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Laura A. Fortman
COMMISSIONER

March 11, 2022

Senator Daughtry
Representative Sylvester
Members of the Labor and Housing Committee

Dear Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and Members of the Labor and Housing Committee:

During the supplemental budget hearing in the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee on Monday, February 28th, Representative Sylvester, citing Maine employers' need for Workforce Development to attract employees, asked the Commissioner to provide some information on current Workforce Development initiatives at the Department. We have a set of two slides which outline this information, which you will see attached in the email.

We plan on attending the work session for review of our supplemental budget proposal and would be happy to elucidate on these initiatives at that point. Please feel free to follow up with me, should you have any additional questions or concerns.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Dillon Murray
Legislative Liaison
Maine Department of Labor

Overarching workforce strategy

Break down barriers for workers, with focus on priority communities

Attract new workers

Connect to high-quality training

Connect with degrees

Individuals have clear pathways to quality jobs

Businesses offer high-quality jobs

Invest in infrastructure to promote stability

Raise awareness of opportunities

Offer training & education aligned with labor market needs

Build clear career pathways for high growth sectors

Promote employers' support of worker livelihood via benefits & wages

Provide navigation support to address basic needs

Incentivize relocation & retention

Offer career exploration & guidance

Expose residents to high-growth in-demand career opportunities

Support employers' investment in training

Provide direct financial & other support to promote stability (e.g., UI)

Support sector-based collaboratives' recruitment efforts

Provide direct financial assistance to learners to enroll & persist

Expand accessibility of high-quality pathway programs

Provide employer resources to create more diverse & inclusive workplaces

Increased size of Maine's talent pool by 75,000 workers*

Increase % with credential of value (from 44% to 60%)

Increase average annual wages by 10% by 2030*

* From ME Economic Plan: Exact goal metrics will be revisited given pandemic-related shifts

MJRP DOL & Partners Workforce Strategies—snapshot of upcoming work (March-May 2022)

Break down barriers for workers, with focus on priority communities

- **Outreach workers deployed within communities** to employment and connecting individuals to jobs, training and resources including building new partnerships with community partners & industry associations
- **Finalizing selection of organizations to implement peer workforce navigation** connecting 3,300 individuals to jobs & resources
- Development of **Workers Fund**: one-time mini grants to address individuals' barriers in returning to or retaining work (via WIOA & other outreach partners)
- *Partner with **DECD** on workforce & talent attraction, **DHHS** on childcare & **DOT** on transportation*

Increased size of Maine's talent pool by 75,000 workers

Connect to high-quality training & degrees

- Reviewing applications for **apprenticeship & pre-apprenticeship grant funding** with focus on healthcare, clean energy & COVID-19 affected industries
- **Healthcare navigators** in Lewiston/Bangor area to provide personalized guidance to individuals seeking healthcare jobs
- Testing coordinated intake process site w/ **MCCS, UMS, adult ed & DHHS** to connect individuals & employers to **healthcare training supports**—aim of reaching & upskilling ~2,000 learners annually
- *Continue partnering with **MCCS, adult ed & UMS** workforce development MJRP efforts*

Increase % with credential of value (from 44% to 60%)

Individuals have clear pathways to jobs & Businesses offer high-quality jobs

- **Direct care recruitment campaign** collecting testimonials from workers to embed in website & campaign
- **Industry partnerships RFA to be released in March**—providing grants to employer groups to organize & create solutions for workforce needs
- Develop **workforce portal** with job posting, training & wraparound supports under cohesive brand
- **Progressive employment model** will work with employers to connect individuals in recovery & re-entry with jobs
- *Partnering with **DECD & DOE** on increasing youth paid work experiences & **DECD** on employer DEI efforts*

Increase average annual wages by 10% by 2030