

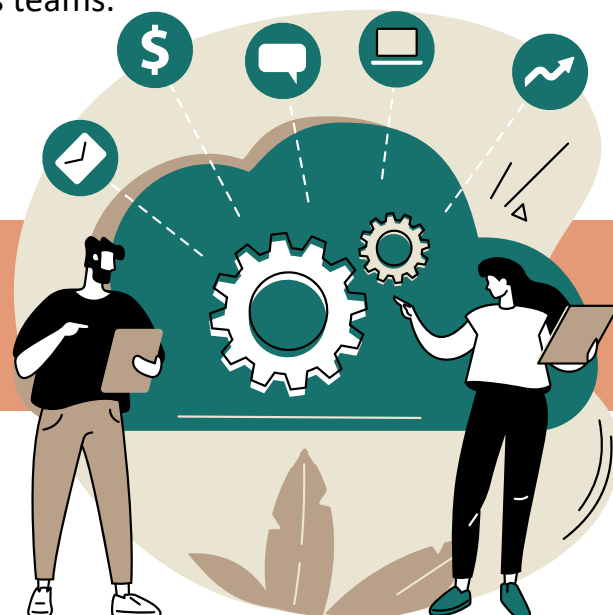
Paycom

Portal for submitting time off requests, reviewing hiring documents, completing benefits enrollment, entering your shirt size, managing payroll-related tasks, and more.

Google Workspace

Used for email, calendar, and collaborative documents across teams. Your JMG email provides access to these core tools.

Most systems can be accessed through the JMG Intranet, where you'll also find guides, links, and support resources.



INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & RESOURCES

Weekly Email Update

Sent out the first of each week during the academic year with important details.

JMG Intranet

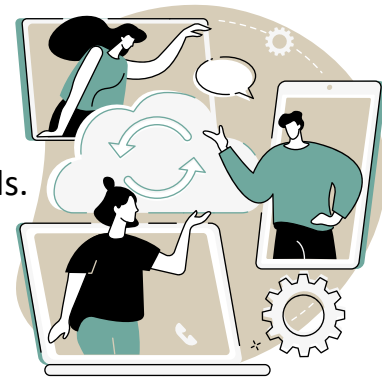
The go-to resource for all things JMG! Available for JMG staff only, it includes curriculum, database guides, forms, employee handbooks, and more.

Guidepost Document

Shared annually at August Workforce Summit, this document outlines JMG's organizational priorities for the upcoming year.

JMG Website

JMG.org is our public-facing website and a central resource for students, families, and partners, featuring program overviews, a wide range of student resources, and impact data.



JMG STAFF TRAINING & EVENTS

New Staff Training

New Staff Training is a multi-day, in-person onboarding experience designed to prepare new and transitioning JMG Specialists with the knowledge, tools, and cultural foundation needed for success. Through interactive sessions, breakout trainings, and peer-led facilitation, staff explore JMG's mission, curriculum, student-centered practices, and the Maine Career Exploration Model while building connections with colleagues and leadership.

New Staff Mentoring Program

New Staff Mentoring Program pairs experienced Specialists with new hires for a one-year, peer-based mentoring relationship designed to build confidence, transfer knowledge, and support professional growth. Mentors and mentees connect regularly throughout the year, attend each other's events, and collaborate on best practices to help new Specialists thrive within the JMG culture.

Fall & Spring Staff Meetings

Held at central locations across the state, these daylong meetings focus on professional development, program updates, and connections within divisions.

Statewide Meetings

Held in December and June, these company-wide gatherings include updates from the CEO, Executive Vice President, and leadership team. The June meeting is a celebration of our collective impact.

August Workforce Development Summit

Often called "The Summit" or "Sugarloaf," this annual multi-day event is held close to or during the first week of August. It brings all staff together to collaborate, celebrate, and kick off the new academic year with training and shared purpose.





Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Chair: Danielle Ahern
SVP, Director of Treasury Services
Machias Savings Bank

Vice Chair: Virgel Hammonds
Co-CEO
FullScale

Secretary: Cary Olson Cartwright
AVP, Corporate Social Responsibility
Unum

Treasurer: Mike Archer
EVP, Chief Financial Officer
Camden National Bank

Chris Cimino
President
C.M. Cimino Realty Inc.

Jeremy Fischer, Esq.
Attorney
PreTiFlaherty

Bob Moody
VAS and AMR Manager
Everett J. Prescott Inc.

At Large Members

Kenden Alford
Psychotherapist
Leadership Coach

Melissa Denbow
SVP, Community Impact Manager
Machias Savings Bank

David Dorr
Director
Somerset Career & Technical Center

Chris Howell
Superintendent
RSU 14

Lisa Larson
CEO
Education Design Lab

Cari Medd
Superintendent
MSAD 52

Jennifer O'Leary
Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives & Partnerships
University of Maine System

Gregg Palmer
Superintendent
Brewer School Department

Nicki Pellenz
SVP, Cash Management Solutions Manager
Bangor Savings Bank

Matt Pouliot
Real Estate Broker
Pouliot Real Estate

Dr. Johanna Prince
Assistant Superintendent
South Portland School Department

Tyler Putnam
Superintendent
MSAD 70

Jeanne Sanders
Director of Tax
L.L.Bean, Inc.

Kimberly Simard

Mary Anne Spearin
Superintendent
Calais School Department

Sara Spugnardi
Lead Talent Acquisition Partner
L.L.Bean, Inc.





Ex Officio Members

Commissioner
Maine Department of Labor

Commissioner
Maine Department of Education

SNAPSHOT: JMG Outcomes and Attainment Goals

Organizational Outcome Metrics Working to Obtain

-  60% of JMG rostered students will earn three micro-credentials annually.
-  90% of JMG rostered high school students will graduate on time.
-  80% of JMG graduating seniors will successfully transition to postsecondary education or a career-focused job within one year of high school graduation.
-  60% of JMG College Success students will earn a postsecondary degree or Credential of Value (COV) w/in 6 years.



Why This Matters

Capturing student outcomes allows JMG to measure impact, strengthen program design, secure sustainable funding, and continuously improve how we serve students.

Program Specific Goals and Outcomes

Core Middle School Programs

1. 60% of JMG students rostered in a core middle school will earn 5 JMG skill builders each academic year.
2. 65% of rostered students are economically disadvantaged.
3. 100% of students who are supported by the foster care system, who are referred to the program by guidance or through JMG's partnership with DHHS, are supported and attempted to be rostered.
4. 35 or more students are rostered in each program.

Core High School Programs (CTE, HSC, and ELO)

1. 60% of JMG students rostered in a core high school program will earn three or more micro-credentials each academic year.
2. 90% of students who complete a core JMG class at any time in high school will graduate from high school within four years.
3. 80% of JMG graduating high school seniors will be engaged in a career-focused job, post-secondary education, or a combination of the two on a full-time basis, or in the military, one year after high school graduation.
4. 60% of JMG graduating seniors will pursue a Degree or COV within one year of high school graduation.
5. 65% of rostered students are economically disadvantaged.
6. 100% of students who are supported by the foster care system, who are referred to the program by guidance or through JMG's partnership with DHHS, are supported and attempted to be rostered.
7. Rostered Students:
 - 45 or more students are rostered in each core high school program
 - 30 or more students are rostered in each CTE program
 - 20 or more students are rostered in each of our HSC and ELO programs

College Success Program (CSP)

1. 60% of JMG students who enroll in CSP will attain a Degree or COV within six years of their initial enrollment.
2. 70% of students will persist in their pursuit of a post-secondary credential from their first to second year of CSP.
3. 30% of students who withdraw from their original CSP campus will Return to School within two years.
4. Each program enrolls a minimum of 40 students, with Specialists working towards JMG's annual goal of enrolling 350 first-year students and maintaining a total program enrollment of at least 1,350 students.

Program Expectations

1. Less than 5% of rostered students will be Unable to Contact. (*Applicable to all programs*)
2. Data will be completed and submitted on time and accurately. (*Applicable to all programs*)

Engagement, pursuit, persistence, and attainment goals are tailored to programs serving non-rostered students.

BUDGET & FUNDING SOURCES



JMG FY26 Board Approved Budget

REVENUE	FY26 Budget
ME DOE - State Appropriation	3,881,379
ME DHHS	5,270,604
HOPE/PaS Initiative	1,180,000
Federal Stimulus ARP - ELO and DECD Direct Grant	2,111,219
Local School Contributions	3,007,000
Private Development	3,056,101
Interest - From Short Term Investments	90,000
Admin Cost Share Revenue from GenUS	42,092
Total Revenue	18,638,395
EXPENSE	
Salaries	12,000,848
Benefits & Taxes	3,388,940
Subtotal Personnel	15,389,788
Administration and Fees	197,796
Facilities	110,013
Communications and Employer Engagement	162,500
Staff Training and Development	294,702
Student Events and Activities	83,000
Student Support	685,500
Supplies	44,200
Technology & Equipment	293,895
Travel Expenses	170,000
Special Projects, Partners and Consultants	507,001
Strategic Growth and Sustainability Fund Investment	700,000
Subtotal Non-Personnel	3,248,607
Total Expenses	18,638,395
Surplus/(Deficit)	(0)

STRATEGIC PLAN



2020-2025
STRATEGIC PLAN

JMG’s 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan
 July 1, 2020 (FY21) – June 30, 2025 (FY25)
 Approved by JMG’s Board of Directors on June 17, 2020

JMG’s Mission Statement: JMG’s mission is to identify students who face barriers to education, and to guide each one on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career, and productive adulthood.

JMG’s Vision Statement: Our vision is to be a champion for all Maine students facing barriers to education. We understand Maine’s future will be a reflection of what we commit and contribute to our youth.

While it took 25 years to serve our first 50,000 students, JMG is projected to serve more than 55,000 students within the next five years. As we look ahead to 2025, it is important to reflect upon our most recent history, and the significant growth achieved within the timeframe of our previous strategic plan.

JMG Budget and Programmatic Outcomes Achieved from FY 2015 – FY 2020			
FY 2015		FY 2020	
Total Programs	79	Total Programs	143
Total Students Served	4,650	Total Students Served	11,000
Total Annual JMG Budget	\$6,987,579	Total Annual JMG Budget	\$12,341,096
Total State Appropriation	\$2,345,379	Total State Appropriation	\$ 3,545,379
Total DHHS Contract	\$ 180,000	Total DHHS Contract	\$ 4,661,233
Total Endowment	\$ 600,000	Total Endowment	\$ 4,591,935

In envisioning the future, because of JMG’s expanded student reach and programmatic scaffolding, we must recognize our organization is a pivotal agent of positive change for Maine’s education and workforce development systems. This capacity comes with extraordinary responsibility to support Maine students and the Maine economy in increasingly critical ways. Recent, and ongoing, independent research by Stepwise Data Research and the American Institute of Research is proving JMG’s strategies of student-centered education, and results-driven career readiness, are effective even for students who face the highest barriers, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and youth-in-foster-care.

As we enter into this next phase, JMG stands poised to achieve the highest level of national standards set by Jobs for America's Graduates for the 25th consecutive year. And while we believe it is important to secure that status, we choose not rest on our laurels. This new strategic plan sets a vision for improved, more significant programmatic outcomes that take our expectations for student success well beyond high school graduation.

We have set an aggressive agenda, focusing on making critical investments in our staff, sustaining the tremendous growth of our organization, and driving forward an intentional and comprehensive redesign of JMG's programmatic blueprint. We will take bold steps to ensure the JMG model remains cutting edge in terms of education and economic relevance – always keeping the success of our students at the center of our efforts and commitment.

The three key strategic priorities for this new plan include:

- 1. Seize JMG's unique position and expertise to deepen the connection between education and workforce development to reinforce and advance a system of post-secondary and career readiness that equally values knowledge and competencies, spanning the full range of essential skills that best serve and prepare students for success beyond high school.**
- 2. Invest deeply in organizational development to support and honor the dedication of our Specialists, strengthening the internal capacity needed to deliver most effectively on mission, while upholding a positive culture based on shared values.**
- 3. Sustain and maximize a diversification of revenue resources.**

In developing this strategic plan – which included an 18-month multi-layered process – the most noteworthy asset cited universally by both internal and, notably, external stakeholders is the strength of JMG's organizational culture. Importantly, the strength of JMG's relationship-based approach and shared values will not only carry forward the ambitious goals of this plan, it is what sets us apart in a vast landscape of measures of success in education and workforce metrics.

At the core of JMG's accountability, our top priority, is to build our strategies and practices with an emphasis on connections and relationships. We hold and lift up the broader perspective of employee and student well-being, helping individuals realize their fullest potential, and investing in the development of talent.

As JMG's Board of Directors and executive team continue to lead and advance a highly effective and accountable organization, we are committed to supporting a culture of trust, risk taking, and innovation that honors an inclusive and transparent decision making process so that all stakeholders are pulling in the same direction on behalf of Maine students.

JMG's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan
Key Priorities and Objectives

- 1. Seize JMG's unique position and expertise to deepen the connection between education and workforce development to reinforce and advance a system of post-secondary and career readiness that equally values knowledge and competencies, spanning the full range of essential skills that best serve and prepare students for success beyond high school.**
 - a. Recognize the significance of JMG's relevancy for the future of Maine, given the scale and reach of programs delivered in partnership with Maine's K-12 public education system, the private business sector, and higher education institutions.
 - b. Align JMG's key performance indicators to the credential-attainment goals articulated recently by education and economic leaders in Maine. JMG is supporting the state's goal, codified by statute, that 60% of Mainers will attain a degree or industry-recognized post-secondary credential.
 - c. Evaluate, through third-party independent research, JMG's student-centered practices and results-driven learning strategies to advance a framework for post-secondary and career readiness that sets standards for what students should know and be able to do.

- 2. Invest deeply in organizational development to support and honor the dedication of our Specialists, strengthening the internal capacity needed to deliver most effectively on mission, while upholding a positive culture based on shared values.**
 - a. Embrace the significant growth JMG has achieved in the past five years, and take the time and effort needed to reinforce organizational excellence.
 - b. Achieve programmatic excellence by solidifying best-in-class practices for new models launched in the past five years; and, continue to develop forward-thinking and innovative approaches.
 - c. Advance systems and tools to better support employees and strengthen the position of the organization.

- 3. Sustain and maximize a diversification of revenue resources.**
 - a. Solidify a stronger fiscal position, leveraging the expertise of the ad-hoc Investment Advisory Committee to fully leverage an endowment, maximize additional assets, and achieve stellar stewardship of current and future investors.
 - b. Promote JMG as a valued partner of Maine's Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Economic and Community Development, the Office of Innovation and the Future, and the state's community college and university systems.
 - c. Continue to advance affiliate business structure.

Table of Contents

Strategic Plan Process	Page 7
Strategic Priorities and Objectives:	
Priority I	Page 9
Priority II	Page 11
Priority III	Page 13
Key Performance Indicators	Page 15
JMG Microbadge Model Framework	Page 17
Review of Five-Year Organizational Highlights	Page 19
History of Funding Sources	Page 21
Benchmarks and Outcomes	Page 23
Year-to-Year Comparison Graphic	Page 25
Reference Documents	Page 27

JMG Strategic Plan Process

During a period of 18 months, JMG’s Board of Directors and executive team led a strategic planning process through board work sessions, structured feedback opportunities with JMG’s operations team and Specialists, and engagement with stakeholders to provide a comprehensive analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats against an environmental scan of trends and issues within education, workforce development, and nonprofit business sectors. And, as a student-centered organization, JMG continuously solicits feedback from enrolled students and alumni and did so in several different formats for this plan.

Key Audience	Date	Participants	Action sought	Format
External Stakeholders	2018	Business leaders, state government leaders, community members, stakeholders	CEO and EVP present to stakeholders at statewide springboard meetings. Feedback captured	Meetings and Surveys
2020 Vision Task Force	2018-2019	Executive Team, Regional Managers, Field Staff	Reading assignments, educational exercises, and meetings to review priorities, progress, and influences	Meetings and Exercises
External Stakeholders	May 2018	Business leaders, state government leaders, community members, stakeholders	CEO presents to stakeholders at Portland Chamber of Commerce: Eggs & Issues and Bank of America employee event. Feedback captured	Meetings
All Staff	Aug 2018	All staff	CEO and EVP captures staff feedback at Workforce Development Summit	Meeting
Board of Directors	Sep 2018	Full board	Leadership consultant, Jim Mahan reviews influencing change process, sets stage for Dec board meeting, strategic planning process defined	Full Board Meeting
JMG Students	Oct 2018	All 2018-2019 JMG student leaders	Leadership Education Conference: activity to capture student voice	Leadership Education Conference
Board of Directors	Dec 2018	Full Board and Executive Team	Strategic Plan Work Session: focus on workforce development and employer engagement	Full Board Meeting
External Stakeholders	Mar 2019	Legislators, School Partners, Key Supporters, Staff, Students	Feedback on research data and serving student populations with intent	Statehouse Hall of Flags
Board of Directors	Mar 2019	Full Board Student Voice	Strategic Plan Work Session: strategic plan priorities and objectives - Student presentation	Full Board Meeting
Legislative Committees	Jan – Jun 2019	DOE, DHHS, IDEA, DOL, and Approps	Presentation and feedback from committee members	Various

Key Audience	Date	Participants	Action sought	Format
Board of Directors	Jun 2019	Full Board	Fund consolidation to launch financial strategies (strategic growth, health care reserve, endowment). Investment in staff: base pay increase and bonus pool structure	Full Board Meeting
Exec Council, then All Staff	Jun 2019	Exec Council	Presentation and feedback on total compensation strategy	Meeting
All Staff	Aug 2019	All Staff	Presentation and feedback of company growth and vision	Workforce Development Summit
Board of Directors	Sep 2019	Full Board	Presentation and feedback of company growth and vision	Full Board Meeting
Governor	Oct 2019	Governor and cabinet members	Presentation of JMG's past and future story/initiatives/impact	Guidepost Letter
Board of Directors	Dec 2019	Full Board Student Voice Office of Policy Innovation & Future	Strategic Plan Work Session: strategic plan priorities and objectives; student presentation; presentation by Hannah Pingree and Maria Povec	Full Board Meeting
All Staff	Spring 2020	All Staff	Presentation and feedback on strategic plan priorities and objectives	Statewide Listening Dinners
Board of Directors	Mar 2020	Full Board, Executive Team, Ops Team	Strategic Plan Work Session: feedback and responses to draft plan	Full Board Meeting
Board of Directors	Jun 2020	Full Board	Vote on final strategic plan	Full Board Meeting
All Staff	Jun 2020	All Staff	Presentation of final strategic plan	Statewide Meeting

Internal Stakeholders:

Board of Directors: Includes all GenME, GenUS, and JMG Board members.

Executive Team: Includes all GenME and JMG executives. Meet bi-weekly.

Regional Managers: Includes ten managers, representing various regions of the state (south, central, north).

Ops Team: Includes regional managers, director of operations, asst. director of operations and vice president of human resources. Meet once-twice per month.

Executive Council: A council consisting of eight master specialists and two non-master specialists who meet several times a year with members of the executive team to discuss important, big picture issues like the state of the company, the direction in which we are headed and plans for the future. Meet 3 to 4 times a year.

2020 Vision Task Force: Includes 26 staff members including executive team, operations team, and field staff. Group has been identified as key behavioral influencers, who attend facilitated meetings to shape and influence change. Group is assigned reading and educational exercises to support role.

Strategic Priorities: 2020-2025

- 1. Seize JMG's unique position and expertise to deepen the connection between education and workforce development to reinforce and advance a system of post-secondary and career readiness that equally values knowledge and competencies, spanning the full range of essential skills that best serve and prepare students for success beyond high school.**

Our objectives include the following:

- a. Recognize the significance of JMG's relevancy for the future of Maine, given the scale and reach of programs delivered in partnership with Maine's K-12 public education system, the private business sector, and higher education institutions.
- b. Align JMG's key performance indicators to the credential-attainment goals articulated recently by education and economic leaders in Maine. JMG is supporting the state's goal, codified by statute, that 60% of Mainers will attain a degree or industry-recognized post-secondary credential.
- c. Evaluate, through third-party independent research, JMG's student-centered practices and results-driven learning strategies to advance a framework for post-secondary and career readiness that sets standards for what students should know and be able to do.

What this means: *As workforce development becomes even more crucial to the Maine economy, JMG recognizes the essential role we play in reaching more than 10,000 members of the future workforce on an annual basis. This formalizes JMG's relationship-based continuum of support focused on student engagement through career preparation pathways in partnership with public education, the business community, and higher education institutions. As the education and economic needs of Maine continue to change, independent research will show JMG makes a difference even for students who face the highest barriers, including economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and youth-in-foster-care. JMG's vision is to be a champion for all Maine students facing barriers to education. We have a longstanding history of directly addressing inequities, including racial inequities, to ensure all students have access to student-centered education. JMG embraces differences of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomics and culture. We understand Maine's future will be a reflection of what we commit and contribute to our youth.*

Strategic Priorities: 2020-2025

- 2. Invest deeply in organizational development to support and honor the dedication of our Specialists, strengthening the internal capacity needed to deliver most effectively on mission, while upholding a positive culture based on shared values.**

Our objectives include the following:

- a. Embrace the significant growth JMG has achieved in the past five years, and take the time and effort needed to reinforce organizational excellence.
- b. Achieve programmatic excellence by solidifying best-in-class practices for new models launched in the past five years; and, continue to develop forward-thinking and innovative approaches.
- c. Advance systems and tools to better support employees and strengthen the position of the organization.

What this means: *This will include attention to key messaging and delivery, leadership development, team building, employee voice and recognition, professional development, and the fostering of a robust and vibrant culture. The College Success model and the Pathway Navigator positions have shown early promise, and a commitment must be made to capture and clearly define what works best and what is replicable. There is significant opportunity to expand and enhance the growth of these models and/or develop new variations of these models. JMG will invest in a new data infrastructure to support the development of a new model that will update the relevancy of competencies; and, create instructional tools and learning strategies — that are student-centered and results driven—in partnership with public education, higher education, and employers. New opportunities for students will include better defined pathways to earn college credits and micro-credentials prior to graduating from high school.*

Strategic Priorities: 2020-2025

3. Sustain and maximize a diversification of revenue resources.

Our objectives include the following:

- a. Solidify a stronger fiscal position, leveraging the expertise of the ad-hoc Investment Advisory Committee to fully leverage an endowment, maximize additional assets, and achieve stellar stewardship of current and future investors.
- b. Promote JMG as a key partner to Maine’s Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Economic and Community Development, and the Office of Innovation and the Future.
- c. Continue to advance affiliate business structure.

What this means: *JMG has expanded revenue resources, and as new “asks” are made of prospective funders, the ability to clearly articulate expectations and messaging will be critical as JMG’s funding resources continue to evolve. JMG is the only statewide nonprofit in Maine formally partnering with all three agencies: Maine’s Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Labor; and, we are deepening our relationship with the Department of Economic and Community Development and the new Office of Policy and Innovation. Within these partnerships, there exist more opportunities to define and promote common priorities and funding resources. Notably, JMG was cited as an example of an effective key partner in providing career exploration and essential skill development in the Maine Economic Development Strategic Ten-Year Plan released in November 2019. In JMG’s prior strategic plan, we created a new business affiliate structure, and we will continue to build upon this framework to both capture revenue streams not accessible to JMG Inc., and, generate revenue back to the core JMG organization.*

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Student Outcomes: This new strategic plan sets a vision for improved, more significant programmatic outcomes that take our expectations for student success well beyond high school graduation. JMG will align its expectations for student performance outcomes to the State of Maine’s strategy, formally adopted in statute in 2019, to ensure all Mainers earn a minimum of a post-secondary credential of value.

With this commitment in place, JMG will transition away from the previous “5 for 5” outcomes, which focus primarily on high school graduation as a benchmark for success; and, we will adopt a new level of student performance outcomes, setting the expectation as high school graduation as the minimum milestone on a pathway to post-secondary education and career skill development.

NEW JMG “True North” Student Outcomes

Attainment 4-Year HS Graduation Post-Secondary Credential and/or College Degree	Attainment JMG Micro-Credential earned in High School	Engagement Full-time Engagement	Pursuit Post-Secondary Credential	Persistence Middle School, High School, College Success
When: - End of Senior Year - Within Six Years After High School Graduation	When: -JMG Senior Year	When: 12 Months After High School Graduation	When: 12 Months After High School Graduation; up to age of 24 years.	When: Annually
Audience: All students who had JMG at any time in high school (HS Graduation) All students who participate in JMG’s senior year program (Credential)	Audience: Primarily seniors; some juniors who demonstrate readiness	Audience: JMG H.S. graduates from the previous year’s Senior Roster	Audience: JMG H.S. graduates from the previous year’s Senior Roster; up to age of 24 years.	Audience: All JMG students, previous year’s roster
Benchmark: HS Graduation Rate Degree/Credential Attainment Rate (6 Years Out)	Benchmark: HS Senior Micro-Credential attainment	Benchmark: 32 hours of engagement – post-secondary, career path, military	Benchmark: Active pursuit of post-secondary credential (6 Years Out)	Benchmark: Stay-in-school rate, year-to-year

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Organization Outcomes: The JMG Board of Directors and executive team leaders will maintain a common set of expectations for organizational key performance indicators, benchmarking on a year-to-year basis throughout this five-year strategic plan. Additionally, specific key performance indicators will be developed for each organizational category on an annual basis to ensure continued advancement of key strategic priorities and outcomes. The categories for organizational key performance outcomes will include:

1. Fiscal Oversight

Standard: Each year, the executive team of JMG will successfully execute the Board Approved Budget, ensuring all targeted sources of revenue are secured to meet the expenses as planned. Quarterly updates will be provided, with timely reports and solid rationale for any anticipated deviations.

2. Organizational Development

Standard: Successfully hire, train, and onboard more new employees and launch new programs, ensuring the JMG brand is understood and positioned well. Given the expected change process needed to implement the strategic plan, organizational development will require extensive culture and team building, including greater coordination and more frequent outreach from the executive and management leadership teams to Specialists and new partners. Ultimately, this success will be measured by achieving programmatic outcomes.

3. Private Development and Fundraising

Standard: Successfully meet private fundraising goals, this includes meeting the current fiscal year's goal; and, obtaining new multi-year commitments beginning for future fiscal years. This will require exceptional stewardship of current investors, and successfully identifying and securing new funders.

4. New Business Structure Advancement

Standard: The new business structure, having been in place for three years as this new strategic plan begins, continues to evolve. The executive team members of GenUS and GenME will continue to demonstrate the value of this structure, to include both the generation of new revenue sources as well as seizing opportunities to advance innovation. The framework of the structure provides an opportunity for bolder risk taking, and an ongoing expectation will be new opportunities will continue to be developed and shared with the board to continue so that the affiliate structure can "scout" new opportunities to both support and fold back into JMG.

5. Strategic Plan

Standard: With this new Strategic Plan in place, it is recognized the Board of Directors and the JMG Executive Team is making a commitment to a comprehensive and enormous change process. On an annual basis the JMG Executive Team will be tasked with demonstrating the execution of a change process that includes board member participation, organizational advancement and culture building, and ownership of a five-year strategic plan to successfully bring the organization to 2025 and beyond.

JMG's Microbadge Model Framework

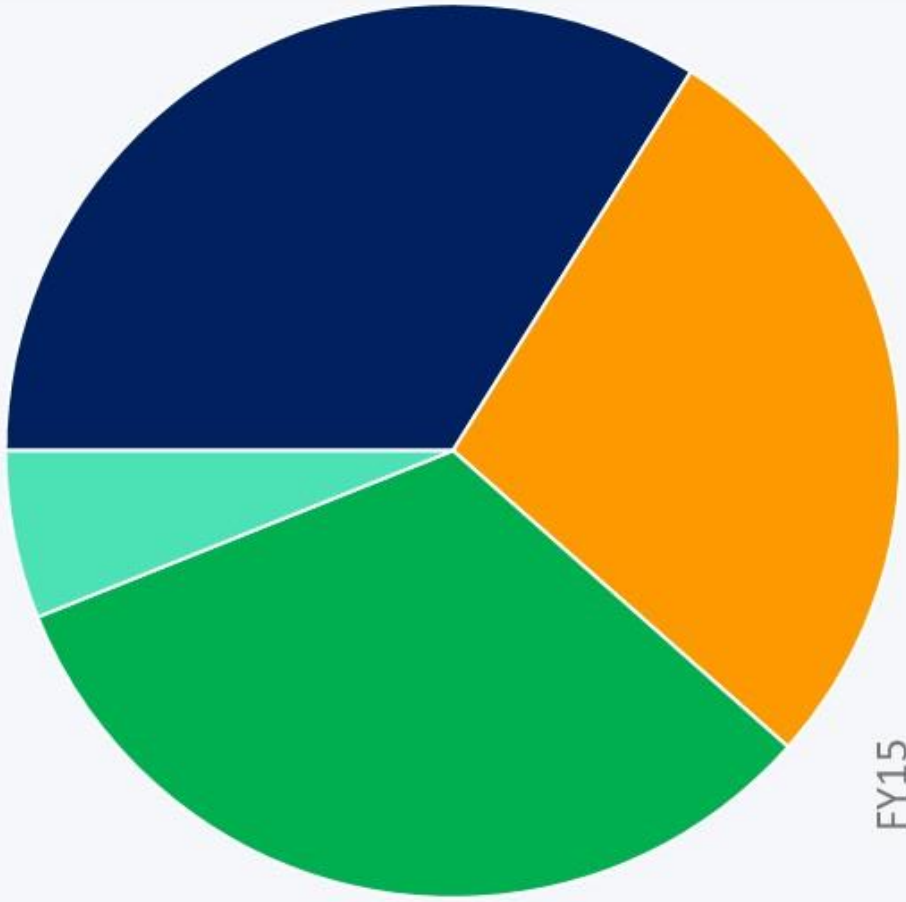
7 Competency Buckets	Middle School Exploration	High School Exposure	Senior Year Experience
	Creativity and Innovation ♦ Critical Thinking ♦ Communication ♦ Collaboration		
Flexibility & Adaptability	<p>i.e. Resiliency</p> <p>Repetition & Reinforcement</p>	<p>i.e. Public Speaking</p>	
Initiative & Self Direction			
Social & Cross-Cultural Skills			
Productivity & Accountability			
Leadership & Responsibility			
Career & College Readiness			
Information, Media, Technology			
			<p>Three-Credit College Course: Thomas College Financial Literacy</p> <p>Post-Secondary Bridging</p> <p>Career Ready</p>

REVIEW OF FIVE-YEAR ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

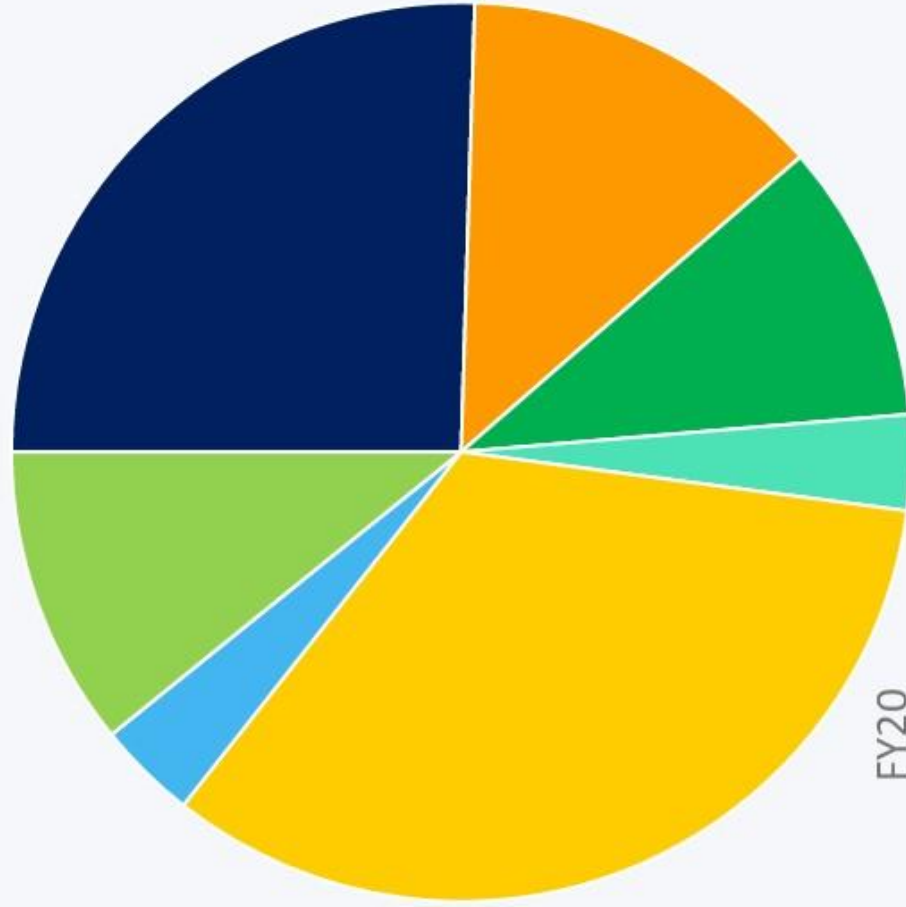
FISCAL YEAR 15	FISCAL YEAR 17	FISCAL YEAR 18	FISCAL YEAR 19	FISCAL YEAR 20
Total of 80 programs 5,150 students served annually	Total of 91 programs 6,500 students served annually	Total of 104 programs 7,000 students served annually	Total of 131 programs 9,000 students served annually	Total of 143 programs 10,000+ students served annually
Specialist starting salary: \$31,500	Specialist starting salary: \$33,000	Specialist starting salary: \$34,000	Specialist starting salary: \$35,000	Specialist starting salary: \$40,000
10-year Specialist compensation: \$39,189 Specialist highest compensation: \$56,271	10-year Specialist compensation: \$42,535 Specialist highest compensation: \$55,636	10-year Specialist compensation: \$44,535 Specialist highest compensation: \$59,636	10-year Specialist compensation: \$47,035 Specialist highest compensation: \$60,000	10-year Specialist compensation: \$53,035 Specialist highest compensation: \$65,000
Newly secured public funds: \$300,000	Newly secured public funds: \$500,010	Newly secured public funds: \$1,250,494	Newly secured public funds: \$2,476,040	Newly secured public funds: \$1,000,000
College Success: one program at Thomas College	One-time financial literacy award: \$1,500,000	State appropriation increase: \$350,000	Contribution into retirement: \$250	Payroll deduction added for NextGen 529
Total budget: \$7,630,475	Total budget: \$8,054,319	Total budget: \$8,780,437	Total budget: \$11,181,224	Total budget: \$12,341,096
Development goal: \$925,000	Development goal: \$1,683,077	Development goal: \$898,459*	Development goal: \$1,688,088	Development goal: \$1,811,268
SGF investment: \$375,000	SGF investment: \$500,000	SGF investment: \$400,000 *first year sunset of Nellie Mae grant	SGF investment: \$400,000	SGF investment: \$400,000
New Executive/Management Capacity: This was the first year of the new 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. Consultant, Carole Martin and attorney, Nelson Toner worked with subcommittee of the board and Craig and Kim to develop new business structure and three-year business plan to launch the GenUS and GenME affiliated businesses.	New Executive/Management Capacity: Elevated role of VP of Finance to Chief Operating Officer, Nate Pelsma. (note – Dena Shorey, Accounts Specialist was promoted to Accounts Manager and completed MBA degree); and, added the new position of Director of Operations to directly support team of Regional Managers.	New Executive/Management Capacity: Added position of Chief Strategy Officer for GenME, David Galin; and, filled vacant position of Vice President of Institutional Advancement with Heather Douglass. Added new Accounting Specialist and New Development Manager. Also one-year part-time position, offered in-kind by Unity Foundation, to support 25 th Gala.	New Executive/Management Capacity: Added two new Regional Managers and a Data Manager. Refined Chief Strategy Officer to provide executive oversight of JAG New England and other GenerationME initiatives. Seek to add workforce development executive capacity mid-year.	New Executive/Management Capacity: Added two new Assistant Directors of Operations, one new Regional Manager, new Assistant to Chief of Staff for more executive team capacity.

Funding Sources

FY15 and FY20



- State Appropriations
- School Contributions
- Development
- Contracted Services = GenME

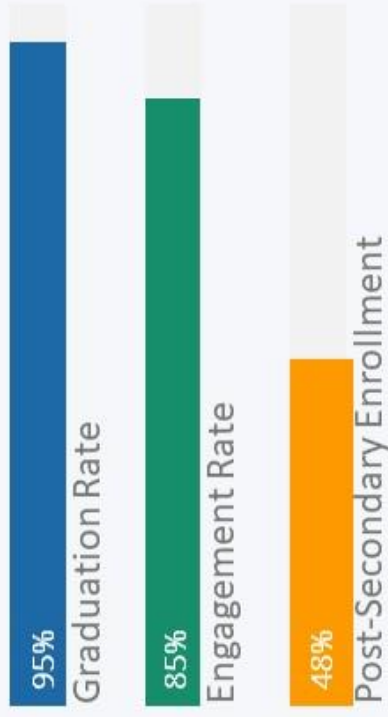


- DOL
- DHHS
- Gala and Endowment

Outcomes

FY15 and FY19

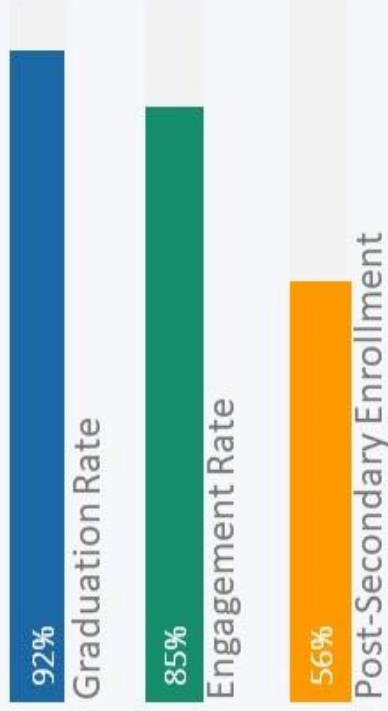
FY15



JMG students earn 14% more in wages

According to a Maine Department of Labor study, six years after high school graduation, JMG students are earning 14\$ more than all other students of the same age.

FY19



Significant wage growth for JMG graduates

Despite barriers, JMG graduates experienced significant, consistent, and sustained wage increases after high school, more than 10 times the rate of inflation.



Higher high school graduation rates for students with disabilities

AIR found that students with disabilities who enroll in JMG are 17 percentage points more likely to graduate high school than their peers with disabilities not enrolled in JMG.

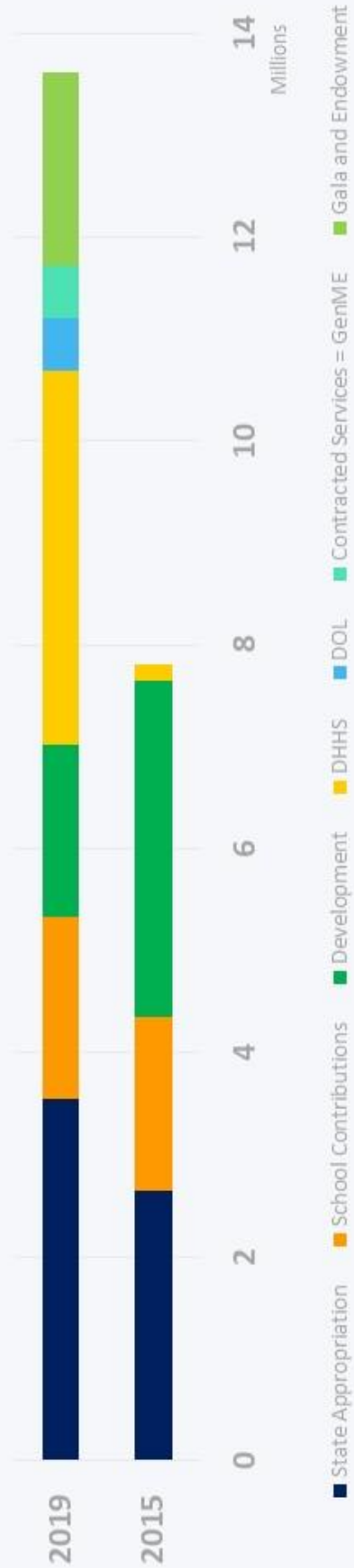


JMG College Success Program supports persistence

Two-thirds of students in the JMG College Success Program who enrolled in college between 2015-2017 are still enrolled today, and 85% are still in college or working full-time.

Comparison

FY15 and FY19



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS



2018 Grant Report

Dear Friends of the Harold Alfond Foundation:

We are pleased to share this Grant Report summarizing our work in 2018 and offering guidance on future grantmaking.¹ For updates throughout the year and additional information on the Foundation's work, please visit our website at www.haroldalfondfoundation.org.

Financial Data and 2018 Grant Funding

Since Harold Alfond's passing over 11 years ago, the Foundation has awarded \$340 million in grant support, primarily in Maine.

After payment of all grants and operating expenses in 2018, the Foundation closed the calendar year with assets north of \$819 million, down significantly from \$864 million at the year-end of 2017. This decrease was a result of two factors: (1) \$41.3 million in grant spending; and (2) no growth in the value of our investment portfolio.

In 2018, the Foundation's grants totaling \$41.3 million were paid to 49 organizations, with spending (on a dollar basis) highly concentrated among 10 recipients. Geographically, over 95% of the Foundation's funding was paid to Maine institutions. Consistent with Harold Alfond's long-time preference for supporting Central Maine communities, over 40% of funding was awarded in this region of the state. Once again, the Foundation invested significant dollars (nearly \$14.5 million) in Waterville.

As noted in previous reports, one might hope Foundation investments will increase lock-step every year. But markets are volatile, and the Foundation, like all investors, will experience negative or flat returns in some years. Such a year was 2018, as a dramatic fourth quarter market decline, triggered by Federal Reserve interest rate tightening, erased our portfolio's gains for the year. Even so, the Foundation's portfolio experienced a negative return of less than one-half of one percent on the year (0.4%). As this report is published, investment returns have surged, and our assets have recovered and now exceed the 2017 year-end value.

¹ Committed to operating in a transparent manner, the Foundation is sharing this letter as one of several means by which we distribute information about our grantmaking and other significant financial, operational, and programmatic activities.

Future Grant Commitments

As of January 1, 2019, the Foundation had binding grant commitments—money payable to charitable institutions for projects in *future* years—of over \$113 million, up significantly from the \$62 million and \$54 million reported a year and two years ago, respectively.² The 2019 increase (on a net basis) is the result of several new grant commitments, many of which are described in this report.

Grant spending for 2019 is expected to equal or exceed \$47 million. Most of this amount has already been committed and will be paid to Maine institutions.

Grantmaking Mission, Values, and Areas of Interest

Over the past year, the Foundation held a series of Board and staff conversations geared toward reflecting on and refining the Foundation’s grantmaking preferences and strategy. Informing this process, like so much of what we do, were the philanthropic principles and pattern of giving of Harold Alfond, as well as the state’s evolving needs and opportunities. Through this work, the Foundation reaffirmed a grantmaking approach and philosophy that continues to favor high-quality leadership, entrepreneurial and creative solutions, teamwork, and “skin in the game” on the part of our grantees. The Foundation’s mission and values, restated as part of our planning process, are shared in Footnote 3 below and, going forward, will continue to guide how we think about grant opportunities.³

Present Thinking and Future Direction

In his semiannual testimony to the United States Senate, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell described the U.S. economy as healthy in many ways but hindered by multiple “longer-run challenges,” such as low labor force participation among prime-age men and women,

² The Foundation’s \$113 million of unpaid grant commitments *does not* include (1) the Foundation’s long-term commitment to the Harold Alfond College Challenge or (2) the Foundation’s commitment to backstop MaineGeneral Medical Center’s “Debt Service Reserve Fund” in the approximate amount of \$23 million (see details in the 2011 and 2012 Grant Reports). It *does* include the Foundation’s remaining commitment to fund the Alfond Leaders Student Debt Reduction Program.

³ Mission:

The Harold Alfond Foundation honors and promotes the values of its founder through transformative investments for the benefit of Maine in education, health care, and youth and community development.

Values:

We value and invest in:

- *Young People* — they are the future of Maine, and we collectively owe them healthy communities, high-quality educational opportunities, and the chance to learn and grow through teamwork and athletics;
- *Leaders and Entrepreneurs* — the health and well-being of our communities rely on addressing pressing needs with strong leadership, creative and entrepreneurial solutions, and teamwork and partnership;
- *Opportunities* — we look to find new and bold opportunities, where our investments can make a difference, may support the “underdog,” and promote healthy competition and “skin in the game;”
- *High-Quality Education and Health Care* — an educated and healthy citizenry is vital for the future success of Maine, well-being of our communities, and strength of our economy. Those who live, work, play, and grow in our state deserve the very best educational institutions and health care services.

stagnant incomes for many families, and a lack of upward economic mobility among people with lower incomes.⁴

As the Harold Alfond Foundation surveys the national landscape, we see an economy in transition. We see that small towns and rural areas of the country are struggling with the challenges of global competition and innovation of an accelerating data and technology driven economy. Given the Foundation's interest in higher education, three statistics are emblematic of this transition and the challenges it has created.

First, there is persuasive evidence that prime-age workers in the bottom 60% of income have had no real inflation-adjusted income growth since 1980.⁵

Second, while higher education correlates strongly with higher income, 60% of Americans have not had the benefit of completing higher education in *any* form;⁶ and,

Third, 60% or more of America's future jobs will require our citizens to have higher education in *some* form and with content that imparts skills needed in our global economy.⁷

That 60% of our citizens are at risk of being left behind poses enormous cultural, economic, and political risks and challenges. In our globally competitive world, with the emergence of artificial intelligence and automation, we see especially foreboding challenges facing our nation's middle class, and less-advantaged youth and young adults, in particular.

These risks and challenges are particularly acute in Maine, a state with large rural areas, a stagnant birth rate, aging population, and a declining skilled workforce. In past reports,⁸ we have described this combination as a "perfect storm" and declared our interest in grants which would:

- Enhance undergraduate and graduate education in the business and STEM fields;
- Incentivize more skilled workers to stay in the state or to move here;
- Support initiatives designed to accelerate the creation or growth of businesses in focused sectors of Maine's economy; and,
- Increase post-secondary educational attainment of all citizens from all walks of life.

⁴ "Semiannual Monetary Policy Report to the Congress." Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell. February 26, 2019. <https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/testimony/powell20190226a.htm>

⁵ "Our Biggest Economic, Social, and Political Issue." October 23, 2017. Ray Dalio. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/our-biggest-economic-social-political-issue-two-economies-ray-dalio/>

⁶ "A Stronger Nation." 2019. Lumina Foundation. <http://strongernation.luminafoundation.org/report/2019/#nation>

⁷ "Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements Through 2020." June 26, 2013. Georgetown University. https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Recovery2020.ES_Web_.pdf

⁸ Two examples are the 2017 Grant Report (pages 2-3) and the 2013 Grant Report (page 3). Both reports are available at <http://www.haroldalfondfoundation.org/history.htm>

Since then, a 2018 report on the Maine economy has shed further light on our state's demographic and workforce challenges. The report references a survey of Maine business and education leaders (by Market Decisions Research) finding that, all across Maine's economy, employers are having trouble finding skilled workers, such as technical and professional workers.⁹ In addition, the study provided compelling evidence of the major need for "middle-skill" workers, who require more than a high school education, but not a four-year or even a two-year degree, yet are so important to keeping the wheels of our economy turning. Thousands of jobs are being posted, many going unfilled.

With this report in mind, we have expanded and refined our list of objectives to include grant outcomes which:

- Better align academic curricula with the state's workforce needs;
- Increase higher education access, opportunity, and training for unemployed and under-employed workers by offering shorter term, non-credit, diverse, non-traditional education linked to employer needs at lower cost; and,
- Support education initiatives which build workforce skills required by the fastest-growing segments of the global economy, such as computer technology and the life sciences.

The Foundation now has some \$40 million committed and payable to higher education and other institutions over the next decade to promote workforce and economic development in Maine. We look to commit more. In the pages ahead, we review the Foundation's work in 2018 and its emphasis on the workforce and economic development challenges and opportunities described above.

Harold Alfond College Challenge

Established in 2008, the Foundation's signature grant program, the Harold Alfond College Challenge, awards a \$500 grant to every Maine resident baby for education beyond high school. This program represents a long-term strategy by the Foundation to increase aspirations and access to higher education among Maine's young people and to build our future workforce. In partnership with the Alfond Scholarship Foundation (ASF) and Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), the program has four goals:

- 1) To increase awareness of the \$500 grant so that Maine families know they have it and why it matters ("Awareness");

⁹ "Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy." December, 2018. Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Maine Development Foundation, and Educate Maine. https://www.mdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/MMW_2018_FullReportsml.pdf

coordinating hub of Maine's graduate programs and tasked with building and leveraging relationships in the business, legal, and public service communities.

In the spirit of Harold Alfond, our \$7.5 million Maine Center grant is a challenge grant, with each payment tied to tangible progress and performance. We look forward to paying every cent!

We hear from many of our education partners on the front lines that the social, emotional, and financial barriers facing today's young people are numerous and increasingly complex, threatening to derail even the most resilient students. Since its founding in 1993, **Jobs for Maine's Graduates** has helped 50,000 young Mainers persist on the path from education to employment. JMG has received our support in years past. And does it ever deliver!

So, in 2018, we decided to invest still further by committing \$4.5 million, payable over four years, to support JMG's endowment and expand the organization's "College Success" program. This program ensures that young students have the support they need to prepare for, enroll in, and ultimately succeed at college and in the workplace. With our support, the program now extends to all of Maine's public colleges and universities (in addition to Thomas College¹²) and includes four new "Pathway Navigators" to help JMG alumni around the state get back in pursuit of a degree or credential of value.

In last year's report, we said that no other organization in America is as good at increasing high school graduation rates, college retention, and degree attainment among youth as JMG. We love being right about our grantees—especially when we are right year after year. In 2018, JMG was named—for the 23rd consecutive time—"Best Program in the Nation" by its national affiliate, Jobs for America's Graduates. Our congratulations and thanks to JMG's outstanding leadership, Craig Larrabee and Kim Lipp, and to all JMG Specialists and staff for their commitment to Maine's kids. Not only does every young person in Maine deserve the opportunity to reach his or her full potential—our state's future depends on it.

Health Care

Seven percent of the Foundation's grant spending in 2018 was directed to Health Care. While a modest percentage of the overall grant budget, the Foundation's Health Care grants are helping to improve the health and wellness of Mainers, especially those affected by cancer.

At over 3,000 deaths a year, cancer is the leading cause of death in Maine. Studies by the Center for Disease Control and National Cancer Institute suggest that rural cancer patients experience the worst survival rates, because they do not have ready access to advanced therapies, such as clinical trials. In Maine, where 61% of the population live in rural areas,

¹² The Foundation awarded grant funds to Thomas in 2015 to support student retention efforts, which included a pilot of the JMG College Success model.



Board of Trustees
Gregory W. Powell, Chairman
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Barry Mills

September 19, 2019

Bruce Wagner, CEO
Finance Authority of Maine
5 Community Drive
Augusta, ME 04332

Dear Bruce:

On behalf of the Harold Alfond Foundation, we would like to commend the Governor and your team for their work in developing a strategic economic development plan for Maine. In follow-up to discussions you and I have had, this letter is to offer four policy suggestions for consideration in your plan. These suggestions are borne out of our experience as Maine's largest philanthropic foundation and are aligned with the Task Force's three stated goals to raise the productivity of Maine's workers, increase their income, and grow the workforce. As CEO of FAME, you are familiar with many of the Foundation's investments, and we are most grateful for your leadership and partnership. Yet some Task Force members may not be so deeply versed, so please excuse the information detailed below of which you are already aware.

The **Harold Alfond College Challenge**, the Foundation's signature grant program, awards \$500 to every Maine resident baby for that child's education beyond high school. To date, the Foundation has awarded over \$51 million to nearly 103,000 Maine children. Families of some 20% of these children have in turn contributed over \$80 million of their own funds to their children's NextGen 529 college savings accounts. And FAME, a key partner in administering the program, has contributed an additional \$12 million to family accounts through a matching program to incentivize higher education savings. In total, nearly \$144 million has been invested for the future higher education of Maine children.

Because the \$500 grant became automatic for all Maine newborns in January of 2013, we now have entire classrooms of kindergarten students statewide who have the Alfond grant as a starting place to save for higher education. However, one of the main goals of the College Challenge – family savings through Maine's NextGen Program - has not been realized: almost 80% of those born since 2013 do not have NextGen 529 college savings account. This suggests a bold policy proposal for your consideration:

***Policy Suggestion #1** – Attract young families to Maine and solidify Maine’s national leadership in college savings rates by opening and contributing to a NextGen 520 college savings account for every child born in or moving to Maine.*

Maine leads the nation in promoting college savings. And across the nation, other states and municipalities are following our lead. Imagine what it would mean to the legacy of the Governor’s economic plan and to the achievements of this Task Force if every child born in Maine were to have a NextGen 529 account. Such an accomplishment would lead to exponentially higher college-going and completion rates, a more educated workforce, and a stronger economy. In partnership with policy goals #2 and #3 below, this strategy could encourage a legion of young families to move to Maine. While ambitious, we believe this goal would not only send a powerful and positive message nationwide about Maine, but could be largely engineered through strategic engagement with the public education system; in particular, by implementing an initiative focused on enrolling students in NextGen as they enter kindergarten and perhaps other grades. Kindergarten is an especially propitious time to increase NextGen account openings as it is not only an education milestone, but also when parents are already completing paperwork with much of the same information required to open 529 accounts.

Because 529 accounts can be used for a variety of post-secondary education options, not just traditional college, we believe that this policy goal could help make significant progress towards the Task Force’s first two stated goals, i.e. to increase Maine workers’ productivity and their incomes.

The **Alfond Leaders Student Debt Program** is an initiative that helps address Maine’s STEM workforce shortage by incentivizing STEM workers to live and work in Maine. It does this through student debt reduction awards of 50% of a worker’s student debt, up to \$60,000 per person. Through the program’s first two years of operations, 92 Maine STEM workers were selected as ‘Alfond Leaders’. They live in 14 Maine counties and are employed by 65 Maine companies, ranging from large publicly-traded firms to small start-ups. All 92 are living and working here in Maine, contributing to our economy with an estimated “economic footprint” of over \$50,000,000 annually, a figure which takes into account their estimated earnings, the business sales generating those earnings, and the indirect impact of those earnings and sales as they flow through the Maine economy.

However, even though student debt reduction payments go directly to the lenders, Leaders have to pay taxes on these debt payments as if the awards were their income. This weakens the program’s ability to attract and retain professionals in Maine and runs counter to the goals of the program. In short, it diminishes what otherwise would be a very strong program, and one unique to Maine. As these are the only grants the Foundation makes that are taxable, it also is a strong disincentive to the Foundation to expand the program to more STEM professionals. These challenges suggest two policy changes for your consideration:

***Policy Suggestion #2** – Attract and retain talented professionals in Maine by exempting from state income taxes any student debt relief made by philanthropic organizations.*

This change would eliminate the disincentive that current state tax law presents for recruiting and retaining skilled workers in Maine generally and Alfond Leaders in particular. It would be a meaningful step forward with no cost to our state. That said, Leaders still owe federal income tax on their awards. This suggests another change that would put Maine at a competitive advantage nationwide for attracting STEM professionals from around the country.

***Policy Suggestion #3** – Provide a first-in-the-nation state tax credit for federal income tax liability related to philanthropic student debt relief.*

As far as we know, Maine would be the only state to offer such a credit. Along with the Opportunity Maine Tax Credit, we believe these two policy changes could give Maine a strategic edge in the fight to recruit young talented workers to the state, and would contribute significantly to the Task Force's third goal to grow Maine's labor force.

Finally, since 2011, the Foundation has granted over \$15 million to **the Maine Community College System (MCCS) and Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG)**, separately but for related reasons. Both organizations are at the forefront of your Task Force's goal to better align workers' skills with employers' needs. They are also partners in improving the college retention and success rates for Maine students. The Foundation recently granted \$3.6 million to MCCS's emerging short-term credentialing initiative; this initiative develops short-term occupational training programs in areas like nursing and welding. During the three years of the grant, MCCS will serve 300 students. The Foundation has also recently granted JMG almost \$6 million to aid in its development of a continuum of support from middle school and high school to college and the workforce. JMG's support system not only helps youth graduate high school and college but gives them critical life and career skills. The similar objectives and collaborative spirit of the two organizations suggest a final policy idea for your consideration.

***Policy Suggestion #4** – Direct MCCS and JMG to expand and hasten their development of short-term workforce credentials and micro-badges that respond to the immediate needs of Maine employers, replete with both technical and soft skills, and with a full suite of student success support services, including financial aid.*

We offer these policy suggestions in the spirit of the Foundation's long-standing partnership with Maine state government and with FAME in particular. On behalf of the Trustees of the Harold Alfond Foundation, thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts with your Task Force, and please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Sincerely,



Gregory W. Powell
Chairman of the Board

cc: Dave Daigler, Craig Larrabee, John Fitzsimmons
GWP/mad



Dear JMG Supporters,

For twenty-five years, JMG has helped at-risk youth stay in school and enter the workforce with the skills and self-confidence that employers demand. JMG's authentic, cohort-based approach has given 50,000 youth a reason to stay connected at a critical time in their lives. Their model supports deep, competency-based skill building that is cost-effective today, and will pay enormous dividends tomorrow as we avoid the financial and opportunity costs that arise when youth disengage from school and work.

And it works: 92% of JMG seniors graduate from high school; 85% of JMG graduates experience positive outcomes one year after graduation in the form of school, employment, or the military; and six years later, JMG graduates are earning 14% more than their peers.

That JMG can so clearly point to positive outcomes demonstrates the deep commitment that JMG has to data and accountability. In the high-stakes of working with at-risk youth, anecdotes do not cut it. We must objectively evaluate what works and what doesn't. JMG's data-driven culture and their willingness to use data to make changes is a key component of their success in helping youth overcome significant obstacles.

What about the next twenty-five years? Now more than ever, JMG's role is critical, both in the hard work of preparing youth for life on their own, and in the broader effort of workforce development. To grow Maine's economy tomorrow, we need to ensure that today's young people enter the Maine workforce with relevant skills, talent, and motivation. Research tells us that trying to bring youth back into the fold after they have disengaged is expensive and fraught with failure. JMG is well-positioned to use their school-based intervention model to keep youth connected and to play an outsized role in addressing Maine's workforce challenges.

One of the primary ways JMG will help Maine address its future workforce needs is with their expansion to college campuses. JMG will now be confronting some of the most critical workforce development challenges of our time by working with college-going young people to ensure they earn credentials of value and do not drop out. JMG is the right organization at the right time to take on this problem, and I am proud to join you in celebrating JMG's success of the last twenty-five years and offer best wishes for the next twenty-five.

Sincerely,

John Dorrer

BIO

John Dorrer is an economist with over 30 years of experience in workforce development. John's work has focused on the study of labor markets and the efficacy of human capital investments. In Maine and nationally, he has formulated research strategies examining the dynamic relationship between skill requirements and learning objectives, and developed collaborative strategies to more effectively align education and training with workplace demands.



FOR THE PAST 25 YEARS, JMG HAS BEEN DEDICATED TO SERVING MAINE STUDENTS WITH BARRIERS TO SUCCESS.

JMG is Maine's only education-based, statewide nonprofit offering a continuum of support to students from middle school, through high school graduation, throughout post-secondary education, and onto successful career pathways.

Here are some startling facts:

Less than **80%** of economically disadvantaged students in Maine *graduate* high school¹; and,

Just **20%** have a college degree within *six years* of high school graduation.²

17% of Maine students with disabilities *drop out* of high school³; and,

Only **10%** have a college degree *six years later*.⁴

Less than **3%** percent of Maine youth from the *foster care system* graduate college.⁵

The vision of JMG is to be a champion for all Maine students who face barriers to education. JMG vigilantly tracks and responds to the outcomes of our programs, always keeping students at the center of the educational process. JMG's successes can clearly be illustrated through measurable, documented performance outcomes. **JMG is Maine's most successful and only statewide high school dropout prevention program.** 92% of JMG high school students graduate high school, compared to 87% for all Maine students. 87% of JMG graduates are in college, working, or in the military one year after high school.

During the past year, **four new research evaluations** have been performed to further analyze the impact of the JMG program. This research, conducted by independent evaluators, provides new insights into the JMG model. The findings are both affirming and a call to action. They show definitively that the JMG model is working, but that more must be done to help disadvantaged students succeed in college and careers.

Research Project #1: Significant wage growth increase for JMG graduates

Stepwise Data Research, an economic research firm located in Yarmouth, Maine, in partnership with the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), analyzed wage records for 1,500 JMG students who graduated high school in 1998, 2009, or 2010. JMG students in this study began with an average of six documented barriers to success. **Despite these barriers, the research showed that JMG graduates experienced significant, consistent, and sustained wage increases after high school.** Average wages for JMG students who graduated high school in 2010 doubled in the six years after their graduation (+107%).

¹ Compared to 95% of non-economically disadvantaged students; source: Maine Department of Education Data Warehouse; 4 year graduation rate for the 2017 cohort

² Compared to 46% of non-economically disadvantaged students; source: National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker for High Schools Demographic Report, 2017

³ Compared to 10% of non-disabled students; source: American Institutes for Research, May 2018

⁴ Compared to 43% of non-disabled students; source: National Student Clearinghouse Student Tracker for High Schools Demographic Report, 2017

⁵ Burt S. Barnow, Amy Buck, Kirk O'Brien, Peter Pecora, Mei Ling Ellis, and Eric Steiner, "Effective Services for Improving Education And Employment Outcomes For Children And Alumni Of Foster Care Service: Correlates And Educational And Employment Outcomes," Child & Family Social Work (2013): 159.

Average wages for 2009 graduates increased by 137% over six years. For both classes, this represented average annual wage increases of over 18% or \$2,300 per year, more than 10 times the rate of inflation.

Research Project #2: Higher high school graduation rates for students with disabilities

American Institute for Research (AIR), a global research firm located in Washington D.C., evaluated the effect of JMG programming on high school graduation rates for Maine students with disabilities. The study was commissioned by the Maine Department of Labor as part of a federal grant they received for their vocational rehabilitation services. AIR used a dataset prepared by the Maine Department of Education that identified over 27,000 students with disabilities who first enrolled in high school between 2005 and 2013 and followed them during their four years of high school. **The results showed that students with disabilities who enroll in JMG are 17 percentage points more likely to graduate high school than their peers with disabilities not enrolled in JMG.** These results were statistically significant at the 99% level.

Research Project #3: The JMG College Success Program supports persistence

Stepwise Data Research analyzed data from three cohorts of students who enrolled in one of ten JMG College Success programs at Maine's public university and community college campuses between 2015-2017. These students were former JMG high school students, youth who had been in the foster care system, or students who had recently received their GED or HiSET diploma. **Two-thirds of students in the JMG College Success Program who enrolled in college between 2015-2017 are still in college today, and 85% are still in college or working full-time.**

Research Project #4: Predictors of college success for JMG students

The college-going and college-completing rates for students from three JMG graduating classes, 1998, 2009, and 2010 were analyzed by Stepwise Data Research. These college success rates were analyzed with data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), which contains semester-by-semester enrollment and graduation records for 97% of U.S. Title IV, degree-granting institutions. The NSC outcome data was then matched with student-level socio-economic data from JMG. **The most important characteristics that predict a JMG student will earn a college degree are their academic performance in high school, the presence of a special-education disability, and the education level of his/her parents.**

JMG is using this new research to refine its learning strategies, programming, and organizational structure to better support the needs of these youth, and in doing so not only help them, **but also break the cycle of generational poverty by supporting academic success, good decision making, and ensuring job preparation and successful connections to career pathways.** For example, JMG and Maine's Department of Health and Human Services have formed a close collaboration to ensure economically disadvantaged and foster care youth have an opportunity to enroll in JMG programs statewide. All JMG Specialists have received Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) professional development.

Today, JMG is reaffirming its commitment to Maine's youth, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged, with a disability, or in foster care. In summary, these research findings are both affirming and a call to action for new strategies to support disadvantaged Maine students. Data evaluation and research have been and will continue to be central to JMG's mission and program.

60%
by 2025

Coalition Members

(As of 10/25/17)

Steering Committee

Alfond Scholarship
Foundation
Bath Iron Works
Coastal Enterprises Inc.
Educate Maine
Emanuel and Pauline A. Lerner
Foundation
Finance Authority of Maine
Great Schools Partnership
Husson University
John T. Gorman Foundation
Live and Work in Maine
Maine Adult Education
Maine Community College
System
Maine Development Foundation
Maine Maritime Academy
Maine Municipal Association
Maine's Pre-K to 12 System
Partners
Maine State Chamber of
Commerce
Maine State Workforce Board
Maine College Access
Network
Maine Community Foundation
MELMAC Education Foundation
New Ventures Maine
Thomas College
University of Maine System
University of New England

Strong Foundations

Alfond Scholarship
Foundation
Educare
Maine Children's Alliance
Maine Department of
Education
Maine Early Learning
Investment Group
Ready Nation/Council for
a Strong America
United Way of Greater Portland



What is MaineSpark?

MaineSpark is a 10-year commitment from Maine's most influential education and business leaders to work together to ensure that Maine's workforce is productive and competitive. MaineSpark organizations connect people with the education, training, jobs, programs and resources needed to thrive in Maine's robust and changing economy. MaineSpark is powered by a coalition of organizations—schools and universities, nonprofits and foundations, government agencies and businesses—with a common goal: **by 2025, 60% of Mainers will hold education and workforce credentials that position Maine and its families for success.**

MaineSpark comprises four tracks, each offering and supporting programs and services for Mainers at all stages of life to reach their education and career goals.

Who is MaineSpark for?

MaineSpark links people in every stage of life, from every economic and educational background, and from every corner of the state and beyond who are pursuing their goals in this great state with member organizations that provide support and services. Whether you are preparing a child for a bright future, getting ready to start work toward or complete a degree or credential, looking to switch careers, or considering a move to Maine, MaineSpark can connect you to a network of beneficial resources.

Why is MaineSpark important?

Maine has jobs—excellent jobs in growing industries. And Maine has workers—hard workers with dreams to fulfill. By working together, MaineSpark's team of organizations and services will best serve Mainers who are aspiring to gain access to the skills, knowledge and information needed to land the jobs they want.

MaineSpark's mission: to shed light on the current employee/employer mismatch; to close the gap between worker skills and industry needs by connecting people with programs that provide training and education resources and services; to increase the overall educational attainment of Maine's people; and to broaden the understanding that Maine is a state full of opportunities and a great place to live and work.

To connect with
MaineSpark, or to sign up
for updates and news,
go to: MaineSpark.me

Press Contact

Ed Cervone
connect@MaineSpark.me

Coalition Members

(As of 10/25/17)

Future Success

Cianbro
Destination Occupation
Educate Maine
Emanuel and Pauline A. Lerner
Foundation
Finance Authority of Maine
GEAR UP
Island Institute
Jobs for Maine's Graduates
Maine Adult Education
Maine Association of Chamber
of Commerce Executives
Maine Community College
System
Maine Department of
Education
Maine Development Foundation
Maine Education Opportunity
Center
Maine Principals' Association
Maine School Management
Association
Maine State Chamber of
Commerce
Maine's Career & Technical
Education System
Maine College Access
Network
MELMAC Education Foundation
New Ventures Maine
University of Maine System

Adult Promise

Educate Maine
Finance Authority of Maine
Goodwill Northern
New England
Husson University
John T. Gorman Foundation
Maine Adult Education
Maine Community College
System
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Development Foundation
Maine Department of Labor
Maine Educational Opportunity
Center
New Ventures Maine
University of Maine System

New Opportunities

Live and Work in Maine
Project>Login (Educate Maine)

To connect with
MaineSpark, or to sign up
for updates and news,
go to: MaineSpark.me



Tracks

MaineSpark's coalition members offer and support a wide range of services and resources aligned with the goals of its four tracks. Below are some highlights of the innovative programs offered through its coalition members.



Strong Foundations, for children
from birth through Sixth Grade

Strong Foundations wants all Maine's children to begin life with good educational opportunities and plenty of hope. MaineSpark can connect children to their futures through programs like the Harold Alfond College Challenge, which gives every Maine baby a \$500 start toward higher education costs, and Educare, a state-of-the-art early learning facility for low-income children in Central Maine.



Future Success, for students from Sixth Grade
through post-secondary education

Future Success prepares Maine's youth for college, trainings and career options so they are ready to launch successful adult lives. MaineSpark can connect young people to their futures through programs like JMG's Drop Out Recovery program, which counsels youth back into quality jobs and post-secondary enrollment, and the Island Institute's Island Fellows Program, which places recent college graduates in professional positions in Maine's year-round island communities.



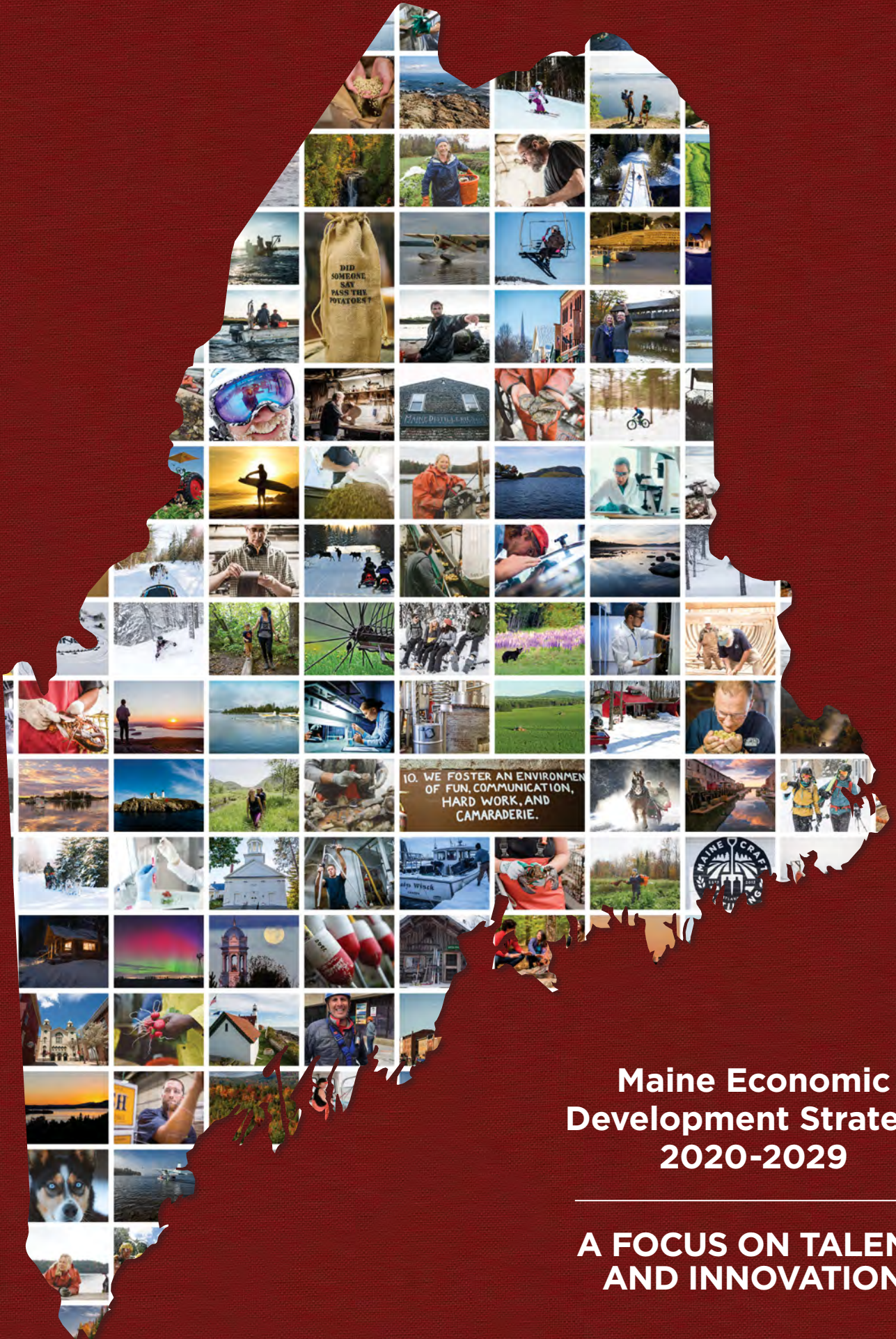
Adult Promise, for those returning to
complete degrees or change careers

Adult Promise offers information, support and resources for those looking to start or finish a degree or certificate, change careers or learn a new trade or skill. MaineSpark can connect Mainers to their futures through programs like the Finance Authority of Maine Lifetime Learning Kit, providing tools that adults need to get ready (and pay) for education beyond high school; and through the University of Maine System's Adult Degree Completion Scholarship.



New Opportunities, for professionals looking
to move or begin new careers in Maine

New Opportunities supports graduates of Maine colleges and other programs who would like to stay and build their careers here, and professionals looking to begin a new chapter of life in Maine. MaineSpark can connect new and potential residents with the resources they need to thrive through programs like Live + Work in Maine's interactive job board, and the Opportunity Maine Tax Credit student loan reimbursement for college graduates.



**Maine Economic
Development Strategy
2020-2029**

**A FOCUS ON TALENT
AND INNOVATION**

STRATEGY A

grow local talent

In the 21st century, economic development is about investing in people and their communities. In order to grow, communities need to attract and retain talent.

Talent is the new currency. Maine is in competition with other states and the world to build and retain a creative and productive workforce, to attract knowledge industries, and to have a well-educated public that can make wise civic and policy decisions.

There are long and short-run aspects to talent building. For the long run, we will invest in our early care and pre-K system on par with how we invest in the rest of our educational system. We will prepare our children entering kindergarten to succeed. We will prepare all students to achieve the competencies needed to find a place in the future economy.

In the short run, we will help adult workers, who are now (or could be) in the workforce, to upgrade their skills so that they can qualify for better-paying jobs — and to simply keep their own jobs, which will require new skills as technology changes. Currently, 190,000 Maine adults (20%) have begun, but have not yet completed, a postsecondary program of study. Over a third of students at the University of Maine and the Community College Systems are over 25 years old. The education system must be dynamic and available to workers on short notice in response to new job opportunities. Maine unions will have a critical role in identifying opportunities, providing training, and modeling well-established and successful apprenticeship programs.

In 2018, 44% of Maine’s workforce has a work credential that goes beyond a high school diploma.¹³ A “credential” is a two or four-year college degree, or a license in the trades, or a professional certificate. The goal set in Maine law to increase this proportion to 60% by 2025.¹⁴

THE MAINE EDUCATION FUNNEL EFFECT AND ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

ENTERING 9TH GRADE	100%	100%	100%
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES	79%	95%	87%
ENROLL IN COLLEGE 2017	40%	71%	55%
RETURN FOR 2ND YEAR OF COLLEGE (2018)	28%	62%	46%
EARN A 2- OR 4-YEAR DEGREE	16%	44%	30%
	ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	NON-ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED	ALL MAINE STUDENTS

To better prepare Maine students, we must specifically look to help children from economically-disadvantaged¹⁵ backgrounds to achieve success. Almost half of Maine public school students (47%) are disadvantaged. By the time of their first nationally-benchmarked proficiency tests in 4th grade, these children display proficiency in

reading and mathematics at half of the rate of the other students. Going forward, they are less likely to graduate from high school or earn a post-secondary credential. This is why investing in quality early learning is so critical; it ensures that all students enter kindergarten ready to learn and gives every child a good chance for success.

¹³ Page 22, Education Indicators for Maine, 2018, Educate Maine.

¹⁴ Workforce Board, Title 26, Chapter 25

¹⁵ Disadvantaged is defined as below 185% of poverty level, which is the criteria used for the free and reduced-price lunch program

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL INCLUDE:

ACTION A1:

Maine's Career Exploration

Research shows that heightened economic mobility for children is a result of “the connectedness, the day-to-day interactions, the diversity of people and experiences, the exposure to others, and sense of belonging.”¹⁶ We will use our neighborhood businesses and employers to enrich student learning.

Maine Career Exploration will start while students are in kindergarten and work with students until one year following graduation from high school. The mission of the program is to connect students and their families to the Maine economy, and to grow our own talent.

The program will work with students on an age-appropriate level to create valuable and rewarding connections to their community, and to explore real opportunities that fit within their individual areas of interest. Workforce skill development will start at a young age and will grow until 100% of Maine students have a 6 month paid internship between their junior year of high school and one year post high school graduation. Paid internships will engage all youth and remove the need to make a choice between needing to earn money and career exploration. Internships will also help establish professional networks for all students, thus expanding their economic mobility.

Elementary age students will be exposed to robotics, technology, and transferable skills that can be utilized in the workforce and create upward mobility. Middle School age students will explore areas of interest that build on their personal strengths and also align to marketplace opportunities. High school students will have opportunities for job shadowing and direct interaction with business, non profits and government (including public safety) to see what is available

Parental engagement will be part of the student experience; this will enable families to learn and grow together.

Students' ability to explore local career opportunities and build community networks is critical to retaining young people in Maine and strengthening civic responsibility.

Current programs such as Junior Achievement and Jobs for Maine Graduates will be key partners in providing support and wrap-around services for students who need additional coaching and soft-skills development.

Maine has several internship/apprenticeship resource sites available:

- Maine Job Link Career Center (Maine Department of Labor)
- Hospitality Maine
- Project Login
- LiveWorkMaine
- Farm Labor Link Network (Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry)

Despite these resources, interns report that it is difficult to understand the apprenticeship/internship system in Maine, and to find listings. The same challenge is faced by new Mainers, Native Americans, low-income students, and minorities. A simplified and well-publicized portal for students is needed.

ACTION A2:

Web Portal matching students and employers

Maine has one website that lists apprenticeship opportunities¹⁷ and two that list internships.¹⁸ Potential interns report that it is difficult to understand the apprenticeship/internship system in Maine, and to find listings.¹⁹ A simplified and well-publicized system will be created. This will be particularly helpful to students who lack access to the informal job market of family and friends, and who need to earn income as part of any experience — students such as new Mainers, African Americans, Native Americans, low-income students, and minorities.

CareerWise Colorado is a successful website for apprenticeships that could serve as a model for Maine. Maine will research best practices from CareerWise and elsewhere in creating its portal.

ACTION A3:

Align curriculums with digital economy skills

The Department of Education is now in the process of reviewing Maine's Career and Educational Development Standards and its Mathematics Standards.²⁰ These identify skills and knowledge that should be instilled from pre-K through high school graduation in the areas of workplace skills and career knowledge, as well as digital skills. Maine's curriculum will better reflect the

¹⁶ Richard Florida, “Kids Raised in Walkable Cities Earn More Money as a result,” City Lab, 10-24-19

¹⁷ joblink.maine.gov/ada/r/search/jobs?keywords=apprentice

¹⁸ Hospitality Maine and LiveWorkMaine

¹⁹ Feedback from FocusMaine summer interns 2019

²⁰ maine.gov/doe/learning/content/career/review and maine.gov/doe/learning/content/mathematics/review

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

2 **Sec. 1. 26 MRSA §2006, sub-§1, ¶¶I and J**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 114,
3 §10, are amended to read:

4 I. Providing policy recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of work-related
5 programs and services for youth, including youth with disabilities; ~~and~~

6 J. Providing policy recommendations to ensure the effectiveness of work-related
7 programs and services for "at-risk" youth; and

8 **Sec. 2. 26 MRSA §2006, sub-§1, ¶K** is enacted to read:

9 K. Supporting and tracking progress toward an attainment goal of increasing the
10 percent of working-age adults holding a high-value certificate, college degree,
11 vocational education or other industry-recognized credential to 60% by 2025 with a
12 focus on meeting future workforce needs and reporting annually on progress to the
13 joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and
14 cultural affairs and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction
15 over labor, business, research and economic development matters.

16 **SUMMARY**

17 This bill adds supporting an attainment goal of increasing the percent of working-age
18 adults holding a high-value certificate, college degree, vocational education or other
19 industry-recognized credential to 60% by 2025 with a focus on meeting future workforce
20 needs to the list of responsibilities of the State Workforce Investment Board. The board
21 may seek information from the Maine Workforce and Education Coalition in regards to
22 an attainment goal. It also directs the Workforce Investment Board to track the State's
23 progress toward the attainment goal and to annually report on the progress to the joint
24 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural
25 affairs and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over labor,
26 business, research and economic development matters.

27 **FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**

28 **(See attached)**



